

# THE OTTOMANS

Its Prominent Figures and Institutions



Osman Nûri TOPBAŞ

 **ERKAM**  
PUBLICATIONS





Istanbul / h. 1445 - m. 2023

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Osman Nuri TOPBAŞ

Original Title: Âbide Şahsiyetleri ve Müesseseleriyle  
OSMANLI

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Editor : Süleyman Derin

Graphics : İlhan Baştaş

Printed by : Erkam Printhouse

ISBN : 978-625-440-741-3

Address : İkitelli Organize Sanayi Bölgesi  
Mahallesi Atatürk Bulvarı, Haseyad  
1. Kısım No: 60/3-C Başakşehir,  
Istanbul, Türkiye

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Web site : [www.islamicpublishing.org](http://www.islamicpublishing.org)

Language : English



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Allah Almighty says:

﴿وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ  
كَمَا اسْتَخْلَفَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ وَلَيُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ دِينَهُمُ الَّذِي ارْتَضَى لَهُمْ  
وَلَيُبَدِّلَنَّهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ خَوْفِهِمْ أَمْنًا يَعْبُدُونَنِي لَا يُشْرِكُونَ بِي شَيْئًا وَمَنْ كَفَرَ  
بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ﴾

*“Allah has promised those among you who believe and do righteous deeds that He will certainly grant them succession to (present rulers) in the earth, as He granted it to those before them, and that He will grant them the authority to practice their religion, which He has chosen for them (i.e. Islam). And He will surely give them in exchange a safe security after their fear (provided) they (believers) worship Me and do not associate anything (in worship) with Me”*  
(Sûrah al-Nûr, 55).

﴿كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ  
وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ...﴾

*“You are the best nation produced [as an example] for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah”* (Şûrah Âli ‘Imrân, 110).

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ says:

«السلطان ظل الله في الأرض يأوي إليه الضعيف وبه ينتصر المظلوم،  
ومن أكرم سلطان الله في الدنيا أكرمه الله يوم القيامة»

*“The (just) ruler who uplifts Allah’s word and does not deviate from justice is like Allah’s shadow on earth. The weak seek refuge in Him, and the oppressed seek vengeance through Him. Whoever aids such a ruler in this world (both materially and spiritually), Allah will assist him on the Day of Judgment”* (Fayz al-Qadir, 4, 143).

‘Umar ؓ says:

«العدل أساس المُلْك»

*“Justice is the foundation of sovereignty.”*



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# FOREWORD

In commemorating the 700<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Ottoman dynasty, we proudly present to our readers an invaluable work that delves into the personalities and institutions of the great Ottomans, whose enduring legacy continues to grip the hearts of countless individuals. As we reflect on this remarkable milestone, we are reminded of the profound impact of their history on shaping the present and inspiring the future.

Throughout the past century, various attempts have been made to tarnish the reputation of the Ottoman state, often by those lacking a comprehensive understanding of its rich history. However, these endeavors have proven futile in erasing the esteemed stature the Ottomans hold in the hearts of people worldwide. Despite criticisms aimed at the Ottoman state for its non-homogenous structure, a perspective rooted in nationalistic ideals that emerged during the French revolution of 1789, there remains an undeniable yearning to preserve and nurture diverse communities and cultures, just as they once harmoniously thrived under Ottoman rule. As with the efforts of the United States to create in an Ottoman-like fashion a single nation out of various ones, the European nation-states, who, for centuries on end, were involved in internecine conflict and war, are now aspiring to unite and forge a single European state. This development stands as a remarkable demonstration of humanity's inclination toward coexistence in our era.

Curiously, some newspaper agencies, whose purpose has long been to erode the spiritual essence that gave rise to the Ottomans, now feel compelled to restore their reputation in the eyes of the people by fostering positive interest in the Ottoman past. A few years ago, the Jewish community expressed their “gratitude to the Ottomans” as they celebrated the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their arrival to Istanbul, an event intertwined with Ottoman intervention that spared them from the Spanish massacre. In a similar vein, this year saw the religious council of the Armenian community paying homage to history by



visiting the Fâtih mosque and offering prayers at the shrine of Mehmed II, commemorating the 546<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the conquest of Istanbul.

It is precisely these and other similar expressions of tolerance, which were part and parcel of the consciousness of the multicultural communities within the Ottoman state, that have now prompted certain newspapers to advocate for the unswerving reputation of the Ottomans. Regrettably, there have been deceptive narratives, exemplified by figures like the Austrian **Joseph von Hammer**, whose works reveal a palpable hostility toward Islam and Turkish identity. Professor **İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı**'s meticulously researched work, which has also been given out free of charge, is the most detailed and rigorous of its kind. However, the author's untimely demise left this work incomplete, with a later section on the post-Tanzîmat period being penned in a notably biased manner by another scholar.

The Ottoman archives contain an abundance of inadequately classified documents, numbering an estimated one hundred and fifty million, most of which remain untouched. These invaluable documents, now accessible to a new generation of educated minds, await future researchers to pen more reliable and robust works. Venturing into the Ottoman past, a history replete with lessons and warnings, holds the promise of equipping us with the tools needed to navigate the complexities of our current age. Ottoman history serves as our source of deliverance, emancipating us from the adverse influences that stem from centuries of relentless attacks intended to sever us from our roots. It is certainly not an overstatement to claim that we are long overdue in our diligent and faithful exploration of Ottoman history. This endeavor is essential to extract crucial lessons that are of utmost urgency in addressing the challenges we face in the present day.

We, therefore, present to the benefit of our readers this invaluable work by **Osman Nuri Topbaş**, whose writings we have read with great pleasure in Altınoluk.

As an exemplary study of Ottoman history, this work will particularly benefit our young generation and illuminate their path forward. We firmly believe that by presenting this work in good faith, we are fulfilling a much-needed endeavor. Understanding the Ottomans requires more than mere knowledge of historical chronology and mundane events; it necessitates grasping the spiritual ethos underlying those events. With this purpose in mind, the present

FOREWORD 

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work, which details the lives and struggles of diverse historical personalities, reveals the spiritual essence that permeated the military and political events of the Ottoman state. We would also like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to the esteemed author and pray that Allah bestow upon him a long and healthy life to bring many such precious works to light.

ERKAM PUBLICATIONS  
1999





# INTRODUCTION

*Praise be to Allah, the Most High and Holy, who has given His helpless servants the peace and pleasure of faith!*

*Peace and blessings be upon the noble Prophet ﷺ, who has saved humanity from oppression and wrongdoing!*

Throughout history, three basic elements have shaped human existence in crucial ways: religion, language, and historical consciousness. Religion serves as the ultimate compass, directing human nature and creation toward the corpus of divine laws that regulate life from the cradle to the grave and prepare individuals for everlasting happiness in the afterlife. Language serves as a vehicle for expressing truth and revealing realities. History, on the other hand, is like a torch that illuminates the future paths of nations, enabling us to understand and analyze the causes and consequences of past events within the framework of religion and language. These three elements are inseparable, and our aim is to present lessons and wisdom based on the eminent personalities of Ottoman history to our esteemed readers.

Preserving the religion, language, history, and cultural heritage our ancestors entrusted to us goes beyond restoring historical artifacts. It involves reviving the spirit, enthusiasm, and civilization they embodied and passing it on to future generations. Our language, which was on the brink of oblivion due to efforts such as those of Agop Dilaçan and similar individuals, aimed at detaching it from the Islamic culture that constituted the foundation of Ottoman civilization, has been virtually purged in a way that will not allow for serious contemplation. Consequently, there arises a pressing need to reclaim and reinstate the language of our forebears, as it stands as a necessary step toward overcoming the bewildering perplexity that currently afflicts us. Language is the medium through which we think, and without a language that accurately conveys concepts and with the words used to express them having been di-





minished and distorted, our ability to engage in deep religious thought is limited. Therefore, ensuring that our language aligns with our mindset, culture, and collective consciousness is essential. And unless this issue is addressed, thought and contemplation – two basic principles of human activity – will remain stunted and fail to attain a significant level of maturity.

Understanding Ottoman history in its true character is crucial. Works written by historians who harbor hostility toward Islam and Turks cannot provide an accurate explanation of our civilization, past, or guide us in shaping our future. It is both a religious and civic duty to reflect upon and lay claim to our historical legacy, even when it comes to the most marginal of individuals. The late **Mehmed Âkif** reminds us of this profound truth:

*It is a surety that a derelict nation will cease to exist,  
If you take hold, then this nation will not fall into ruin.*

History represents the collective memory and accumulation of experiences of a nation. Just as individuals cannot exist independently of their past experiences, nations, too, must be constantly aware of the lessons and warnings embedded in historical events. The rise and fall of nations may be construed as an aggregate of experiences passed down to future generations. Interpreting the causes and consequences of these experiences accurately and comparing them with newly emerging events is essential in shedding light on what lies ahead.

A great nation acquaints itself with its true history and values its temporal and spiritual leaders. If the up-and-coming generation knows their history better than the history of others and learns from the past, then there is no reason to worry about the future. However, if an entire generation turns its back on its history, discredits it, and remains unaware of its leaders, it alienates itself from its essence and mistakenly elevates traitors as heroes. In such a situation, the future appears bleak and fraught. The safety of those who disregard the past has never been guaranteed. Therefore, our roots should extend to the past as our branches should reach the future.

The science of history should not be seen as a mere compilation of tedious events. Genuine study of history reveals its elevated nature as it encompasses various incidents and exploits, guiding us to discern truth from falsehood, right from wrong across societies. To establish order within communities and



shape the future of societies, it is imperative to have an in-depth understanding of history and thoroughly extract lessons and warnings from it.

The Noble Quran imparts wisdom and lessons of past events, both positive and negative, experienced by communities in bygone eras. Nations that committed injustices and disobeyed Allah serve as examples and lessons for those who come after them. The Quran mentions their miserable end, emphasizing that neither heaven nor earth wept over them:

فَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ سَلَفًا وَمَثَلًا لِّلْآخِرِينَ

“**We made them an example and a lesson for those after them**” (Sûrah al-Zukhruf, 56).

فَمَا بَكَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّمَاءُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَا كَانُوا مُنظَرِينَ

“**Neither heaven nor earth wept over them, nor was their fate delayed**” (Sûrah al-Dukhân, 29).

And yet, despite this, Allah declares in the Quran that nations that do not stray from the divinely ordained path, persevere in their religion, and transmit the message of Islam to all four corners of the world by adopting the banner of monotheism, are also said to be successful:

أَنَّ الْأَرْضَ يَرِثُهَا عِبَادِيَ الصَّالِحُونَ

“**...My righteous servants shall inherit the land!**” (Sûrah al-Anbiyâ’, 105), indicating the fulfillment of Allah’s promise.

This passage informs us that the Quranic method renders righteous and sinful behavior discernible, facilitating better understanding and application. **Mehmed Âkif** eloquently emphasizes the importance of these lessons:

*History is often described as repetition,  
Would it repeat itself if any lesson was taken!..*

History relies on **archival sources**. As documents belonging to the Ottoman civilization are reworked, it becomes increasingly evident that the malign and uninformed accusations advanced by some researchers have no real value.



Nations with rich histories and great civilizational traditions are considered exceptional. While many structures are being built today, the **Sulaymâniye** mosque complex will remain a magnificent architectural achievement. Today, Ottoman architecture is one of the most popularly visited sites among tourists, many of whom gaze with admiration and find their souls at rest.

Researchers from abroad and at home are still going to great pains to understand and tap into the genius of the Ottoman state while also trying to draw lessons from what they have come to know. This is reflected in our archives overflowing with foreign scholars. As we enter the twenty-first century, it is crucial to introduce the new generation to our culture, civilization, and spiritual character that gave life to both.

Just as understanding Ottoman history is essential to comprehend the past and present of world history, it is also necessary to make sense of the delicate situation Türkiye faces today and the regional issues that are ready to erupt. In the same way, redressing the crises of the Muslim world requires accurate scrutiny and analysis of the historical legacy of the Ottomans.

The **Noble Quran** contains many profound teachings, commanding righteous believers to spend on their loved ones to obtain Allah's divine pleasure. The most important aspects can be explained as follows:

There are two precious things in this world for humankind: life itself and the material resources given to us. These two can be exchanged for everlasting paradise and Allah's divine pleasure. Individuals who devote themselves to Allah can only flourish with the help of these two realities. This is crucial because the difference between ruling and being ruled lies in the dedication of committed individuals who devote their existence, property, and life to Allah and society.

Peace and tranquility can only be preserved through individuals dedicated to serving others. Similarly, the honor and glory of societies endure as long as these devoted people walk the earth. Today, more than ever, we must probe the spiritual depths of those altruistic human beings whose hearts were absorbed with faith and rapture – to hear them, to understand them, and to draw lessons from their inner states. In today's world, where most of humanity has succumbed to material power and lives under the dominion of the ego-self, we are highly in need of figures like **Osman Ghazi** and **his progeny** of selfless individuals who committed themselves to Allah. We must delve into the depths of our souls and reacquire that spiritual character.



The Prophets, the Companions, the saints, and those who underwent spiritual cultivation occupy the highest level among patrons of pious endowments. These individuals carried the faith in their hearts to all four corners of the world in a relatively short period and played significant roles in shaping history during its most glorious periods.

The true architect of the Ottoman state was **Shaykh Edabali**, a Sufi master and a distinguished servant of Allah. As long as Edabali's lineage continued, the Ottoman sultans were guided in the right direction, and humanity attained the peace it sought. We must closely observe the devotion and inner spirit of the Ottoman sultans, whose outward and inward were cultivated by Edabali and those belonging to his spiritual line, and strive to relive that exalted state.

The **Ottoman state**, which represented the most glorious phase of Islamic history after the era of the Companions, was characterized by the love for the Prophet ﷺ displayed by all people, from the sultan to the shepherd. The Ottomans introduced exemplary forms of reverence and countless displays of honor, such as placing one's hands on the heart upon hearing the Prophet's ﷺ name and standing in respect while listening to poetic adaptations of his blessed birth. When a written message arrived from Medina, every Ottoman sultan made it a habit to perform ritual ablution before kissing and rubbing the letter on their eyes and stood in respect as it was read aloud.

Similarly, during the repair of the **Prophet's Mosque**, the Ottomans handled its stones in a state of ritual ablution while uttering the *basmalah* ('In the Name of Allah'), and tied felts to their hammers to avoid disturbing the soul of Allah's Messenger ﷺ. These actions represent unparalleled examples of human decency and dignity.

During the Ottoman era, the **Surre Regiment** would set out for **Medina** (or *al-Madīnah al-Munwarrah*, "The Luminous City") and prepare themselves in a nearby place for the spiritual journey. They entered the city with Allah's guidance after performing *istikhârah* ('seeking the good' from Allah) and maintained ethical decorum throughout their visit. Many would bring earth from Medina back to their native land as a source of healing and blessing.

Little known is the fact that the **crest** at the end of the turbans in the miniature paintings of the Ottoman sultans represented a broom. This symbolized their role as sweepers of the H̄aramayn, and they personally funded the salaries of those who cleaned the two sacred cities.



Another sign of love and respect was the preservation of the blessed strands of the Prophet's ﷺ beard and hair, known as *Sakal al-Sharîf*, in the pulpits of various mosques. For many centuries, they were seen as a blessing and mercy to the Ummah.

All these demonstrations of affection and lofty character are indicated in the final words of **Osman Ghazi**, who stated, “**Our objective is not to be just another world conqueror, but one that strives toward elevating the Word of Allah (i‘lâ-yi kelimetullâh).**” These words guided the Ottoman sultans who displayed prudence and scrupulousness across the ages in order to stay true to Osman’s testament.

The following instruction given by **Orhan Ghazi** to his son **Murâd Khan** suffices to demonstrate his enraptured faith: “**It is not enough for the Ottomans to rule over two continents! For the elevation of the Word of Allah is far too great of a cause to fit into two continents! Just as we are heir to the Seljukids, we are also heir to the Romans (i.e. Europe)!**”

The last words of the great sultan and saint, Murâd I, who was martyred in Kosovo, exemplify true martyrdom: “If the victory of Islam depends on me being martyred, I had pleaded with Allah that He grant me martyrdom. It means that my prayer was accepted. All praise and gratitude to Allah! After witnessing the victory of the soldiers of Islam, my life comes to an end.”

The Ottomans were always on the side of the oppressed. They brought justice, virtue, civilization, and service to the places they conquered. Even among the Christian communities in the conquered territories, no one went hungry or was left without shelter. Widows were protected, and clothing, food, and shelter were provided. The ideals of the Ottoman sultans were embodied in the concept of *nizâm-ı âlem* (‘order of the world’), and the state’s purpose was rooted in the idea of ‘world domination based on Islamic and humanistic principles’.

Before **Fâtih**’s conquest of Constantinople, the Christian and Byzantine noble **Notaras** expressed true tolerance and justice in Islam with the following statement: “**I would rather see the turban of the Turks than the cardinal’s hat [worn by the Christians] in Istanbul!..**”

On Sultan Yavuz Selîm’s deathbed, when his confidant Hasan Can said, “–Your Majesty, now it is time to be with Allah,” Yavuz responded:

“—My dear friend! Who do you think I have been with until now?” We are in great need of a ruler like **Yavuz**, who possesses a love for faith, moral virtue, and lofty ideals.

We must reflect on what drove a world leader like Kânûnî, a *pîr-i fânî* (a senior figure, esp. someone who renounced the world), who ruled the Ottoman state for half a century, to embark on an expedition in such a poor state of health. What can we make of the state of Abdulhamîd I, who, unable to bear the pain of losing the Ochakiv Fortress, passed away shortly after? The Sultan’s faith was profound, as his heart was filled with sorrow, which ultimately cost him his life. He said, “Our young soldiers and innocent people have been crushed!”

To truly understand these realities, feel their pain, experience historical consciousness, and comprehend the spiritual ethos that gave them life, an accurate analysis of past events and the leading personalities of the time must be presented. It is also imperative to write and read rigorous works on these matters to keep our ancestors and their memories alive in our hearts and, above all, to preserve the spiritual fervor of Islam and the love of the Prophet ﷺ.

This book attempts to convey the wisdom that underlies the life stories of altruistic individuals and people of the heart who went down in history as paragons of honor, humaneness, and love. Their service and heroism in the lands they ruled were filled with mercy, compassion, and affection, all in the name of Allah’s pleasure. And their advice and actions ultimately gave direction to society.

During the preparation of this work, which was intended to commemorate the 700<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the Ottoman state, we found it necessary to include some of its exceptional personalities along with the scholars, sages, and craftsmen of the era. We classified them into two main sections.

In this book, you will learn about the Ottoman sultans who conquered major parts of the world, the ‘friends of Allah’ (*awliyâ’*) who guided them, the scholars, statesmen, and other great figures, as well as the inner states of many exemplary personalities. These individuals have shown the world that the Ottoman state, as the pinnacle of the Turkish nation in state-building and its military complex, also held an exceptional position in science, philosophy, ethics, and art. The Ottomans thus excelled and proved themselves in every field, both materially and spiritually.





The first three centuries of the Ottoman state, influenced by the faith and loyalty of Abû Bakr ؓ, the bravery and justice of ‘Umar ؓ, the modesty, love, and ecstasy of ‘Uthmân ؓ, and the knowledge and wisdom of ‘Alî ؓ, spanned a brilliant era that encompassed the world and witnessed the elevation of the Word of Allah.

No nation in its history has ever had a succession of such magnificent, world-conquering sultans enduring for three centuries. Similarly, no state in the world’s history has been as long-lasting as the Ottomans, who upheld human rights, law, and compassion. It is worth noting that the state founded by Osman Ghazi reigned for 623 years.

The great Ottoman state, which began with four hundred horsemen and grew into a mighty state, spread to three continents and led with dignity and honor for six centuries. It later disintegrated into forsaken statelets and became a renowned shrine in a historical cemetery. Now, we must be worthy caretakers of this celebrated shrine.

**I am no historian, and instead of writing a chronological history, I have attempted to present the spiritual foundation of our material progress, along with the reasons and wisdom behind the unfortunate collapse of the Ottoman state, by considering prominent figures of our religious and cultural history.**

Indeed, the scope of this study is not limited to philanthropists who dedicated themselves to a sacred cause. Although the list could be expanded further, we have confined the present work to a select few to provide an adequate understanding and perspective.

Citing sources in works like this is not only a common practice but often used to give a study a “scholarly” appearance. However, this work does not resort to such a method to avoid overwhelming the reader with numerous sources and claiming scholarly expertise.

It is hoped that readers pardon any errors or mistakes, recognizing them as part of my humble efforts to benefit the younger generation and instill in them religious and collective enthusiasm. I ask **Allah** to accept this plea and take refuge in His infinite mercy.

I would like to express my gratitude to the historian **Kadir Mısıroğlu**, whose valuable insights helped analyze and criticize this work prior to its publi-





cation. Special thanks to one of my devoted students, **Muhammad Ali Eşmeli**, who worked diligently during the preparatory stages of the book. Finally, I ask Allah that He accepts this work as an act of ongoing charity (*sadaka-i câriye*).



On this note, it should be mentioned that no author is born with the knowledge and value judgments they present. Those who act as guides are the ones who shape the spirit and mind of other individuals, directing them toward the path of either truth or falsehood. Without such guidance, individuals leave the world like bare reeds with unpleasant and tuneless sounds. Their works remain mere collections of information. Therefore, without spiritual guidance, no work of substance or person of influence will come to light.

In this regard, we thank Allah for being born in a blessed land where our souls and minds are guided in the right direction with extraordinary grace, and our hearts are nourished with its spiritual ambience. We owe everything sensible and good in our lives to Islam, the spiritual well-spring that has enlightened us since our early childhood. My honorable father, **Mûsâ Topbaş Efendi**, served the people most fittingly throughout his life, something that I cannot match. Having lived for eighty-odd years, he carried the spiritual qualities that made the Ottomans who they were with his faith, wisdom, kindness, grace, and decency, impressing my heart with them. On this occasion, I consider it a duty of loyalty to express my gratitude and acknowledge the genuine source of truth flowing from my humble pen. I ask our readers to recite Şûrah al-Ikhlâş and Şûrah al-Fâtiḥah three times for my honorable father and friend of Allah, whom we entrusted to His mercy on Friday, **July 16, 1999. May Allah's mercy be upon him!**

Having fulfilled this sacred duty through the grace and blessings of Allah, and following in the footsteps of my late father who raised me in his blessed hands, I present this humble work.

**And it is Allah from whom guidance and success are granted!**

**Osman Nuri TOPBAŞ**  
Azîz Mahmûd Hudâyî Vakfı  
22.07.1999  
USKUDAR





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CHAPTER ONE

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# Ottoman Sultans







*The Warrior-Sultan Who Laid the Foundation of the Ottoman State on the Path of Spreading and Elevating the Word of Allah*

## **OSMAN GHAZI**

*(1258-1326)*

The House of Osman belonged to the Kayı tribe of the Oghuz Turks, who migrated from Central Asia to Anatolia.

Osman Ghazi was one of three sons of Ertuğrul Ghazi. His sobriquet was “Fahruddîn.”

We are told that his father, Ertuğrul Ghazi, received spiritual revelation about the great works Osman Ghazi would accomplish. Despite being the youngest son, Osman Ghazi’s administrative skills and extraordinary abilities led the beys to unanimously recognize him as the head of the tribe after his father’s passing. Poets of his time expressed his rise to leadership in the *beylik* (principality) with the following verse:



*Girded with the sword of religion on his waist,  
Presenting Islam to the whole world.  
The door of opportunity for Islam has been opened  
He is the servant of the Prophet's Ummah...*

Thus, Osman Ghazi, who became the head of the principality through an alliance, expanded the land from 4,800 km<sup>2</sup> left by his father to 16,000 km<sup>2</sup>. It was during his time that the first coin was minted.



His father, Ertuğrul Ghazi, had a spiritual mentor named **Shaykh Edabali**, whom he regarded highly throughout his life. Ertuğrul Ghazi wanted his son to be raised under Shaykh Edabali's guidance. Osman Ghazi often visited Shaykh Edabali and received his spiritual blessings.

One night, while a guest at Shaykh Edabali's house, Osman Bey experienced exhilarating moments in the presence of the Shaykh. These moments brought peace to him and relieved his inner struggles. It is said that because a **Quran** was hanging on the wall of the room where he was to sleep, he did not stretch out his legs but instead curled up where he sat and fell into a delightful sleep. In his dream, he saw that the moon emerging from Shaykh Edabali's chest, gradually forming a crescent, entered his own chest. A sapling grew between him and the Shaykh, becoming a sycamore tree with branches spreading over three continents, taking many nations under its dominion. In these lands, the **call to prayer** resonated from majestic towers and domes, and nightingales recited the Noble Quran. The entire landscape transformed into a rose garden under the vast sky.

While marveling at these beautiful landscapes in his dream, Osman Bey suddenly saw a gazelle appear. He woke up and aimed to shoot an arrow at the gazelle as it fled westward.

He performed ritual ablution and sought permission from Shaykh Edabali to enter his presence. He then recounted his dream, and the Shaykh listened attentively, his face shining with a pleasant smile. Shaykh Edabali, with the eye of his inner heart, deciphered the mystery behind the dream. When Osman Bey finished speaking, the Shaykh raised his head, looked into his eyes, and spoke with a soft and harmonious voice:



“—My son! Only Allah possesses knowledge of hidden realities (*gâ'ib*). However, there is much good in the dream you saw. Allah will grant you and your descendants sultanic rule. The world will come under the protection of your offspring. You will marry a girl from my progeny, and the children from this marriage will become leaders of this great state, which will flourish over time. This state will also expand to the West...”

Âshik Pashazâde expressed Shaykh Edabali's words to Osman Ghazi in the following verse:

*The station of guidance and blessings are yours,  
The eternal state is yours.  
Prayers are yours from the end of your generation,  
The furnished tables and the invitations are yours...  
Lineage and generation along with evidentiary proofs are yours,  
The fate of the world is yours;  
For the jinn and humankind, as well as the royal decree, are yours...*



Shortly after Shaykh Edabali shared his dream, Osman Bey married the Shaykh's daughter, **Mal Hatun**. This marriage allowed Osman Ghazi to gather economic power and men of *futuwwah* (Islamic guild organization) around him. Thus, the material foundation was laid for the state that would guide the people, elevate the Word of Allah (*i'lâ-yi kelimetullâh*), and bring order to the world (*nizâm-i âlem*) for six hundred years.

At the same time, the spiritual leaders of the time all allied under the leadership of **Osman Ghazi** and his progeny. In particular, **Edabali**, **Haji Bek-tâshi Walî**, and **Ahî Evrân** hoped and prayed to Allah for this.

These expectations and supplications were based on numerous spiritual signs revealed beforehand. Ahmad Cevdet Pasha recounts that **Muhyî al-Dîn Ibn 'Arabî** had prophesied this glad tiding seventy years before the emergence of the Ottoman state, deriving it from numerology (*ilm-i cifir*) and Quranic passages. He even titled his work *al-Shajarah al-Nu'mâniyyah fî Dawlah al-Uthmâniyyah* before the Ottoman principality came into existence. Additionally, some events mentioned in this work foretold that the first caliph from the House of Osman would be **Yavuz Sultan Selîm**.





With these and other lofty glad tidings, the Ottoman flag rose under the spiritual protection of the great ‘friends of Allah’. The Anatolian faithful sought solace in the people of the heart, who were among the ‘friends of Allah’, and found peace. Otherwise, Anatolia as a whole faced the danger of losing its spiritual essence. The westward advance of the Mongols, who were idolatrous, caused distress, demoralization, and even hopelessness among the people of Anatolia. The signs of moving away from its essence gradually became apparent, as Mongolian customs, traditions, and lifestyles took hold. By forging a close connection with Edabali’s spiritual lineage, the Ottomans were able to halt this painful situation. They regarded their defeats as a test or a consequence of their deviation from the truth. Osman Ghazi declared to his subjects that the believers, confirmed by Allah, would once again prosper and be victorious.

The Ottomans, without involving themselves in useless conflicts between Anatolian principalities, were ready to engage in armed struggle and advance westward. This created a sense of unity around Osman Ghazi that was unshakable and demonstrated the sincerity of his statements and teachings. Everyone who understood that spreading and elevating the Word of Allah was a command of Islam rushed to rally under the sacred banner he unfurled. The Seljukid scholars and emirs, dispersed in the aftermath of the Mongol invasion, also pledged allegiance to Osman Ghazi. The kind treatment Osman Ghazi received by the last Seljukid sultan also played a role in this. The Sultan said to Osman Ghazi:

“—Osman Ghazi! You have many marks of felicity. There is no equivalent to you and your generation in the world. My prayers, Allah’s grace, the blessings of the Prophet ﷺ, and the favor of the ‘friends of Allah’ are all with you.” He complimented him and sent him various gifts, including a plume, a flag, a sword, and an imperial edict, to acknowledge his success and efforts in elevating the Word of Allah.

Therefore, despite being granted autonomy by the Seljukid sultan, Osman Ghazi remained loyal to him and did not act independently until the Seljukids departed from the historical arena. This indicates that the Ottomans naturally became heirs to the Seljukid state.

The most remarkable aspect of Osman Ghazi’s era is that he established the foundation of the state on enduring spiritual principles. In his midst were





people of knowledge, belief, and wisdom, including **Shaykh Edabali**, **Shaykh Mahmûd**, **Dursun Fakîh**, **Kasim Karahisârî**, **Shaykh Muhlis Karamânî**, **Âshik Pasha**, and **Elvan Chelebi**. Spirituality was so crucial in the state structure that after the conquest of Karacahisar, Dursun Fakih affirmed the principality founded by Osman Ghazi in his Friday sermon.

**Khwâja ‘Ârif Rîwgarî** and **Khwâja Mahmûd Anjîr al-Faghnawî** belonged to the Naqshbandî Sufi path, while **Shaykh Sa‘d al-Din Jibâwî**, **Bahâ’ al-Dîn Walad**, **Shaykh Edabali**, and their peers were the sultans of the heart who lived during Osman Ghazi’s time and enlightened the world.

According to many narrations, Edabali is considered one of the “**sons of the Messenger**.” The sons of Osman also enjoyed a similar honor and renown from their mother’s lineage, which traced back to the **Messenger** of Allah ﷺ.



In regards to his respect for the ‘friends of Allah’, Ertuğrul Ghazi imparted Osman Ghazi with the following invaluable advice that would guide the souls of all his successors:

*“Look, son!*

*Mistreat me, but do not mistreat Shaykh Edabali! He is the spiritual light of our tribe. His wisdom is invaluable!*

*Defy me, but do not defy him! If you disobey me, I will be saddened and hurt. If you go against him, my eyes will not look at you, and even if they do, they will not see you!*

*My testimony is for you, not for Edabali! Consider this my final request!”*



Edabali trained and mentored the young and energetic Osman Ghazi, allowing him to experience the pleasure of experiential knowledge (*ma‘rifatullâh*) and instilling in him virtues such as good character, selflessness, composure, and self-reliance. Through this, he prepared Osman for the leadership of a world state.

Furthermore, Edabali shaped the atmosphere around Osman Ghazi, particularly the young generation, recognizing that they were the seeds of the





future. By understanding the essence of these young individuals, one can anticipate what the future holds. Edabali gave direction and purpose to the enthusiasm of Osman Ghazi and his companions, steering them toward the path of spiritual struggle and service to the people in the most perfect and foundational way.

**In this respect, Shaykh Edabali was the true patron of the Ottoman state.** While other principalities were disintegrating due to a lack of someone like Shaykh Edabali, the Ottoman principality quickly rose to become a sovereign state and eventually expanded its domination. Over six centuries, the Ottomans introduced the world to Islam, administered justice, and embodied the essence of truth.

Through the eloquent language that expresses our emotions and stems from a glorious past where rights and laws were established, we can mention some of Shaykh Edabali's wise words that guided Osman Ghazi and future statesmen:

*“O Son!*

*You are the ruler now! From this point onward, anger should be for us, while compliance is for you! Resentment should be for us, while conciliation is for you! Blaming should be for us, while endurance is for you... Weakness and error should be for us, while tolerance is for you... Misunderstandings, conflicts, and disagreements should be for us, while justice is for you... Evil eye, sinister tongue, and unfair criticism should be for us, while forgiving is for you...”*

*“O Son!*

*From hereon in, breaking up is for us; bringing together is for you... Indolence is for us; exhorting, encouraging, and enhancing are for you...”*

*“O Son!*

*Your burden is heavy, your work is difficult, and your strength depends on introspection... May Allah's help be with you. May He bless your beylik. May it bring benefit on the path of truth. May your light shine far and wide. May He grant you the strength to carry your burden without stumbling. May He bless you with a sound mind and heart.”*



*“You, your companions, and dervishes like us must pave the way for what has been promised to us by utilizing the sword, thought, and prayers. We must remove obstacles.”*

*“Son!*

*You are powerful, strong, intelligent, and eloquent...But if you do not know how and where to use your strengths, you will be swept away by the winds of change! Your anger and soul will overpower your reason. May you always possess patience, steadfastness, and willpower!...”*

*“Patience is crucial. A ruler must know how to be patient. A flower does not bloom before its time. Unripe pears are inedible, and even if eaten, they cause discomfort. Similarly, an ignorant ruler is like an unripe pear.”*

*“May your people live with self-knowledge (‘irfân). Turn not your back on them. Always be aware of your presence. It is this wisdom that guides society and keeps it alive.”*

*“Son!*

*Some people are born at dawn and pass away during the evening call to prayer.”*

*“The world is not as vast as your eyes perceive. All the secrets and unknowns that are yet to be discovered will come to light through your virtues and justice.”*

*“Hold your mother and ancestors in high esteem! Know that blessings reside with the elderly.”*

*“If you lose faith in this world, it will become barren and devoid of life, just like a green field turning into a desert.”*

*“Be forthright! Do not take on every promise! Do not say ‘I saw’ or ‘I know’! Do not frequent places where you are loved; otherwise, your affectionate bond (muhabbet) and reputation will be harmed...”*

*“Have compassion for these three individuals: the scholar among the ignorant; the wealthy person who becomes poor; and the one who loses their reputation while still being remembered!...”*

*“Remember that those who hold positions of power are not as secure as those beneath them.”*



*“Do not be afraid of standing up for what is right in a dispute! Let them know that the best of horses are called ‘doru’ (chestnut) and the best of brave men are considered fearless.”*

*“The greatest victory is to know oneself. The true enemy lies within. A friend is someone who truly understands their own soul.”*

*“The land does not belong to the ruler to divide among their sons and brothers. The territory belongs only to the one who governs it. When he passes away, whoever succeeds him becomes the ruler of the country. Our forefathers were mistaken for having divided the state among their sons and brothers while they were alive and healthy. That is why they did not live nor let others live...” (This principle allowed the Ottomans to remain in power for six centuries)*

*“Once a person is seated, they cannot easily get up. When a person does not move, they eventually become numb. When numbness sets in, they begin to speak, and their words turn into gossip. Once gossip starts, it becomes incurable. The friend becomes an enemy, and enemies suddenly turn into beasts...”*

*“A person’s strength will diminish over time, but knowledge remains. The light of knowledge can even penetrate closed eyes and bring enlightenment.”*

*“Animals die, their saddles remain; humans die, but their work remains. Do not mourn for those who have passed away, but mourn for those who did not fulfill their purpose... Carry on where they left off.”*

*“I do not favor war, nor do I wish to shed blood. Yet I understand that the sword must be raised and lowered. But it should be done for the sake of giving life. Killing another under the sword is a grave sin. The principality is nothing more than territory. War should not be waged solely for land.”*

*“We do not have the privilege to stop and rest, for time is limited and short!”*

*“Loneliness is for the fearful. Farmers who know when to cultivate the earth do not seek advice from others. Even if one is alone...As long as the person knows that soil must receive ample heat and moisture.”*

*“Love should be at the core of your pursuit. Love is found in silence. It is not expressed through shouting or appearances!...”*



*“He who does not know his past cannot comprehend his future. Osman! Know your past well so that you can boldly move forward in the future. Do not forget where you came from, lest you forget where you are going!...”*

Edabali had molded Osman, as you would knead a lump of dough, with these sorts of directives. Osman faced complex circumstances. Should he unite the principalities that acceded from all directions? Should he maintain a delicate balance? Should he be on the lookout for the Byzantines or the Germiyaniids? Should he pay attention to the Mongols? Should he fight against the *Tekfurs* (Christian feudal lords)?

In all these crucial matters and more, Edabali became a spiritual guide for Osman, shedding light on the paths he would embark on with the wisdom and prudence gained from his exceptionally devout life.

Alongside this remarkable spiritual upbringing, Osman Ghazi and his subjects transformed into a righteous community, putting Islamic moral ethics into practice and applying them to their lives. With a small number of tribal forces, they defeated the Byzantine army and the Christian feudal lords one after another and established a sultanate. This tribe had started with four hundred tents and received enormous divine favors along with blessings from their spiritual cultivation. This line of geniuses, from father to son, would continue for a long time. The world witnessed countless manifestations of happiness and justice under their rule. Everywhere they went, they became an element of stability and world order.

Osman Ghazi, who embodied this great becoming, undoubtedly enjoys the honor of being one of the most remarkable figures of human history. This is why one of the world’s greatest states was designated with his name.



Having received an excellent religious and spiritual education, Osman Ghazi was a devout and righteous ruler. He was inclined toward the hereafter and exceedingly reluctant to engage in acts religiously forbidden. His entire purpose was struggling for the sake of Allah. It is said that he was a soft-spoken, charitable individual who never once became angry during his life. In addition, he possessed ambition and puissance and was highly capable of managing the affairs of the state. He was a brave man who knew no fear.



Even Christian historians were obliged to acknowledge the truth without sacrificing it, as evident in their statements. According to the historian **Joseph von Hammer**:

“In the state he left, the organization and the basic foundations were so strong that the Ottomans soon became the largest state in the world. If the people of his time had said: “The descendants of this warrior will defeat many powerful states and bring Europe to its knees and dominate these regions!,” everyone who hears them will say: “This is a dream; an absurd fairy tale!” But that renowned Ghazi and his entourage, especially the Sufi scholars and the ulema, believed this wholeheartedly and made tireless efforts for this great unfolding.”

Indeed, Osman Ghazi and his brave men did not descend from horseback; day and night they raced about from one expedition to another. They developed rapidly, grew, and multiplied. They became a nightmare for the Byzantines. From ages seven to seventy, they fought to spread the vibrant call of Islam to the world. The unbelievers could no longer leave their castles.

**Alphonse Lamartine** writes:

“Osman Ghazi by nature was simple, honest, and just. In applying his reason and intellect to the unity of Allah, he tried to constrain idolatry and the false beliefs that were against the divine unity on earth. However, by following the policy of the conquerors, he began to administer and settle in the countries he conquered. Osman Ghazi progressed slowly; but he never came back. However, by following the policy of the conquerors, he began to save and settle in the countries he conquered. **Osman Ghazi moved forward at a slow pace; albeit he never fell back...**”

Although Osman Ghazi was preoccupied with completing the establishment of his state, his greatest goal was to advance toward Istanbul and fulfill the good news of the Prophet ﷺ. The following poem by Yazıcıoğlu Ali expresses this truth:

*Osman, you are the son of Ertuğrul  
Oğuz, you are the progeny of the Qarakhanids  
You are a humble servant of Allah  
Liberate Istanbul and turn it into a rose garden!...*

When Osman Ghazi's conquests are carefully examined on the map, the following notable objectives stand out:

1. The aspiration to establish borders along the sea.
2. The ability to recognize the state of Byzantium, which was on the verge of collapse, and encircle it from the two seas.
3. Disjoining the Greek territories from each other and then conquering the isolated areas.

Osman requested his son to strive in this direction and exert the same effort. Before his death, he had come near the front of Bursa and pointed to his son the dome of a monastery that glowed from afar, saying:

**“–You should lay me under the silver dome!”**

Osman Ghazi spent his life constantly toiling and engaging in war, making good use of the advantage of being situated on the border with Byzantium. This provided his state with a great deal of dynamism and paved the way for his modest principality to become a world state. The heirs of Osman Ghazi did not claim any status of greatness or magnificence at the outset, for they were known as the *sultânü'l-guzât* or ‘the sultan of warriors’. He turned an ideal that was thought to be imaginary into reality. In this context, Herbert Adams Gibbons expresses his praise as follows:

“Osman Ghazi was not the son of a prince...And this state, although it did not come enough in contact with the outside world to have money of its own, grew steadily year after year. The way his state was formed was the assurance of its permanence and of its great future. It is also an indication of the real greatness of the man who formed it...Attila, Djenghiz Khan, Timur, the greatest conquerors of the stock from which Osman came, utilized a race already made. They were leaders of a united people. In spite of their dazzling exploits, they were mere raiders, and their empires were the territories of an unassimilated path of conquest. Osman's work was more enduring than theirs, more far-reaching in its results. For he was building in silence while they were destroying with a blast of trumpets. We may place him with them, perhaps above them, for which of them gave his name to a people?”

The personal property of Osman Ghazi, who led an exceptionally pious life, when he died, consisted of armor, a pair of boots, a few banners, a sword, a spear, a few herds of horses, three flocks of sheep, and the like.





**May Allah have mercy on his soul!...**



Osman Ghazi and his companions were not deceived by the world and did not cater to their carnal desires. They did not indulge themselves with pride, arrogance, or vanity despite their power, strength, distinct intellect and will-power, success, and glorious victories.

They did not debase themselves by being concerned with deceitful worldly possessions, status, and high-ranking positions. They preserved the dignity and respect of the turban that they wore on their heads. They became honorable soldiers undertaking the great cause of elevating the Word of Allah.

The blessings they obtained from realizing that true happiness resides in the worship of Allah were instrumental in increasing their gratitude, heartfelt enthusiasm, and passion for experiential knowledge.

**They** did not pay heed to the transient blessings of this world and spent everything they could for the sake of the afterlife. Never were they driven by an ambitious pursuit of meaningless victories. For this reason, the pages of history are filled with glory and honor for them...

**O Allah! Bless those of us who remain estranged, orphaned, helpless, and oppressed after them with a new awakening and revival in the way of Allah!..**

**Âmîn!..**







*The One Who Rises to Great Heights  
Receiving His Father's Sincerity and Willpower, His Brother's  
Contentment, and the Supplication of the 'Friends of Allah'*

## **ORHAN GHAZI**

*(1281-1360)*

He was the second Ottoman Sultan. His father was Osman Ghazi, and his mother was **Mal Hatun**, the daughter of the spiritual architect of the Ottoman state, Shaykh Edabali. From a young age, Orhan Ghazi grew up participating in the wars against the Byzantine *Tekfurs*. He married the Muslim daughter of the captured Yarhisar *Tekfur*, **Nilüfer Hatun**.

Orhan Ghazi, like his father, Osman Ghazi, and dignitaries of the state, was shaped by the spiritual upbringing of Shaykh Edabali.



Orhan Ghazi conquered Bursa in 1326. Meanwhile, his father, Osman Ghazi, on his deathbed, was very pleased about this and sent him an impe-





rial edict inviting him to come to his side. Orhan Ghazi rushed to his father as soon as he received the order. Memorizers of the Noble Quran were reciting in heartfelt and touching voices passages from the sacred text, while Ahî Şemseddîn, Ahî Hasan, Turgut Alp, Saltuk Alp, and other commanders were kneeling and shedding tears beside Osman Ghazi.

Realizing that Orhan Ghazi had arrived, Osman Ghazi gestured with his hand to his son to sit beside him. He then informed those around him that he had appointed him to take his place. He ordered his sons and commanders to obey Orhan Ghazi and to extend their allegiance. Afterward, he offered his last warnings to Orhan Ghazi with the following testament, which were like the bedrock of the Ottoman state:

*“Son! My only request is that you do not do anything contrary to the command of Allah! Find out what you do not know by asking those who are qualified! Do not try to do something you have not learned well! Do not deprive your soldiers of your guidance and benevolence! Know that the human individual is the servant of goodness.*

*Son! **Ensure that the affairs of the religion take precedence over any other consideration!** Because the state will become stronger by fulfilling what is religiously obligatory! For this reason, respect the scholars and do not be improper toward them so that religious affairs will function in an orderly way.*

*Wherever you hear of a person of knowledge, seek them; look upon them with favor and show them lenience. **However, do not involve people in the affairs of the state who live unscrupulously and lack religious zeal and experience. For the one who is not afraid of his Creator will not show mercy to the creation!***

*Stay far away from oppression and reprehensible innovations lest they lead you to ruin.*

*Know that our vocation is the way of Allah, and we aim to spread His religion.*

*Our cause is not a meaningless quarrel or conquest but to spread and elevate the Word of Allah, that is, to glorify the religion of Allah! Bless my soul by not allowing me to abandon jihâd!..*



*Son! Whoever from my dynastic household strays from the right path and justice, let them be deprived of the intercession of the Prophet ﷺ on the Day of Judgment!..*

*Son! Always be faithful to your loyal men who expend their lives serving the state for the sake of Allah! Watch over them! Protect their families after they pass away!..*

**Show respect, honor, and favor to the righteous scholars who give moral strength to the state. If you hear that there is an expert scholar, gnostic, or 'friend of Allah' in another country, invite him to your hometown with grace and respect! Let religion and state affairs be directed by their benevolence and blessings!**

*Do not feel a sense of pride in your army and wealth! Take lesson from my condition, for I am like a weak ant now. I have been blessed undeservedly with many blessings of Allah (SWT).*

*Take the path that I walked on! Observe the rights of Allah and His servants! Be satisfied with the income you receive from the state treasury! Do not spend beyond the essential needs of the state! May the next generation take you as an example! Do not allow oppression to transpire! Be about justice and mercy! Turn to Allah in all your affairs, ask Him for help, and take refuge in Him!..”*

With these words, Orhan Ghazi, who was acknowledged by Osman Ghazi himself that he was to be appointed head of the principality, showed great nobility and courtesy and proposed that his elder brother, Alâaddîn, assume leadership after his father's death, realizing the heavy burden of the responsibility of leading:

He said, “**–Here you are; sit on the throne my father left!..”**

Upon this offer to the throne, which is something rarely encountered in history, his brother Alâaddîn also praised the fine spiritual education he had received:

He said, “**–No! Our father has entrusted this duty to you. His prayers and blessings are upon you. Just as he made you a *serdar* (commander-in-chief) of the military in his time, the same duty is now yours; being the ruler of a principality suits you...”**



Osman Ghazi's testament to his son virtually became the constitution of a 620-year-old world state.

Orhan Ghazi took his father's advice to heart, applying it as an essential life principle. As a benediction for this, he was blessed to expand the territory of his father's homeland sixfold, from 16,000 km<sup>2</sup> to 95,000 km<sup>2</sup> at the end of his thirty-three-year reign.

Conversely, Orhan Ghazi initiated the first war between the Ottoman sultanate and the Byzantine empire, which resulted in the latter's decisive defeat. After this war, referred to as the Battle of **Palekanon**, Byzantium became increasingly weaker and could not show any resistance in the territories it had lost; the Ottoman conquests would also serve to open the path to the west.



Orhan Ghazi inherited his father's sincerity and willpower along with his brother's contentment and received prayers from the religiously devout (*ehlullâh*). Thus, he became an exceptional model figure for the Ottoman sultans for many ages after him. To briefly put it, he had become an exemplary individual who we call «**the personage of Orhan Ghazi**». The fact that every morning, he would light the lamps of the mosque that he had built as a part of the Orhaniye complex in Bursa and personally distribute food and serve the poor in the almshouse (*imâret*) he had founded are signs of this model character. With these pious deeds, the groundwork of thousands of pious endowments (*vakıflar*) was laid in the Ottoman state.

Orhan Ghazi was quite devout. His devotion to the divine commandments had become his ultimate duty. He loved those who possessed inner knowledge (*ehl-i irfân*) and memorized the Quran. He was generous to war veterans (*ghazi*), artisans, and the poor; and reverent to warriors of the faith (*müccâhidler*). He had houses built for them and provided for their livelihood. He had a high appreciation for scholars. He was a thoughtful, forward-thinking, just, brave, and warrior sultan. He possessed noble attributes rarely found in rulers. According to the Muslim traveler **Ibn Baţţûta**:

“He was the noblest of the Turkoman rulers in his time. He had nearly a hundred fortresses.”

The first Ottoman madrasah was inaugurated in Iznik during the reign of Osman Ghazi. The position of professorship was also assigned to **Dâvûd-i**



**Kayserî**, the exoteric (*zâhiri*) and esoteric (*bâtinî*) scholar of the time, who wrote a commentary on **Muhyî al-Dîn Ibn ‘Arabî’s** *Fuûş al-Ĥikam*. This work formed a basis for the spread of Sufi thought throughout Ottoman lands.

Building on his father’s service to the people, Orhan Ghazi had Sufi lodges and convents constructed across his entire state to ensure the spiritual development of the people. **Geyikli Baba** and **Dervish Murâd** were two renowned Sufi dervishes of that time. In particular, the well-known oak tree planted by Geyikli Baba had become a symbol of the greatness and power of the Ottoman state. The incident is as follows:

Geyikli Baba had settled in Uludağ. Hearing of his fame, Orhan Ghazi sent word and summoned him. However, this ‘friend of Allah’, walking among deer in the mountains, did not accept the invitation. He had also sent a message stating:

“–Do not let Orhan come to me either!.”

When Orhan Ghazi became curious and asked for the reason, he received the following reply:

*“Sufi dervishes are people of foresight. They are the people of the heart. They must behave properly. Otherwise, their prayers will not be accepted if they deviate from the righteous path. You, on the other hand, are the trustees of the Ummah (Muslim community). In this case, you are soldiers of the frontier, and we are soldiers of supplication. Victories are achieved due to the joint efforts of these two types of soldiers. The frontier soldiers are equipped with courage and military tactical knowledge toward achieving this success; the soldiers of supplication must be kept from having any inclination and love for the world. Therefore, I am afraid that the gifts and offerings that are likely to be presented when I come to you will bring worldly affection into the hearts of the dervishes and reduce their loving attachment for the hereafter. Thus, you and we will be among those who suffer... Your Majesty! But you should know that our meeting will be ordained when the time comes, by the Will of Allah.”*

After some time, Geyikli Baba arrived at Bursa and planted an oak tree in Orhan Ghazi’s courtyard. They reported the matter to the Sultan. Orhan Ghazi came there at once.

Geyikli Baba said to him:



“—We planted it for spiritual blessings. As long as you stay, may the supplication of the dervishes be accepted for you and your progeny.”

Orhan Ghazi offered to give İnegöl and its surroundings to Geyikli Baba as a gift from his heart despite the message he had received from him earlier. However, Geyikli Baba, whose heart and eyes were satisfied, did not accept this saying:

“—Worldly possessions belong to Allah. He gives to those who are qualified. We are not among such people.”

The Sultan insisted. Thereupon, Geyikli Baba feared that it would be arrogant not to accept what was given and said:

“Let the area opposite from the mound be the courtyard of the dervishes!”

Unfailing in his respect for the religiously devout, Orhan Ghazi, who was raised under their spiritual care and used a portion of the state taxes on them, had been overjoyed by Geyikli Baba’s hospitality and, with great joy, fell into his hands and repeatedly kissed them...

Here is the magnificence, strength, and secret that lies at the foundation of that great world state!..

The fact that a sultan, who brought many armies to their knees, clung to the hands of a saint among his subjects and kissed them to his satisfaction with tears of joy and happiness was no minor incident but, indeed, a spiritual and lofty tax for all the grand conquests. History is a witness to the Ottoman sultans’ tolerance toward the ‘friends of Allah’, which was one of the main reasons for the divine favor bestowed upon them.

Possessing an evident awareness of this, Orhan Ghazi received Geyikli Baba’s benediction and had a shrine and mosque built for him after his death.



**Khawja Muhammad Bâbâ Sammâsî, Shaykh Edabali, and Haji Bek-tâshi Walî** of the Naqshbandî spiritual chain were among the age’s greatest figures.

The era of Orhan Ghazi was a period in which the Ottoman state was shaped by an unearthly leaven that brought it to power and prestige in subsequent ages. This period represents the preparatory phase for the new and great



advances to be made in the future. The combination of faith and power, which cannot be easily achieved, was likewise sustained consistently and ingeniously by the blessed spiritual elders of the time.

In this way, Orhan Ghazi was the person who transformed the principality into an actual state.

Like his father, Orhan adopted a warrior spirit against unbelievers rather than being preoccupied with clashes in Anatolia. In this path, he had set his sights on what lay far beyond, especially Istanbul. For this reason, he was given the title “the frontier guard of the horizons” (*merzbânü'l-âfâk*). It is said that he did not remain in one place for more than a month and lived a life of constant *jihâd* in the way of spreading and elevating the Word of Allah. However, he showed that true conquest is in the hearts, saying, “Magnanimity (*mürüvvet*) is preferable to war!”

Therefore, due to his genius politics and powerful advances, **the outward conquests provided by the swords were eternalized by the inward conquerings of the heart**. The conquered places were first inhabited by the people of the heart, the righteous, and the saints. Their exemplary lives were instrumental in guiding the town and city folk.

The saints of this army of spiritual conquest were imbuing the richness of their own hearts into the hearts of the people and the stone and soil of the newly conquered lands. Thus, all the members of the society, from the laity to the elite, were laying the first foundations of the institutions of service in order to attain Allah’s pleasure...

The local Christians living in the newly conquered lands admired the ethical life, morals, and especially the feelings of mercy and compassion of the Ottoman people, a situation that facilitated the conversion of the indigenous people to Islam. The fair treatment that Orhan Ghazi showed to the people after the conquest of Iznik delighted them, and for this reason, there were no cases of migration, and everyone lived blissfully.

Other Christian-inhabited cities, feeling this peace and tranquility laden with justice, also wanted the Ottomans to conquer their own lands and secretly wrote letters inviting them for this purpose. The tyrannical *Tekfurs* among their leaders had gone so far in persecuting and oppressing the people that no one had the strength or tolerance to endure it anymore. Even the *Tekfurs*’ own



family members were fed up with their cruelty. Interestingly, the castle of Aydos was conquered by Abdurrahman Ghazi, thanks to a secret plan devised by the daughter of the *Tekfur* herself.

Following the path of his father and embodying a lofty presence, Orhan Ghazi was considered one of the greatest Ottoman rulers. His military, political, and administrative planning were so impressive and significant, placing him among the state institutions of a new epoch rather than an intermediary one.

He was strategic in all his endeavors and methodical in his every move. He was a cautious and determined warrior, skillfully pursuing his goals. Through his captivating pursuit of war and conquest, the justice in his territories, the sincerity and warmth in his heart, and the blessing of service to the crystal-clear religion (*dîn-i mübîn*), he continued to foster political unity in Anatolia, following his father's footsteps. In fact, in addition to the invitation and proposals from unbelievers to conquer their lands, numerous esteemed and exceptional individuals, driven by the spirit of unity and solidarity of Islam since the establishment of the Anatolian principalities that broke away from the Seljukids, joined the Ottomans along with their territories.

This state, whose basis was established on a special reverence for the Noble Quran, went on to protect sacred trusts with the utmost regard. With the blessings of these two aspirations, the Ottomans ruled with glory and honor under the title '**The Eternal State**' (*Devlet-i Ebed-Müddet*) for six hundred years. The ultimate purpose of this magnificent **World State** (*Cihan Devleti*) was '**spreading and elevating the Word of Allah**' (*i'lâ-ı söztullâh*) and establishing '**world order**' (*nizâm-ı âlem*). By bestowing the world with the spirit, tranquility, and radiance of the **Quran**, the Ottomans ushered in an unprecedented era of peace and justice.

In the Ottoman state, armed struggle (*jihâd*) and sacred campaigns (*gazâ*) were cherished, and the wisdom and spiritual essence of the Sufi masters permeated throughout. The *tekkes*, which served as spiritual training centers, played a crucial role in developing individuals and nurturing spiritual maturity. This was primarily actualized through pious endowments and the efforts of individuals and the state. Naturally, individuals were charitable, compassionate, tenderhearted, and courteous. Those who overcame the obstacles of their carnal soul (*nafs*) radiated inspiration everywhere, serving the home-



land and spiritually guiding the people. **For, the heart does not perish under the ground; it is the corpse that decays.** Therefore, the institutions that symbolized and testified to these great hearts became everlasting. Mosques, madrasahs, and almshouses were continuously constructed in the conquered lands. In matters of state and justice, Islamic jurisprudence was implemented according to the principles of the Shariah (Islamic canonical law).

Economic prosperity was also high. **Nişancı Mehmed Pasha** said:

“Poverty, helplessness, and adversity were eliminated from society. To the extent that wealthy believers had difficulty finding those willing to accept charity (*şadaqah*) and the obligatory alms-tax (*zakat*).”

In other words, the Ottoman state emerged as an ambitiously formidable world state, shaped by the spiritual guidance provided by Shaykh Edabali and his peers. Greatness was achieved both in matter and meaning.

Within a short period, the Ottoman state acquired such strength and splendor that Orhan Ghazi intervened in the internal affairs of the Byzantine empire, placing and removing whomsoever he wished on the throne. His son, Sulaymân Pasha, carried the torch of faith to Rumelia and devised a prudent settlement plan there. Shaykh Mahmûd expresses this in the following couplet:

*You have performed a remarkable act by spreading prayer rugs over the water for the people,*

*You have taken Rumelia with the aid of religious piety...*

Orhan Ghazi, who dutifully and sensitively carried the trust bestowed upon him from his father, Osman Ghazi, fell ill after the accidental death of his son, Sulaymân Pasha. He appointed his son Murâd Bey as his successor and advised him as follows:

*“Son, do not take pride in the glory of your reign! Do not forget that even Prophet Sulaymân ﷺ did not possess the world. His throne, too, saw its downfall. Indeed, every reign will come to an end! Yet, life presents a tremendous opportunity for every individual! This opportunity should be utilized wisely to serve others in the way of Allah and to seek intercession of the Prophet ﷺ!..*

*If you view the world through the lens of the hereafter, you will realize that it is not worth sacrificing for the eternal happiness of the world to come!..*





*Son! The Rumelian Christians will not remain idle! You must advance in that direction! Conquer or prepare for the conquest of Constantinople! Strive to maintain good relations with the other Turkish chieftains. Even if the people call upon us, the rulers will not relinquish their principalities! It will take some time. Later, they will fall into your hands like a ripe fruit. If no trouble arises in Anatolia, you can easily manage your affairs in Rumelia! Therefore, strive not to disturb the peace in Anatolia! By implementing this policy, my blessed father, Osman Ghazi, transformed Söğüt ve Domaniç, which consisted of a handful of lands, into a strong principality. With the permission of Allah, we elevated the principality into a sultanate. You will take it even further!*

*It is not enough for the Ottomans to rule over two continents! The vastness of spreading and elevating the word of Allah is too great to be confined to two continents!.. Just as we are the heirs of the Seljukids, we are also the heirs of Rome!..*

*Son! Do not deviate from the law of the Quran! Rule with justice! Take care of the war veterans! Feed the poor! Consider it an honor to personally serve those who serve the religion! Do not delay in punishing the oppressors! **The worst form of justice is the one that is delayed!** Ultimately, even if the verdict is correct, delayed justice is a form of cruelty!*

*Son! I have reached the end of the road. You are at the beginning. May Allah bless your reign!..”*

Solakzâde summarized the advice of Orhan Ghazi in the following verses:

*Never be proud in this transient world.*

*Whatever you do, do not choose the path of evil*

*Since you have attained independence through your reign*

*Always administer justice within the state*

*Be a facilitator of world order, my son.*

*Be resolute in the seat of sovereignty [on which you sit]*

*“Do not take pride in temporary possessions! Never stray from the path of the Shariah! As the ruler, you must uphold justice in your state! Maintain order in the world so that your sultanate may endure!”*



Orhan Ghazi, who engraved his name in the glorious pages of history as a unique sultan with his demeanor, character, and exemplary personality, passed away in 1359. His tomb is located in Gümüşlü Kümbet in Bursa.

**May Allah's mercy be upon him!..**

*In today's world, where humanity is primarily driven by power and lives under the dominance of the ego-self, it is crucial to reacquaint ourselves with these monumental figures in order to attain the level of selflessness demonstrated by individuals like Orhan Ghazi, whose hearts were filled with faith, spiritual ecstasy, and fervor. Therefore, we must listen to their words, comprehend their teachings, and imbibe their inner essence. We must illuminate the depths of our souls with spiritual radiance and regain that unwavering moral framework for which we have yearned...*





*History's Model Personality  
The Sultan of Warriors and Martyrs*

## **MURÂD KHAN I (HUDÂVENDIGÂR)**

*(1326-1389)*

He was the third Ottoman Sultan.

His mother was Nilüfer Hatun. In the year he was born, Bursa was conquered, and his grandfather, Osman Ghazi, passed away.

**Murâd Khan I** was raised by influential figures of his time who were authorities in the exoteric and esoteric sciences. He was appointed heir upon the death of his elder brother Sulaymân Bey, the conqueror of **Rumelia**. Shortly after, his father also passed away. He was invited to Bursa and ascended the Ottoman throne. He was known as **Hüdavendigâr** and **Ghazi Hünkâr**.

Murâd Khan possessed the distinct qualities of a statesman and had a profound sense of depth in his heart. This inward depth allowed him to attain

high spiritual stations, including sainthood, shaykhdom of professional guilds, and martyrdom.

After swiftly establishing peace and tranquility in Anatolia, he turned his attention to Rumelia. During his time, conquests extended to Europe, and the “**Law of Pencik** (one-fifth)” was implemented, which meant that one-fifth of the spoils obtained in war belonged to the state according to Islamic law. The Ottoman state organization was effectively established in the conquered areas. No one suffered from hunger or poverty, and everyone, regardless of wealth, religion, or ethnicity, found themselves in great repose and bliss.



While these tactical moves were underway, the European Christian states, concerned their kingdom would be lost to Ottoman conquest in the west, organized a “**crusade**” consisting of 60-100 thousand people.

In response, Sultan Murâd sent an army of four thousand men led by **Haji Ilbey** for reconnaissance. On the other hand, since the Crusaders faced no resistance when crossing the Maritsa River, they began celebrating their presumed victory. After indulging in food, drink, and drunkenness, they fell asleep. Taking advantage of the enemy’s negligence, Haji Ilbey carried out a night raid on the enemy from three sides.

The allied Crusaders, shocked and panic-stricken by the attack of four thousand Ottoman soldiers, suffered a significant defeat. Many dispersed and retreated under the cover of night, while most drowned in the Maritsa River. The few survivors managed to escape. By daybreak, all the Crusaders had perished. Thus, the famous victory, known as the “**Serbian Destruction,**” was achieved. The Crusaders were devastated, and as a result, the capital city was transferred from **Bursa** to **Edirne**.

Mosques, madrasahs, and many cultural institutions were built, transforming Edirne into a civilizational center of the state. The Muslims who migrated from Anatolia to the newly conquered territories displayed noble Islamic conduct and lifestyle, becoming role models of virtue and morality. The just administration of the state and the charitable institutions it established brought great satisfaction to all. The borders extended into central Europe, making it necessary to eliminate the Serbian strand, the primary source of strife in Europe.



The allied Crusader forces and the Ottoman army faced each other in the region of **Kosovo**, southwest of **Pristina**. The Allies had an army of about one hundred and fifty thousand men, while the Ottoman army consisted of only sixty thousand.

At dawn, the Ottoman army launched a well-organized attack. Sultan Murâd Khan commanded the center, Şehzâde Yildirim Bâyezîd on the right flank, and Şehzâde Yâkub Chelebi on the left. Fathers and sons merged as one in heart and spirit. They felt the excitement of preparing for war and martyrdom to elevate the Word of Allah. It was as if a breeze from the Companions whispered, **“May my mother, father, and soul be sacrificed for you, O Messenger of Allah!...”** as it swept across the plain of Kosovo in the heart of Europe. Murâd Khan, while inhaling this glorious wind, attained martyrdom at the end of the battle. He would live on until the end of times as an ideal symbol of faith, spiritual ecstasy, and perseverance, the foundation of an epic victory achieved at Kosovo that day.

When the Sultan entered the lowlands of Kosovo on August 8, 1389, he encountered a tremendous storm that filled the air with smoke and dust. It was such a violent storm that he could not see anyone, even at close proximity. That night coincided with the **Night of Acquittal** (*Berât Gecesi*). Murâd Khan, after praying two cycles of ritual prayer, tearfully made the following supplication:

*“O Lord! If this storm has been caused by the sins of your helpless servant, Murâd, do not punish my innocent soldiers!..*

*My Allah! They have come this far solely to glorify Thy name and spread Islam!..*

*“O Allah! You have never denied me victory to this day. You have always accepted my prayer. Once again, I appeal to Thee; accept my prayer! Bless us with rain! Let this cloud of dust dissipate. Let us see the unbelieving soldiers openly in full view!..*

*O Allah! Both the world and this servant belong to You. I am a helpless servant. You know my intention and innermost secret best. Worldly possessions and property are not my objectives. I desire only your contentment.*

*O Allah! Do not allow these believing soldiers to be defeated and perish at the hands of the unbelievers!.. Grant them such a victory that all Muslims*

*will celebrate and rejoice! If you wish, let this servant of Thee, Murâd, be sacrificed on that joyous day!..*

*O Allah! Do not make me the cause of the destruction of so many Muslim soldiers! Aid them and grant them victory! I am willing to sacrifice my life so long as you accept me among the martyrs! I am content to sacrifice my soul for the sake of these soldiers of Islam. You made me a warrior. By your grace and favor, bless me with martyrdom in the end!*

*Âmîn!..”*

After making this humble invocation, the Sultan began reciting the Noble Quran in a remarkable state of spiritual presence. Shortly after, clouds of mercy appeared, and a downpour of rain ensued at the heart of Kosovo, bringing an end to the wind and dust.

The Ottoman army felt great joy and delight as the wind ceased and the rain cleared the dust clouds. Murâd Khan, filled with gratitude, prostrated himself. On that day, tears of joy mingled with the raindrops.

Before the war began, Murâd Khan delivered the following historic address to his distinguished soldiers:

*“-My fellow, brave men! Today is the day of perseverance, a time for passionate display, courage, and bravery...*

*For all these years, the people of our homeland have honored you. Even now, great achievements await you to solidify our past, the glory of which has spread throughout the world.*

*With Allah’s permission, no enemy attack will be able to stop our glorious banner, which will wave proudly and triumphantly in the heart of Kosovo and toward the inner borders of Hungary, trembling with His majesty. The glorious victory we will achieve today will elevate the Word of Allah throughout Rumelia.*

*Even if a person has a long lifespan, it is not eternal. It will ultimately come to an end. Only Allah is eternal. There stands an arena of glory for those who wish to spread and elevate Allah’s Word and attain paradise.*

*Warriors! Attack and charge with me, raising the resounding cries of ‘Allah’!”*





After uttering these words, the cry “Allah, Allah...” echoed amidst the war anthems of the renowned Janissary band, and the attack on the enemy lines commenced. The battle started on the morning of August 8, 1389, and lasted eight hours, resulting in the near-complete destruction of the enemy side.

At the end of the battle, after confirming victory, Murâd Khan, who began walking around the battlefield in gratitude for the outcome, came across a martyr and said the following to him:

إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

**“Indeed we belong to Allah, and to Him, we shall return!”** (Şûrah al-Baqarah, 156).

He then approached a wounded soldier and showed mercy and compassion by caressing him, asking if he was in pain or had any requests. Meanwhile, an injured Serbian soldier who had been lying among the dead arose and said;

*“–Leave me; I will kiss the Sultan’s hand and become a Muslim! Also, I have good news for you! King Leyan was also captured. He is being handed over to you.”*

While the Sultan’s guards searched for the king, who was said to be on his way, feigning injury, he quickly approached the Sultan, pretending to kiss his hand. In a moment of heedlessness, the Serbian drew a hidden dagger from under his arm and thrust it into the Sultan’s chest. The guards were stunned by the sudden attack. They captured the assassin and promptly tore him apart.

Thus, Murâd Khan’s prayer for martyrdom, which he had beseeched from his Lord, was accepted and became famous throughout history.

The Sultan’s last words before he was martyred were as follows:

*“I prayed and supplicated that if the victory of Islam depended on my martyrdom, Allah would grant it to me. It must therefore mean that my prayer was accepted. Praise be to Allah, as I witness the triumph of the soldiers of Islam, my life has reached its end!..*

*Now I entrust you, my victorious soldiers, and the state to my Protector.”*





After these words, Sultan Murâd's purified body, shrouded in the blessed blood of martyrdom, embarked on a celestial and eternal journey!..

**Ahmadî**, the poet, expressed the lofty rank Sultan Murâd attained in a couplet that reads:

*Seek Allah's help and remember from your soul,  
So that you can reach your [spiritual] conquest and remember your  
[worldly] conquests...*

“Seek assistance (*nasîb*) from his spirit (beautified by conquest) so that you may also achieve a conquest like his!”

The internal organs of Sultan Murâd Khan's saintly body, which had been mangled with a dagger, were buried at the site of his martyrdom, where a mausoleum was built. Although his body was brought to Bursa and buried next to the mosque and complex he had constructed in Çekirge, a second mausoleum was erected there as well.

The place in Kosovo where Sultan Murâd's internal organs were interred became famous as “**Meşhed-i Hudâvendigâr**.” Meşhed, being a place noun, bestowed the name “Meşhed-i Hudâvendigâr” upon the spot where Sultan Murâd was martyred. Meşhed-i Hudâvendigâr was regarded as so sacred that even in the agreements the Ottomans signed upon their withdrawal from the Balkans, a special clause was included for this place.

Ali Yâkub Efendi, my late Kosovar teacher of Albanian origin, cherished the Ottomans deeply and always spoke of them with great compassion. He used to say:

*“How could I not love the Ottomans? If they had not come, we would have remained in the darkness of disbelief... In our country, the love of religion with the Ottomans became so intertwined that Ottoman and Muslim were used interchangeably with different expressions. So much so that at times, the question “What is the condition of being Turkish?” would be answered by considering the conditions of Islam. Even if I were to recite the entire Quran every day and continuously supplicate, “O Lord! Have mercy on these people!” I still would not be able to repay my debt to the Ottomans!..”*

*May Allah have mercy on all those who have passed!..*





Murâd Khan I, loved by his people and soldiers, is remembered with many titles and epithets. The main ones are:

**Sultânü'l-guzât ve'l-mücâhidîn** (the sultan of warriors and soldiers who fight in the way of Allah),

**Maliku'l-mashayih** (the sultan of the shaykhs)

**Gıyâsü'd-dünyâ ve'd-d-dîn** (the helper of this world and the religion),

**Abu'l-feth** (the father of conquest),

**As-sultânü'l-adl** (the righteous sultan),

**Leysü'l-İslâm** (the lion of Islam)

And most famously, he was known as, **Hudâvendigâr** (mujahid, hero, protector, and ruler).

Murâd Hudâvendigâr achieved one victory after another during his twenty-nine-year reign, never experiencing defeat. The small principality he inherited from his father, Orhan Ghazi, was transformed into a great state over a short period. The lands of the Ottomans, which were 95,000 km<sup>2</sup> at the time of his father's death, expanded to 500,000 km<sup>2</sup> during Murâd Khan's reign.



Sultan Murâd Khan spent his life on the battlefields and participated in 37 battles throughout his twenty-nine-year reign, becoming one of history's remarkable figures.

Even the Pope, the leader of the entire Christian world, was powerless against his overwhelming might. The poet describes this grandeur as follows:

*Because bliss has come to Ghazi Murâd,  
Upon his quest, he found the crown of sovereignty at once...*

He continued the conquests his brother had initiated in Rumeli and rapidly expanded them into Central Europe with sincerity and determination. The entire Balkans became part of Turkish lands, and Byzantium, Bulgaria, and Serbia became tributary states under Ottoman rule.

Murâd Khan settled the spiritual elders of the time in the regions he conquered, establishing lodges and convents, the most distinguished centers of knowledge and wisdom of that era.



He also pursued a significant settlement policy by bringing Turkmen tribes and establishing them in these regions. These migrations allowed his grandchildren to advance as far as Vienna and laid the political foundations of the Ottoman state, which would endure for five hundred years in Rumelia.



While the Ottoman sultans were on the battlefield fighting against the unbelievers, they were also occasionally vulnerable to the attacks of some principalities in Anatolia. An analogous situation occurred when Sultan Murâd Khan was at war in Rumelia, and Karamanoğlu Alâaddîn Bey attacked Ottoman lands. Upon learning this, Hünkar said with great sadness the following to those beside him:

“Look at what this oppressor has done! Let’s fight against the unbelievers, at a month’s distance away, and wage war day and night, and have them come and plunder the property of the Muslims! O warriors! How can I give up fighting and draw a sword against my Muslim brothers?!” He showed patience and tolerance against the Anatolian principalities for the sake of the unity of the Ummah.

Like his ancestors, he did not perceive the Anatolian principalities as enemies. Moreover, he found it objectionable to govern the principalities by force and coercion since he knew such unity would quickly wane if established in this way. He and other Ottoman sultans took matters gradually, not because of weakness, but because they found it more appropriate to unite and integrate Anatolia, generally consisting of Muslims like them, through persuasion. Therefore, they did not resort to the use of force unless it was necessary. As a result of their lengthy patience and prudence, the unity of Anatolia could only be established during the time of Sultan Yavuz Selîm. But it was established so firmly that even when all Ottoman lands were disbanded, Anatolia preserved its unified and orderly structure.

His father, Orhan Ghazi, in his last request to the saint and martyred sultan, Murâd Khan, said:

“Just as we are the heirs of the Seljukids, we are also the heirs of Rome!” Thus commanding his son to direct his attention to Europe.





Sultan Murâd Khan also paved the way for his successors and prepared them for the conquest of Europe. The plains and highlands of Europe are still littered with the footprints of his agile horse.



This all indicates the high degree of moral, volitional, and administrative power that Murâd Khan possessed. What he accomplished was outstanding. He would apply, develop, and strengthen the laws of the Shariah meticulously. His skill in making quick decisions secured him many victories. He was very religious and respectful toward the ulema and shaykhs.

The Byzantine historian **Halkondil** admitted the following about **Sultan Murâd**:

*“Sultan Murâd won victory after victory by commanding more than thirty-seven wars in Anatolia and Rumelia. He was never seen fleeing the enemy and turning his back.*

*Even when he wanted to have his soldiers rest for some time, he would keep himself busy. He disliked laziness. He knew nothing of rest. While his soldiers rested, he went hunting. In his old age, he never lost his vitality.*

*He treated the communities that obeyed peacefully and the foreign children in his palace with compassion. He was also generous and quick in giving remuneration. When entering the war, he encouraged and enthused his soldiers. He would punish wrongdoings sternly and keep to his word.*

*Murâd Khan’s entourage trembled at his majesty and intensity. However, he would treat them with the gentleness, compassion, and affection that a commander could not [typically] display.”*

The following statements by **Gibbons** are also noteworthy:

*“For thirty years Murâd had guided the destinies of the Osmanlis with a political sagacity surpassed by no statesman of his age. It is only because we know so much more of Mohammed the Conqueror and of Soleiman the Magnificent that Murâd has never received his proper place as the most remarkable and most successful statesman and warrior of the house of Osman. When we measure the difficulties which confronted him, the problems which he solved, and the results of his reign, against the deeds of his more dazzling successors, we see how easily he stands with them, if not above them.*



*The transformation effected in his lifetime is one of the most wonderful records in all history. His conquests were to endure for five centuries, until the Treaty of Berlin, in 1878.*

*Although an infidel and enemy of Christ in the eyes of the Byzantine ecclesiastics, he handled them so much better than the popes that he won their sympathies.*

***Osman gathered around him a race, Orkhan created a state, but it was Murâd who founded the empire.”***

Sultan Murâd, who possessed these beautiful attributes that even the enemy is forced to acknowledge, established supremacy in the heart of the state with the works he had built in Anatolia and Rumelia. At the end of the Serbian Destruction victory in 1364, Sultan Murâd, as an expression of gratitude, had a mosque built in Bursa, Bilecik, and Plovdiv, an almshouse, madrasah, bath, and an inn in Yenişehir and Bursa Çekirge.



One poet expresses that as a result of this sincerity of the Ottomans, they attained a lofty magnificence as people acceptable in the sight of Allah:

*For the House of Osman’s sincerity became notable,  
They came to possess expert knowledge of the Almighty!..*

How beautifully the following incident demonstrates this truth:

Sultan Murâd Hudâvendigar was a Sufi-oriented sultan. After making every effort in this regard, he would ultimately leave every matter to Allah and never fell behind in his ritual prayers and supplications. Although he besieged the Bulgarian city of Pleven for fifteen days, he withdrew by leaving some soldiers there as the conquest was unsuccessful. However, despite all his efforts, his withdrawal made him extremely sad. He prayed and took refuge in Allah, saying:

*“O Allah the Creator, raze this ruined castle to the ground and render it desolate!..”*

In the meantime, a messenger arrived and reported that one of the castle’s walls had been leveled. However, there was no apparent reason that could explain its destruction. The Muslim soldier entered through that demolished wall and, grateful to Allah, conquered the province shortly after.



The following state of the martyr of Kosovo, the saint Sultan Murâd Khan, which shows his faith, ecstasy, and awe-inspiring reverence, is a tremendous lesson for us. Murâd Khan said to the palace imam with tears in his eyes:

*“–When I say the takbir in my ritual prayers, I cannot see the Kaaba and pray in a state of presence without saying three takbirs...”*



The existence of all Muslim peoples in the Balkan countries today is a product of the first Ottoman conquest and its settlement policy.

The people there were entrusted to us by the Ottomans. They must be protected in the regions they inhabit. For the call to prayer in Europe bids with them.

**Kosovo was the first outpost of Islam in the middle of Europe.**

Kosovo is a legacy that has cost us dearly in exchange for Murâd Khan’s blessed blood. How beautifully the late Âkif reminds us of this legacy:

**Wherever I see it, I come across a bloody plain...**

**Is it you or your imagination?**

**Where are the thousands of words of praise in your every stride?**

**Where is the path in which that “Lightning” cleaved into your chest?**

**Where are the soldiers? Where is the king of martyrdom that lies in your heart?**

**Where is that sacrificial victory today? Where is that day of rejoicing?**

**Say, Mashhad, allow me to prostrate and kiss the land;**

**Do you not have two or three drops of Murâd’s blood?..**

.....

**Yet, would the boot of the Serbian step on his chest?!.**

.....

The Serbs of that day are the same as the Serbs of today. Nothing changes except the difference in time.

I wonder how far our hands and hearts can reach to help our oppressed and suffering brothers, who are fluttering like birds with broken wings while



Serbian snakes rear up and destroy the progeny of Sultan Murâd with severe cruelty. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

“You will see that the believers are like one body in their mercy for one another, their love for one another, and their affection for one another. If (any part of this body) suffers, other parts also lose sleep, and they feel its pain feverishly” (Bukhârî, Adab, 27; Muslim, Birr, 66).

“Believers are like a building (made up of parts) clamped together” (Bukhârî, Salâh, 88; Muslim, Birr, 65). As this Prophetic tradition stipulates, should believers not be like people with a single heart and pulse? Just as our bliss should be one, should not our sorrows be shared?

**Today, we, the heirs of Kosovo and Bosnia, must take our history and selves into account!..**

For nearly a hundred years in our country, the unfortunate outcome in which ill-informed individuals have used unsound methods to reject the sacred heritage left to us by our ancestors is a clear affront to their memories!..

Exemplary incidents such as the Bosnian and Kosovo tragedies remind us again of the Ottoman spirit, which some uneducated people boast of saying “we have buried [them]” and thus necessitate that we protect what has been entrusted to us. That is why we must awaken from our somnolent state, remember our past responsibilities, and return to our essence.

Content are the great heroes of a blessed determination where a new awakening and prospective revival hints at the coming reckoning!..

O Lord! Grant us renewed strength from the hearts of our ancestors so that we do not miss the great opportunities that arise as we enter the twenty-first century!..

**Âmîn!..**





*The Crusaders' Feared Dream, The Conqueror of Nikopol,  
The Sultan of Rumelia*

## **YILDIRIM BÂYZÂZÎD KHAN**

(1360-1403)

He was the fourth Ottoman sultan.

His soldiers nicknamed him *Yildirim* ("Lightning") for his courage in the wars he participated in and his ability to maneuver very quickly.

He ascended to the throne upon the last will of his father, Murâd Khan, who was martyred in Kosovo.

While continuing to advance to secure this great victory, Bâyzâzîd I would conquer many new cities. Among them was the famous city of Skopje. One poet describes this as follows:

*Skopje is the land of Yıldırım Bâyzâzîd Khan;  
He is from the progeny of Fâtih, a reminder of an epoch...*

.....



*Skopje was the continuation of Bursa in the Shar Mountain,  
It is a garden of tulips, of spilled clean blood...*

For Bâyezîd Khan to have said to the delegation who came to commend him during his advance:

“I will advance as far as Rome!..” shows the magnificent horizon he had drawn for himself on the path of Islam’s majesty and honor.

Besides his impressive courage and bravery, he was also highly skilled in politics. He knew well how to capitalize on Byzantium’s scramble for the throne. He even became so powerful that he could put a person in prison on the throne and the one on the throne in prison. Analogous to his political genius, he also increased the tribute he received from Byzantium. He likewise ensured the construction of a mosque in Byzantium and the establishment of a Shariah court to deal with disputes among the Muslims living there.

Again, due to his political brilliance, it is astonishing that Yildirim availed the Byzantines to conquer Alaşehir on his own behalf as he was making his way to the district. This incident is one of the rare events in recorded history as it shows the magnificence and distinction of Yildirim Bâyezîd Khan for his justice and honor in the way of spreading and elevating the Word of Allah; and the disgrace of the Byzantine emperor who tried to remain in power while perpetuating countless atrocities.



Bâyezîd Khan displayed extraordinary success in his foreign policy and took crucial steps toward uniting Anatolia. He annexed most of the Karamanoğulları, the largest of the principalities, to the Ottoman state. However, this annexation was realized by the will of the people themselves. **Âshik Pashazâde** describes what had taken place as follows:

“...When Bâyezîd Khan came to Konya, the city gates were closed. However, since it was harvesting season, heaps of barley and wheat were all over the Konya plain. Since the people rushed to the castle, they could not take them inside. Seeing this, Yildirim Khan’s soldiers approached the foot of the fortress and called out to the people of Konya, saying:

“–Come, sell us barley and wheat to feed our horses!”





As they came out of the castle and approached the Ottoman army, a few people from the crowd said:

“Let’s see if what they say is true?”

Bâyazîd Khan, who was aware of the situation, prudently gave the following instructions to his soldiers:

***“These are our Muslim brothers. Do not oppress anyone! Observe the rights of every human being; let those who own the barley sell it at their discretion!..”***

Thus, those who came had sold what they wished at the price they demanded. They took their coins and returned to the castle with great satisfaction in a way they never expected. When the people of Konya saw this passionate justice and humaneness, they voluntarily opened the city gates and welcomed the Ottomans inside. Hearing of this incident, some other cities around also sent envoys and invited the Ottomans to their towns:

“–Please, come! You rule our cities!”

One poet writes of the believing and righteous people of Anatolia:

*Every just “khan” is a saint  
Sulaymân conquered the world with justice  
If a khan is just, then he is the likes of Sulaymân...*

And in grasping the subtlety in his verses, he was embracing the Ottomans wholeheartedly.

This welcoming, which history witnessed with great admiration, represented one of the best illustrations of justice carried out by the Ottomans, an elevated kind of justice that further increased the prestige and magnificence of the Ottoman state. In other words, the Ottomans established their greatness, dominance, and renown not on spears and bayonets but on the love and affection in the hearts of the people and the entire community.

The Ottoman domination and majesty that encompassed the world were based on the legacy of Shaykh Edabali and other similar forms of guidance that ensured this.

Yildirim Bâyezîd Khan, who paid attention to this issue with great diligence, strengthened his state immensely and left an impression all over the world.



In the meantime, the entire Christian world began to become uneasy with the development and strengthening of the Ottoman state. They ultimately prepared a large crusader army. This allied Crusader army, which was formed to eliminate the Ottomans while saving **Byzantium** and capturing **Jerusalem**, which was in the hands of the Muslims, immediately took action as they entered Ottoman lands and besieged the **Niğbolu** fortress on the banks of the Danube River.

**Yildirim Bâyezîd, who received news of this, came to Niğbolu at a speed that was worthy of his name. He rode his horse alone in the middle of the night to inform them not to surrender the castle as he skillfully passed through the enemy's ranks and called out to the castle commander from the foot of the walls:**

“–Hey, Doğan!..”

Recognizing the voice of the Sultan, Doğan Bey immediately replied from the tower, greatly surprised:

“–Yes, my valiant one!..”

Yildirim Bâyezîd Khan relayed his brief instruction as follows:

**“–Doğan! I came with my army! Do not surrender the castle!”** afterward, he quickly turned around and disappeared into the darkness.

The following day, the bloody battle with the Crusader regiment resulted in Yildirim Khan's decisive victory. The Crusaders' army consisted of recruits from all European states, large and small. Among them were ten thousand French knights who boasted, “If the heavens fall, we will hold them with our spears!” However, even **Jean the Fearless**, the proud leader of these knights among whom many fell to the sword, could not escape captivity. The Crusaders were worn out due to the attacks of the faithful Ottomans. On that day, Yildirim Bâyezîd was injured in various parts of his body and fell to the ground after his horse was hurt. Nevertheless, he ignored his injuries, mounted a new horse, led the war with all his might, and achieved victory.

Yildirim Bâyezîd's impressive victory at the Battle of Niğbolu, which he carried out alone against the Crusaders on behalf of all the Muslim communities, was one of the greatest successes achieved against the Christian European states.

On this victorious occasion, the Abbasid caliphate in Egypt sent a letter to Yildirim Bâyezîd to congratulate him, addressing him as “The Sultan of Rumelia” (*Sultân-ı İklîm-i Rûm*).

Yildirim Bâyezîd had also taken many nobles and knights captive after his victory in Niğbolu. Among the captives, as we mentioned above, was the renowned French knight, Jean the Fearless. Yildirim Bâyezîd Khan released them in exchange for ransom and arranged a feast for them on the day of their return. All the knights were extremely ashamed of the Sultan’s humane treatment, reflecting on their misdeeds and the cruelties they had inflicted on the captives. They said:

*“– From now on, we swear on our honor and reputation that we will not oppose Yildirim Bâyezîd Khan, the Khan of Anatolia and Rumelia, and that we will not use weapons against him!..”*

Upon hearing these words, which they uttered in a state of gratitude, the great Sultan Yildirim Bâyezîd Khan, who exemplified Ottoman glory and courage against the people of disbelief, addressed the knights with his thunderous voice:

*“I return the oath taken by Jean and his fellows, who in Europe had received the nickname ‘fearless’, that they would not use arms against me. Go; gather your armies again and come upon me! Know that your action will allow me to triumph once again. I am a sultan who is aware that I have come into the world to earn Allah’s pleasure and glorify His religion. In this respect, the help and favor of Allah are with us. And if one’s helper is Allah, then surely no power nor strength can defeat them!..”*

This magnificence and justice amazed not only the knights who attended the banquet but the whole world. As a matter of fact, like many others, the bishop of Salona called on Sultan Bâyezîd to save his country from tyranny. Thus, the conquest of Greece took place.

Years later, the Venetian Travijani described Yildirim’s heroic and victorious army as follows:

*“In the Ottoman army, there was no such thing as wine, gambling, and prostitution as we have in our times. In addition to their uninterrupted military training, they chant Allah’s great and exalted name and are always victorious, for they busy themselves with worship day and night.”*

It is a known fact that the Edabali spiritual lineage played a crucial role in bringing the Ottoman state to this high level, as its enemies also admit. Similarly, the fact that Emîr Sultan, who corresponds to the Edabali of Yildirim Bâyezîd Khan's era, came to Bursa through a spiritual sign and became the son-in-law of the Sultan indicates that the chain of spiritual guidance continued in the Ottoman state.



The encounters between Yildirim Bâyezîd and Emîr Sultan are notably exemplary:

According to tradition, when Emîr Sultan came to Bursa, Yildirim Bâyezîd Khan was on a military campaign in Hungary. Due to the fierceness of the war, many soldiers were wounded. However, a young man with an illuminating face bandaged their wounds and prayed for them. Since Yildirim himself had been wounded, he called out to this youth with affectionate love flowing from his heart:

“—O brave one! I also have a wound on my arm; wrap it, won't you!..” Emîr Sultan wrapped the Sultan's wound with a handkerchief he took out of his pocket and disappeared among the soldiers.

When all the soldiers saw that their wounds had completely healed, after a short time, they conveyed the situation to the Sultan with great surprise. When Yildirim Khan, curious about the wound on his arm, opened the handkerchief and, to his surprise, realized that he had also recovered. His astonishment heightened when he noticed the cloth wrapped around his arm was a half-cut engagement handkerchief (one that the bride would give to the groom)... No matter how hard he searched for that young man, he could not find him.

At the same time, the Ottoman army, which was constantly advancing, faced great difficulty in conquering a fort, and the soldiers suffered many casualties. As Sultan Yildirim Bâyezîd was losing hope of bringing down the stronghold, the castle gates suddenly swung open. He recognized the person who opened them; it was as if he was the illuminating-faced young man who had bandaged his wounds earlier. In the presence of this bewildering moment, Yildirim Bâyezîd immediately ordered the attack, and after the conquest, he had someone search for that otherworldly man. However, as in the previous incident, he, once again, could not find him. Thus, the young man who helped





him twice in his most difficult moments became a mystery that filled his heart with wonder.

Days later, when the Ottoman army returned to Bursa victoriously, Emîr Sultan, who had married Yildirim's daughter at the time, was among the greeters. Bâyezîd Khan dismounted from his horse and made eye contact with Emîr Sultan, realizing that this young person was the one who had bandaged his wounds on the battlefield. In a revealing way, he said:

“What was the secret behind your quick hands?”

Emîr Sultan, in a state of humility and meekness, replied:

“–Your Majesty! It says in the Noble Quran: «The hand of the power of Allah is upon their hands!» (Şûrah al-Fath, 10) and, in this context, there is no difficulty for Allah!..”

Yildirim asked again:

“–Is that handkerchief yours?!”

Emîr Bukhârî replied, smiling:

“–Yes, my father! Half of it is in my pocket. I am your son-in-law, Shamsuddîn Bukhârî...”

Sultan Bâyezîd Khan, pleased with this, looked at Emîr Sultan's illuminating face again and said:

“Were you not that brave man who opened the castle gate?”

Emîr Sultan responded with a serene silence. Then these two great personalities, one a temporal ruler and the other spiritual, embraced each other, praising and thanking Allah.



**Âshik Pashazâde** said:

“The House of Osman is a trustworthy lineage. They have never committed an unlawful act. They have been careful to avoid actions considered sinful by the ulema.”

Due to their exemplary behavior, **Molla Fanârî** had the courage to not accept the testimony of Yildirim Bâyezîd, as the Sultan had stopped attending the congregational ritual prayers. Molla Fanârî openly asked the Sultan:



**“–Your Majesty! I cannot see you among the congregation. As the leader of this state, you must be first in line. In other words, you must perform good deeds. If you do not join the congregation, it will set a bad example for the people, hindering the acceptance of your testimony.”**

In response to this incident, as an expression of gratitude for his success at Niğbolu, Yıldırım Bâyezîd built the famous **Ulu Mosque** in Bursa and resumed attending the congregational ritual prayer five times a day.

During the mosque’s opening ceremony, the Sultan advised all the shaykhs and ulema, particularly **Emîr Bukhârî** (Emîr Sultan).

On a Friday morning, everyone had gathered for the ceremony. After some time, Sultan Yıldırım Bâyezîd honored his son-in-law, Emîr Bukhârî, with his presence and said to him:

“–O Emîr! Please, open the doors of the sacred mosque and lead the prayer! This honor belongs to you as the elder of the Ummah.”

However, Emîr Bukhârî humbly objected:

“No, Your Majesty! Some people are older than me. You should bestow this honor upon Shaykh **Abû Hamîdüddîn-i Aksarayî!**”

Bâyezîd Khan, who had not heard of a person with that name until then, asked:

“Who is this person?”

Emîr Bukhârî replied:

“–Your Majesty! Maybe you have heard of him; he is a well-known baker who goes by the name **Somuncu Baba**. He also generously donated bread to the workers of the Ulu Mosque. That person is Abu Hamîdüddîn-i Aksarayî, one of the revered saints.”

The Sultan agreed with his suggestion. Emîr Bukhârî stood up, introduced Somuncu Baba to the congregation, and invited him to the pulpit. Somuncu Baba, feeling embarrassed, said:

“–My Emîr! What have you done? You have exposed me!..” and walked to the pulpit in resignation.





On that day, from the pulpit, Somuncu Baba provided seven different allegorical commentaries (*işârî tefsîri*) on Şûrah al-Fâtiḥah. However, as his secret was revealed, he later left Bursa, taking his student Haji Bayrâm-ı Walî with him.

The safety of the Ottoman lands was ensured with the friends of Allah. Even the princes, raised as future sultans, were cultivated by qualified individuals from various walks of life, with their spiritual upbringing entrusted to saintly adepts. The following incident is a remarkable example that occurred during the upbringing of Fâtiḥ:

Şehzâde Sulaymân, one of the sons of Yildirim Bâyezîd Khan, was mildly punished by his teacher for his lack of interest in his lessons. Enraged, the prince went directly to the palace and complained to his father. Yildirim Khan immediately summoned the teacher and asked:

“Why did you punish Sulaymân?”

The teacher, with a sense of calm and dignity, replied:

“–Your Majesty! Your prince will be responsible for governing the state in the future. The Ummah will be entrusted to him. His ignorance will harm the people. Although he is currently a prince, he has not yet acquired scholarly and spiritual mastery. Therefore, it is my duty to cultivate and educate him accordingly...”

Yildirim Bâyezîd lowered his gaze with reverence and said:

“–You are right! You can also discipline me if necessary! With teachers like you at the forefront, we will rule the world.”

The teacher, understanding the subtle wit in the kind-hearted Sultan’s response, paid no attention to Yildirim Khan the next day when he came to inquire about the punishment of his son.

Thus, the prince, recognizing the spiritual rank of his teacher surpassing his own father, realized his mistake and became a diligent student, putting great effort into his lessons from that day forward.





The aim of conquering Istanbul was the dream of every Muslim and the greatest wish of Yildirim Khan. There have been commendable efforts on this path.

Yildirim Khan besieged Istanbul four times. During his fourth siege, Byzantium was about to fall into his hands like a ripe fruit. Because the conditions were more favorable than those under Fâtih, Yildirim took advantage of this and nearly secured the conquest. The conquest would have come quite easily. However, the **Timurid calamity**, which started to ravage Anatolia at the time, caused this sacred venture to be abandoned. Using minor disagreements between him and the Ottomans as a pretext, Timur had entered Anatolia in the name of a vain conquest. He intended to bolster his fame and greatness by defeating the Ottomans, who were established in a noble position by advancing toward glorifying Islam. It is thought-provoking that after his victory, to which he had aspired for self-serving purposes, he declared the Ottomans a common enemy in a letter he wrote to the mentally unstable king of France.

When the events that occurred are analyzed, although both sultans seem to have been caught up in mutual provocations at first glance, Timur's actions demonstrate the grave mistake he committed before history.

It is a historical fact that the Papacy had incited Timur to fight the Ottomans. This provocation was carried out indirectly through spies disguised as Muslims. These spies appeared to be extreme supporters of Timur and were, therefore, successful in their espionage and covert activities.

The Pope, who could not accept his defeat at Niğbolu, constantly provoked Timur against the Ottomans so that the Christian world could feel secure. Therefore, to be caught up in this provocation is nothing but foolishness.

Byzantium constitutes the other wing of the instigators. If the unquenchable ambitions of the principalities were to be added to all of this, it is easy to understand why Timur was caught up in the provocations coming from all sides.

Having been seized by these provocations, the conceit that enveloped Timur's soul was made apparent. If Timur had conquered himself before he intended to embark on a conquest, that is, if he had spiritually purified himself, the direction of the events would have been entirely different. In other words, Timur could not overcome his ego acting with the idea of "who are the Ot-





tomans?” with the aspiration of becoming the ruler of the world. The demands that caused a rift between the two sides always came from Timur, and it was Timur who brought his army along with him to march against his opponent.

During his campaign against the Ottomans, Timur was oblivious to the words and warnings of the respected ulema and leaders around him. They believed it was wrong to fight the Ottomans, who won great affection among the Muslims, since the wars they engaged in were against the people of disbelief.

When Timur besieged the fortress of Sivas with elephants, the tanks of that time, **Şehzâde Ertuğrul**, the son of Yildirim Bâyezîd, who was in the castle, gathered the notables of the city and said to them:

“I must strive to protect you. Timur’s forces may be incomparably greater than ours. This is a matter of divine decree. It is incumbent upon me to bravely face his attack and defend you and the castle in a manner befitting our glory. You should know that Timur can never enter this city without trampling on our corpses...”

Following these words, Şehzâde Ertuğrul acted as he said and showed an incredible response to the great Timurid army with a handful of brave men. They fought heroically. However, in front of an army that flowed like a flood, he was ultimately martyred alongside his warriors.

Timur, who had eliminated the prince, sent news to those in the castle saying that if they surrendered, no one would shed their blood. But he brutally killed all the people defending the castle who surrendered by trusting his word.

Yildirim Bâyezîd, who received news of the situation, mourned in pain over both the fall of the castle and the loss of his son, along with many brave men. At that time, Uludağ was behind them. Up ahead, a shepherd who knew of nothing was playing with his reed pipe. After listening to it for a while, the Great Sultan said to the shepherd with deep sorrow:

**“–Play, shepherd, play!.. Pleasure is yours, and comfort is yours... What do you have to worry about? Did you lose a fortress the likes of Sivas, or did you lose a brave son, the likes of Ertuğrul?.. Play, shepherd, play!..”** then he quickly rode his horse toward Bursa.

Although Bâyezîd Khan reacted harshly to Timur’s letters, in reality, he was compelled by Timur to engage in this war and later ones. The following



words he uttered to **Malkoçoğlu Mustafa Bey**, the sentry of Sivas, clearly demonstrate this:

“–Malkoç Bey! Do not think I will make peace with a tyrant like Timur, who killed so many people, even children who possessed no awareness of anything!..”

The most unfortunate incident that happened to Yildirim Bâyezîd was undoubtedly the **Battle of Ankara** with Timur, an ambitious ruler. This battle resulted in the sad defeat of the Ottomans and marked the beginning of a grievous **interregnum period**. As a result of his vain stubbornness, Anatolia fell into turmoil again as it was in the past, and the Islamic conquest in the west halted for some time. In this respect, although Timur was a pious ruler in his personal life, his obstinance rendered his good works incompatible with the beliefs and spirit of a Muslim. His horrific killing of people in Sivas and similar acts cannot be justified with any excuse.

On the other hand, the Timurid calamity was a disaster that delayed the Ottoman conquest of the west by at least fifty years.

It is known that if the head of a family has an ego, this negative attitude will only harm the other members. However, when there is the slightest ego in the heads of a state, this causes damage to a large mass of communities and results in social disasters.

The attitude dominant in Timur is nothing but this ego. He acted with the intention that “I will rule the whole world.” Otherwise, the conflicts between him and the Ottomans were not rooted in issues of great importance.



With that being the case, it would be wrong to make unfounded judgments about the exceptional personality of Yildirim Bâyezîd by referencing his defeat in Ankara. Moreover, the reason that made him lose this war was not due to Yildirim’s incompetence but the fact that the Anatolian rulers, who had been in constant contention with each other impelled by their ambition to lead ever since the dissolution of the Seljukids, betrayed the Sultan with the self-same drive and allied with the opposing side. Otherwise, it is a historical fact that before this betrayal, Yildirim was clearly superior throughout the war and came very close to victory. The Ottomans had dominated the first six hours of the war, and Timur had lost his composure at one point and decided to make



peace as he got down on his knees. At this very moment, some of the Anatolian rulers, deceived by Timur's attractive promises, betrayed Yildirim and came to Timur's rescue, and thus the war turned in his favor. Timur implicitly confessed this truth when he said:

*“—These dervishes did nothing wrong in combat.”*

On the other hand, this statement reveals a great truth by illustrating the widespread belief that the Ottomans were a **“Ghazi State.”**

It is because of this notion that, despite winning the war and capturing Yildirim Bâyezîd Khan, Timur failed to completely destroy the Ottoman army. Apart from the spoils of war, he gained nothing for his people. Timur's ego led to a devastating war that left thousands of orphans, widows, and oppressed individuals in tears. He spared no cruelty toward the people, showing no regard for the Muslim-inhabited towns he entered, violating their dignity, honor, and property. Especially in Bursa, where he tragically burned all the historical Ottoman documents.

By comparing the two, it becomes apparent that Yildirim was a far superior sultan to Timur. Despite Timur's victory in Ankara, his state collapsed within ten years. In other words, since Timur did not represent a higher civilization than the Ottomans, he simply came and went from the territories he occupied like a passing flood. The state could not survive and disintegrated after his passing. The Ilkhanids, who succeeded them, did not last long. On the contrary, the state that Yildirim left behind regrouped and recovered within ten years, and became a powerful and conquering state.

The strength of the Ottoman state's spiritual foundation is the primary reason for its rapid ascendancy. Raised under the spiritual guidance of the Edabali lineage, the Ottomans had a distinguishing feature. They did not pursue the selfish cause of “I will be the leader!” and thus did not shed the blood of Muslims for personal gain. This point is critical. Other principalities in Anatolia constantly fought among themselves, striving to take the place of the Seljukids and become the leaders of the Anatolian region. In contrast, the Ottomans chose to engage in wars against non-believers and utilized their resources to serve the religion, rather than themselves.


In preferring to wage war in droves chanting “hurrah,” the Ottomans acted per the Islamic spirit of fighting in the way of Allah. For this reason, they consistently enjoyed the support of the Muslim masses. The other Anatolian

principalities, however, were constantly at war with each other. Even though both sides fought under the cries of “Allah, Allah,” they were neither appreciated nor approved by the people. As a result, the conscience of people residing in those principalities was never at ease, and they ultimately embraced the Ottoman state from the bottom up.

One of the most successful sultans in forging this desirable political union was undoubtedly Yildirim Bâyezîd.

**Consequently, it must be stated that if the defeat at Ankara had not occurred, some of the false accusations against Bâyezîd Khan probably would not have arisen. Therefore, from this perspective, it is necessary to consider some of the personal flaws attributed to Yildirim.**

According to **Ahmadî**, one of the renowned poets and historians of that period, in his work entitled *Tevârîh-i Mülûk-i Âl-i Osmân*:

*“Yildirim Khan was a just and righteous sultan, much like his father and grandfather. He loved and honored the people of knowledge and bestowed gifts upon them. He treated renunciants and the religiously devout kindly. His practice of world renunciation was also evident. He dedicated himself to worship day and night. He never took a glass of liquor in his hand nor listened to the harp or reed. He embodied the justice of ‘Umar  as the Ottoman ruler.”*

In brief, Yildirim Bâyezîd Khan was a great commander-in-chief who, in a state of servitude, attained the rank of martyrdom as the leader of warriors and defenders of the faith.

**May Allah have mercy on him!..**

The tradition of sending the Surre Regiment to the blessed lands was meticulously observed by the Ottomans and first began during the reign of Yildirim Bâyezîd Khan.

**Bahâ al-Dîn Naqshband**, ‘**Alâ al-Dîn Aţţâr**, ‘**Allâmah Sâd al-Dîn Taftazânî**, and **Hâfîz Şîrâzî** from the Naqshbandiyyah spiritual chain were among the distinguished individuals who passed away during Yildirim Khan’s reign.

**O Lord! Bestow upon us the blessings of those exceptional people who have selflessly served others in Your way!..**

**Âmîn!..**





*The Second Founder of the Ottomans*

## **CHELEBI SULTAN MEHMED KHAN**

*(1389-1421)*

He was the fifth Ottoman sultan.

**Chelebi Sultan Mehmed**'s position among the thirty-six Ottoman sultans was exceptional. He suppressed one of the worst civil disturbances and restored the state to its former power and strength.

He enjoyed superior esteem since, apart from material strength, his political and spiritual power also determined the outcomes he achieved. Suppressing civil disorder, conflict, and anarchy that arise within the internal structure of states is more challenging than resisting and overcoming enemy attacks. This is because, in the case of domestic disorder, many people struggle to identify the truth, making restoring unity quite arduous.

Chelebi Sultan Mehmed overcame this difficulty and, as the second founder of the Ottoman state, took his place in the glorious pages of history.

It is well known that Timur, despite being a Muslim who attacked the Ottomans and engaged in a meaningless war under the influence and deception of the Papacy, debilitated the people and the state through massacres, looting, and plunder. Chelebi Sultan Mehmed, who overcame the ten-year calamity referred to as the “**interregnum period**” in our history, is a colossal figure who should be studied carefully and taken as an example. Many lessons can be learned from his struggles for our time.



Two important points need to be meticulously examined in these struggles experienced by the princes, each of whom is undoubtedly a great personality, who engaged in fierce conflicts with each other after the unfortunate fate of Yildirim:

1. No prince sought to establish a separate state in the region where they exercised sovereignty. Instead, they aimed to seize the Ottoman throne and become the sole ruler. If this were not the case, the Ottoman state, like other Anatolian principalities, would have split into four or five principalities again and would have taken centuries to regain the enormous power wielded by the Ottomans.

2. In the case of conflict between the princes, the people displayed incomparable firmness, maturity, and a historical consciousness that cannot be compared to our times. They preferred to wait for the outcome of the quarrel between the princes without showing partiality. Therefore, the people sent their representatives to **Mûsâ Chelebi**, who had come to the outskirts of Bursa, and said:

*“–We are neither for nor against any of you! Brothers and sisters, settle the matter amongst yourselves! If you involve us in this conflict, you will open wounds that will be impossible to heal again. The soldiers under the command of each of you owe a debt of conscience in their loyalty to your princes. However, we request that you do not allow this conflict to divide the people of this nation...”*

This statement reveals Chelebi Mehmed’s power to influence others and his resilience in preventing disintegration. It also indicates the strength and character of the people. Otherwise, in many societies, everyone would blindly follow a leader as if they would in a sectarian party, and violence and hatred would spread among the people.



The perceptive Sultan Mehmed Chelebi knew the above truth well and did not involve the people in the conflicts between his brothers. And after establishing his authority, he acted with amnesty and tolerance, thus closing the wounds that had been opened and making them forget the strife.

To prevent the bloodshed of thousands of innocent Muslims that would have occurred had the fratricidal quarrels continued and to protect the integrity of the state and its territories, ensuring the survival of the state and religion, **Fâtih Sultan Mehmed Khan** decided to establish a legal injunction on the issue of “fratricide” in his famous *Qanunnâme*.



Examining the life of Chelebi Mehmed Sultan, a model personality, shows us how he used financial leverage wisely and applied amnesty and persuasion carefully to bring the ten-year interregnum period to an end. When Timur attacked Anatolia, Ghazi Sultan Yildirim Khan besieged Istanbul for the fourth time, and there was no obstacle for him to conquer Istanbul at that moment. However, he was obliged to abandon the battle to deal with Timur, thus delaying the conquest of Istanbul by fifty years. This signifies that the so-called ascension period of Ottoman history underwent a fifty-year disruption. For this reason, if Chelebi Mehmed’s establishment of domination, which gave new direction to the interregnum period, had been further delayed, it would have taken much longer or perhaps even been impossible to restore sovereignty, and the state and the people would have witnessed a sad fate. Likewise, the victories that contributed to the glory and honor of our history might not have occurred. From this perspective, Chelebi Mehmed is a great heroic figure who prepared the groundwork for the victories that came later.

Chelebi Mehmed was highly capable to the extent that he participated in the Battle of Ankara with his father when he was only fourteen. In this battle, he commanded a force of forty thousand men, which constituted half of the Ottoman army, waving his sword from morning to night against the Timurid army as they attacked with herds of elephants.

That day, Chelebi Sultan Mehmed did not leave his father alone with his soldiers until the very last moment. However, given the apparent outcome of the war, he was forced to retreat upon the insistence of some perceptive leaders.

After his father, Bâyezîd Khan, was captured, all of his brothers declared their sovereignty in the regions where they were located. Meanwhile, the majority preferred him, especially the ulema and the shaykhs. They said to him:





**“You will not do anything contrary to the religion nor persecute the people! You will strictly adhere to the commandments and revelations of Allah!..”** with these conditions, he was invited by the people to lead.

Chelebi Mehmed assumed the sultanate by giving them his word in this regard. Thanks to the help of the people, he was able to unite the Ottoman lands under one banner.

After bringing the Ottoman lands under a single administration, Chelebi Sultan Mehmed intensely endeavored to rebuild the state. In doing so, he followed in the footsteps of his predecessors and did not deviate from justice even by a hair’s breadth. He reduced taxes levied on the people and treated everyone well. He also acted with utmost persuasion in his disagreements with his brothers.

In addition to his remarkable politics, Chelebi Sultan Mehmed was exceedingly merciful and compassionate. He frequently chose the path of forgiveness. While Chelebi was in Edirne, Karamanoğlu had entered Bursa, looted the city, destroyed its mosques, and even opened the grave of his late father Yildirim and burned his remains. But when Chelebi later captured Karamanoğlu, he did not want to shed the blood of Muslims. Owing to his high compassion, he said:

“–O Karamanoğlu! What shall I do to you?”

Karamanoğlu responded :

“The eternal decree belongs to Your Majesty.”

Chelebi Mehmed said:

“Come, swear that you will never harm Muslims again!”

Karamanoğlu pressed his hand to his chest, saying:

“As long as this soul remains in this body, I will not abandon my loyalty and obedience to the Ottomans!..”

After these words, the Sultan re-bestowed his principality on him. However, as soon as Karamanoğlu left the Sultan’s presence, he took out a dove hidden in his bosom to give a sham of an oath and cut off its head. Then to those around him, he said:

“–I swore by this dove. Now that it is dead, my oath is no longer valid...” and continued his old enmity, using religion as a tool for his deceit.





This incident alone shows how tolerant Chelebi Mehmed was toward Muslim Anatolia and the difficulties he underwent in establishing unity among them. **But the blessings that resulted from his patience and endurance toward hardship were just as great.** It was this frame of mind that elevated the Ottoman state. While the principalities formed after the fall of the Seljukids fought fiercely with one another to see who would get to replace them, the Ottomans, taking advantage of their geographical position, marched against the unbelievers and did not pay any regard to or participate in the quarrels that ensued in Anatolia. The soldiers and eminent personalities of the Anatolian principalities slid into a disturbance of conscience amid these entanglements as they fled from the bottom up and defected to the Ottoman principality. This led to the Ottomans gaining immense power in a short period since the wars the Ottoman state engaged in were not against Muslims.

Indeed, considering that their focus had always been on the west since its establishment, the policy pursued by the Ottomans in Anatolia did not go beyond protecting their territorial integrity. That is why it was only after Yildirim had secured victory in Niğbolu that the first Ottoman campaign was undertaken in Anatolia.



**The attitudes and behaviors of the Ottomans in the past are essential for us and the Muslim world today to preserve our unity and solidarity. Those who do not get involved in conflicts between Muslims and are dedicated to their struggle with non-Islamic forces will receive great blessings akin to their ancestors. Accordingly, the correct method of achieving this struggle is to act on the assumption that there is an undeclared truce among believers in our country and across the Muslim world.**



Chelebi Mehmed was a sultan who served his people with all his being. He put an end to the issues that disturbed them and made exceptional efforts to ensure peace in the community. Along these lines, he had the Knights of Rhodes' fortified towers in Izmir demolished in one night due to the persecution suffered by the people and the complaints that arose as a result. Thereupon, the leader of the knights came to the Sultan and told him that this act could be taken as grounds for war with the European states and the Pope and wished for the Sultan to withdraw. Sultan Chelebi Mehmed, on the other hand, gave the following reply:



*“I wish to protect the Christians as much as the Muslims. However, the towers in Izmir needed to be demolished, for they had become a cauldron of evil and mischief. By respecting everyone’s rights, I am obliged to fulfill what is expected of me in the path of peace and tranquility for my subjects and people. Do not expect me to do anything contrary to justice, even if I know that all the Crusaders will stand against me!..”*

One of the greatest calamities of his time was the **revolt of Shaykh Bedreddin**.

Shaykh Bedreddin’s ultimate objective was to destroy the Ottomans. Since Mûsâ Chelebi’s unwitting appointment of him as the chief qadi had considerably increased his popularity, he gathered a sizable number of supporters around him, initiating a large-scale revolt against Chelebi Mehmed. However, the rebellion was quickly suppressed with the help of the people who had grown tired of the interregnum and wanted peace and tranquility. Shaykh Bedreddin was captured and tried before a delegation composed of the ulema. He was made to determine and ratify the punishment himself, and he was hanged in the bazaar of Serez per the legal judgment (*fatwâ*) of the great scholar **Mevlânâ Haydar** from Herat.



The Surre Regiment, which was first dispatched to Mecca and Medina during the reign of Yildirim Bâyezîd, was formalized during the reign of Chelebi Mehmed Khan. In the first official Surre Regiment held in 1413, fourteen thousand gold coins were sent to Mecca and Medina. This service, which was dedicated to the two sacred cities, exhibits how beautifully the religious and spiritual structure was in the Ottoman state and how great the love, devotion, and passion were for the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ.

Moreover, **Sulaymân Chelebi** eternalized this loving attachment with his poetry **Mevlid-i Şerîf** which he wrote during the reign of Chelebi Mehmed. According to tradition, a preacher stated on the pulpit that the Prophet of Allah ﷺ was no different from other prophets. Someone in the congregation objected to this with the following Quranic passage:

**“We favored some prophets above others!..”** (Şûrah al-Baqarah, 253). This deliberation lasted for months. Sulaymân Chelebi, the grandson of Shaykh Edabali, was also deeply saddened by these disputes, and, with great sincerity and affection, he penned a book on the Prophet ﷺ entitled **Vesîletü’n-Necât** (“The Means of Salvation”). It is a blessing of this sincerity and affection in





him that the work he had written continues to this day, holding a distinct and exceptional place in many Mawlid celebrations. This is a spiritual indication of Sulaymân Chelebi's sincerity and love for the Prophet.

Sulaymân Chelebi was brought up during the reign of Murâd I. He had established a spiritual affiliation with Emîr Sultan. During the time of Yildirim Bâyezîd, he was the imam of the sultanic palace, and after the Sultan's death, he served as the imam of the Great Mosque until his passing.



Chelebi Mehmed Khan had lived through a strenuous and exhausting reign; he pulled the state out of the greatest disaster it had suffered due to the Timurid calamity in a relatively short time and accomplished great things by striving day and night to restore the Ottoman state to its former majesty. The following quote from him reveals this truth:

“The affliction I suffered in my childhood no one has experienced...”

Having fallen to his deathbed at a very young age owing to these great sufferings, we find Chelebi Mehmed's last request to his viziers exemplary, for even in his last breath, he had his subjects and the state on his mind:

“—Immediately inform my eldest son Murâd to come! For I can no longer leave my bed. If I pass away before Murâd arrives, do not announce my death to anyone; otherwise, clashes within the entire nation will ensue, and the blood of fellow brethren will begin to flow like a stream once again!..”

Endowed with a sublime sense of responsibility, the great Sultan was very young when he passed away. According to his will, his funeral was delayed until his son arrived, which took forty-one days. Thus, this ruler, who served the state and nation with his being, proved to everyone what a blessed sultan he was.

### **May Allah have mercy on him!**

Historians say the following about Chelebi Mehmed, who bore over forty wounds on his body as a testament to the battles he participated in:

*“Due to the wounds he sustained from the wars he engaged in, he was often stricken with illness. However, his perseverance was not lacking. While his achievements may not have matched the victories of Yavuz Sultan Selîm and Fâtih Sultan Mehmed, he is comparable in his ability to quell social unrest. By bringing about peace and enduring extraordinary difficulties and hardships*



*one could not ordinarily bear, he earned the right to be remembered as the second founder of the Ottoman state, which was plagued by destruction and strife. He was instrumental in the construction of numerous pious foundations. The mosque, madrasah, almshouse, and the Green Tomb he built in Bursa are considered works of art and philanthropy.”*

Bursa is replete with architectural marvels that epitomize the peace and tranquility of the Ottoman state, while Istanbul showcases its grandeur. The most distinguished place in Bursa embodying these qualities is the tomb of Chelebi Mehmed and the surrounding Mosque. These two places are collectively known as “The Green Tomb” in honor of this esteemed ruler, and they resemble a garden from the Gardens of Eden with their spiritual ambiance and lush greenery.

One poet expresses the spiritual delight he experienced in Bursa as follows:

*It is as if I am in the presence of a miracle,  
From the sound of water and the rustling of wings,  
Time in Bursa is like a crystal chandelier...  
We visited the Green Tomb last night,  
Occasionally hearing musical notes,  
The sound of the Quran resonating through the tiles.*

The inscriptions on the works commissioned by Chelebi Mehmed contain the following descriptions of him:

*The sovereign of the east and west,  
The ruler of the Arab and non-Arab lands,  
The chosen one with the Lord's blessings,  
The protector of religion and the world,  
The great Sultan...*

**O Lord! May the spirit and consciousness of unity that unified and integrated the Ummah, enveloping the heart of Chelebi Mehmed Khan, be blessed with the same glory as the Ummah of Muḥammad, who enters the threshold of the twenty-first century still in a state of disarray!**

**Âmîn!..**





*The Sword of Islam that Made the Crusaders Tremble  
The Sultan Who Hastened from Conquest to Conquest*

## **SULTAN MURÂD KHAN II**

*(1404-1451)*

He was the sixth Ottoman sultan.

Murâd II ascended the throne at the age of eighteen following his father's death. His first act was to lay his father to rest in the tomb of the Green Mosque.




A day after the burial, Emîr Sultan Bukhârî, the son-in-law of Yildirim Khan, presented Murâd II with a sword. In this way, this sultan of the spirit initiated the first sword-wielding ceremony, a tradition that would endure for centuries.



During the Ottoman era, the symbol of the sultanate was not the crown. Although the word “*îac-dâr*” (“wearer of a crown”) appeared in official texts

as an epithet, the authority of a ruler was established through pledging allegiance and sword-wielding. This practice continued until Sultan Vahîduddîn, the thirty-sixth Ottoman sultan.

After the conquest of Istanbul, the sword-wielding ceremony took place at the tomb of **Abû Ayyûb al-Ansârî**. This event was known as the **“sword procession.”**

The sword wielded by the new ruler belonged to ‘Umar , which was safeguarded in the Topkapi Palace. This sword was bestowed upon the Sultan by the most respected cleric of the time, accompanied by a prayer of commendation. An imperial tent was erected within the Edirnekapı walls for foreign nationals to pay tribute as well. Non-Muslims were prohibited from entering the Eyup district until the **“Tanzîmat Edict”** of 1839, as this area contained the graves of numerous known and unknown Companions . It was a sacred land watered by the blood of the blessed Companions  and became a burial site for martyrs.

After receiving congratulations from foreign nationals, the Sultan would proceed to the Janissary quarters. The Janissary quarters extended from Zeyrek and Şehzâdebaşı to Karaköy, with the central building located in Karaköy. The Sultan held the highest rank among the Janissary battalions or divisions known as the “medium.” The Janissaries held a privileged position within the army.

Witness the perfection of a system that placed the Janissaries, all of whom were taken as young recruits, as the protectors of the Sultan, always eager and prepared for military expeditions every summer. They embarked on conquests in the lands of their birth with purpose and love for Allah. This commitment was exemplified during the sword-wielding ceremony.

After accepting the congratulations from foreign nationals, the chief Janissary would offer a cup of sherbet to the Sultan upon his arrival at the central building of the Janissary quarters. The empty cup would then be filled with a pouch of gold. The chief Janissary would take this and depart from the sultan’s presence, retracing his steps:

He used to say, **“The soldiers ask you, His Majesty the Sultan, that our first expedition will be against Western Rome!..”**





The Sultan would respond to this request using the words “*-In-shâ-Allâh* (If Allah wills it)!..”

Then all the soldiers would exclaim in unison:

“*-In-shâ-Allâh!*..” and thus conclude the ceremony.

This tradition persisted until the abolition of the Janissaries in 1826.

Two points deserve emphasis regarding the sword-wielding ceremony, which commenced during the reign of Sultan Murâd Khan II:

1) The sultans dined alone, with their meals served in closed containers sealed with lead to prevent assassination and maintain the grandeur and majesty of the state. The head cook responsible for the sultan’s meals would close them with his personal seal. As seen in the above example, newly enthroned sultans had no problem drinking the sherbet offered solely by the chief Janissary at the conclusion of the sword-wielding ceremony. This trust placed in a community of young boys reflects the flawlessness of the system. One of the main factors that ensured the continuity of the Ottoman state was the amalgamation of its diverse elements in an Ottoman melting pot filled with truth, justice, love, and the joy of faith.

2) The Ottomans kept alive the spirit of conquest that had endured for many centuries, guided by the ideal known as *Kızilelma* (“Red Apple”). After the conquest of Istanbul, the *Kızilelma* became Western Rome. Reflecting on the tragic events that had taken place, such as the Russian invasion of Bayburt on the eastern front and Edirne on the western front in 1828, reveals the significance of the Sultan and his soldiers taking a solemn oath two years prior to conduct their first campaign in Western Rome.



When Murâd Khan II ascended the throne, the Byzantine emperor audaciously congratulated him and requested that the Sultan’s brothers be handed over to them. They claimed they would provide them with a fine education and upbringing, hoping to secure peace and tranquility for themselves while safeguarding against a potential Ottoman conquest by holding the princes hostage.

Sultan Murâd II responded gracefully and decisively to the emperor’s indecent and deceitful offer. Through Bâyezîd Pasha, he conveyed the following message to the Byzantine envoys:





“–Tell the Byzantine ruler! The upbringing of a Muslim child under the care of non-Muslims contradicts the Shariah. Furthermore, inform your ruler that he shall never again violate our friendly relations with such demands!..”

Murâd Khan II’s response deterred Byzantium from attempting to divide the Ottoman state by manipulating **Şehzâde Mustafa** (the Sultan’s uncle), who was under their control. The incident, known as **Düzmece (“False”) Mustafa**, was swiftly suppressed with the spiritual support available to the Ottomans. Emîr Bukhârî described this unusual affair as follows:

“The sultanate was taken from Sultan Murâd Khan. I met with the Prophet ﷺ three times. I fell to his feet and prayed in secret. I supplicated that Sultan Murâd be kept in power..”

This prayer and patronage had the blessed effect of causing Şehzâde Mustafa, who confronted Murâd Khan II with a large and formidable army, to suffer from a severe nosebleed disease. The bleeding persisted uncontrollably for three days and nights, rendering the prince incapacitated and ultimately proving fatal. Witnessing his condition, many of those around him joined Murâd Khan II’s side. Şehzâde Mustafa found himself in a situation where victory was unlikely and was easily defeated.

Afterward, Murâd II besieged Istanbul with the intent and determination to end the untold ruses of Byzantium, including the Düzmece Mustafa incident, and to realize the glad tidings of the Prophet ﷺ. He had already captured all of the Byzantine lands except the city walls.

Emîr Sultan had also joined the effort with five hundred of his disciples. This siege was supported by many other shaykhs and spiritual leaders and lasted for four months. However, at that time, due to the calamities that ensued in Anatolia and the provocations by Byzantium, a decisive conclusion was, once again, not reached.

However, the splendor of the Ottoman state during Yildirim’s era was restored by Murâd Khan II, who took things even further. He achieved his goals along this path one by one and over a short time by acting with both strength and power, as well as with determination and foresight. Not only did he take crucial steps to ensure unity in Anatolia but also continued efforts to conquer Europe with the same vigor, making the Ottomans one of the greatest states in the world.



Even the kings who went to war with Murâd Khan II, the Sultan who raised his state to such magnificence, feared for their lives and saw escape as the solution. On one occasion, after suffering defeat at the hands of Murâd II, the German king abandoned the battle, mounted his horse, and fled until he reached a secure place.

Despite his grandeur, the policy Sultan Murâd II pursued was wise and judicious. The following incident is a brilliant example of his fine politics:

Timur, who defeated Yıldırım Bâyezîd in Ankara, obliged the Ottomans to pay tribute for only a few years. After that, the Ilkhanids continued receiving this tribute, claiming they had replaced Timur. This tribute was given until Murâd Khan II. The Ottoman pashas, who had fully recovered and become more powerful during Murâd's reign, said to the Sultan:

“–Your Majesty! Why do we pay tribute to them? Let's get rid of it once and for all!..”

Murâd II, a very intelligent and ambitious sultan, gave the following exemplary response to this passionate request:

*“They are unaware of our growth and current strength. Now, if we do not give them the money they request, they will leave; they will gather an army, albeit a mediocre one, and attack us. They will be defeated in effect; however, Muslim blood will be shed... So send them the money they request for the time being! Because I do not wish to shed the blood of a Muslim for the sake of money!*

*However, demonstrate the magnificence of our army to the Ilkhanid envoys so that they will realize the strength and power we possess and never again have the audacity and courage to demand tribute from this sublime state, which is far superior to them!..”*

Indeed, the result was as Murâd Khan II had indicated.

This political subtlety exhibits his genius and sensitivity to Islam. Wisely ruling out engaging in a war that could result in victory to prevent shedding Muslim blood is a splendid manifestation of a high sense of responsibility that he felt in the way of Allah. This mentality is one of the most influential factors that ennobled the Ottomans!



When the birth of his son Fâtiḥ neared, Murâd Khan II recited the Noble Quran during the night and stayed awake until the morning, waiting to receive the good news of the birth of his child. As he was reciting **Şûrah al-Fath**, he received word of the good news and was told:

“–Your Majesty! Glad tidings, you have a son.”

Sultan Murâd Khan II instinctively said:

**“Praise be to Allah, a Muḥammadan rose has bloomed in the garden of Murâd.”**

He named him Mehmed and exclaimed:

*“May the glory of this prince Mehmed’s good spirits spread to the world!”*

This prince, whose birth gave the Sultan immense joy, received an excellent education and was brought up exceptionally in all respects. So much so that Mehmed II had reached a level where he could assume the throne even at the age of twelve. Sultan Murâd Khan II, recognizing his son’s competence and ability, conceded the throne to him with great secrecy and fervor and retreated to Manisa.

Sultan Murâd Khan II’s relinquishment of the throne to his son is one of history’s most significant events. The wisdom behind his renouncement was that the Sultan not only had the nature of a dervish, but he also wished to see the conquest of Istanbul while in good health. Sultan Murâd Khan II, kindled with aspiration, applied much effort toward realizing the conquest. His struggles and advances continued in this direction until he met **Haji Bayrâm-ı Walî**. However, when he received the signs from that great friend of Allah regarding the emphatic conquest (*feth-i mübîn*) of Istanbul and learned that it would be carried out by his son **Mehmed**, he readily accepted this information and reformed his policy along these lines. However, when the desire to witness the conquest while he was alive was far too pressing, he conceded the throne to his son Mehmed, who was only twelve years of age at the time.

The meetings and conversations that took place between Sultan Murâd Khan II and Haji Bayrâm-ı Walî, one of the great spiritual sultans of the period, were as follows according to tradition:

Disciples who gathered around Haji Bayrâm-ı Walî as a result of his spiritual guidance and energy had increased considerably. His name had spread



beyond Ankara throughout the entire nation. However, while some loved him immensely, others also envied him. Sultan Murâd Khan II, who heard his venerable name and wondered about him, received false information about Haji Bayrâm-1 Walî from some of these envious people. However, the Sultan also received some information from those who loved him. Among the things he was told about Haji Bayrâm-1 Walî included: “*He is gathering men against the state!*” But without falling into delusion, others said: “*He has quite a large number of disciples. They work in the fields and help the poor.*”

Sultan Murâd sent two envoys to Haji Bayrâm-1 Walî and invited him to Edirne, saying “– Do not fail to show respect!”.

Haji Bayrâm-1 Walî, who was informed, in spirit, of the approaching envoys, welcomed them with his student Akşamsaddîn at the gates of Ankara and accepted the Sultan’s request. When he came to Edirne with Akşamsaddîn, he was greeted by the Sultan with great honor. Murâd II said to this venerable saint, whom he summoned to the capital city out of necessity:

“Sir, we have caused you much inconvenience!”

Haji Bayrâm-1 Walî responded to the Sultan’s statement in the following manner:

“–All troubles and causes disappear in the face of beautiful and blessed outcomes...”.

This great sage and the Sultan had long conversations. Murâd Khan II asked Haji Bayrâm-1 Walî a number of profound questions. Extremely pleased with the answers he received, he stood up and tried to kiss the sage’s hands. However, Haji Bayrâm-1 Walî withdrew his hands and said to the Sultan:

“*You are a sultan in command of a state who keeps the affairs of the Muslim world in order. You must maintain order in the state and throughout the nation. Ours is to make the people worthy of this state. We pray for you. We consider serving the people a great act of worship. As for you, if you follow the principle, ‘Do not forsake jihâd!’ as prescribed by your great grandfather, your conquests will expand, and one day you will conquer **Roman** lands in its entirety!..*”

A kind of shaykh-disciple relationship began between Murâd Khan II and this great friend of Allah. The Sultan was deeply moved by conversing with him and became a faithful disciple as he rid himself of the guise of a sultan.

From the first to the last, practically all the Ottoman sultans were scholars, poets, artisans, and Sufi mystics. Nearly every sultan would establish a spiritual affiliation with one of the most respected Sufi shaykhs of the time and act with his guidance. Behind the outward splendor and triumphs, this unearthly sphere and support had always existed.

Despite the magnificence of his state, Sultan Murâd Khan II was also very humble. He was a sultan in both the earthly and spiritual realms. His meeting with Haji Bayrâm-ı Walî and his ability to renounce his ego-self as the head of the state is a manifestation of the sultanate's spiritual quality.

During Murâd Khan II's meeting with Haji Bayrâm-ı Walî, a cradle was brought inside. Haji Bayrâm-ı Walî looked at the cradle and began to recite Şûrah al-Fath ("The Victory") in a voice that everyone could hear.

Everyone was in a state of wonder. They could not give meaning to why Şûrah al-Fath was being recited without a glance at who was in the cradle. Haji Bayrâm-ı Walî, who turned to Sultan Murâd Khan II after finishing the Şûrah, said:

*"—You are a person who has attained perfection (zât-ı kâmil). Could you read that beautiful verse again for your prince?"*

Murâd II, already bewildered by Haji Bayrâm-ı Walî, looked at him with amazement once more. Although he had not read this poem to anyone, he tried to grasp the meaning of Haji Bayrâm-ı Walî's reference to him and spontaneously read the famous verse from his heart at the birth of his son:

***"A Muḥammadan rose bloomed in the garden of Murâd!.."***

After hearing this verse, the Sultan became silent and thanked Allah in his heart, realizing the greatness and wisdom of the saint he had conversed with. He remained silent, aware of the virtue and blessing of the spiritual subtleties that this friend of Allah would bestow upon him. Haji Bayrâm-ı Walî, with a meaningful smile on his face, shook his head and spoke, fixing his eyes in one direction:

*"—Your Majesty! We did all we could do during the time of Bâyezîd Khan and your siege of Istanbul. Nevertheless, the fact that the conquest was not granted is because its time has not yet come. For everything has been declared a specific time by Allah's providence..."*





At this point in their conversation, Sultan Murâd Khan II reflexively asked:

“–I wonder, to whom will divine providence assist in victory? Will this honor be granted to me?!”

Haji Bayrâm-ı Walî continued his speech and said the following:

**“–Your Majesty! Conquering Istanbul is not destined for you. Yes, that blessed land will certainly be conquered, but even I will not witness it. The conquest of that city will be granted to your Muḥammadan rose in that cradle and our young Akşamsaddîn.”**

Tears filled everyone’s eyes, and their hearts were spiritually overwhelmed. Haji Bayrâm-ı Walî answered questions even before they were asked, bringing joy to everyone, especially the Sultan. Haji Bayrâm-ı Walî finally said to the Sultan:

**“–Your Majesty! We need to leave our Mehmed to his instructor, Akşamsaddîn! Even I am among those aware of his worthiness!..”** and concluded his speech.

Akşamsaddîn, who would raise the great conqueror of the future, respectfully lowered his head. He left, disappearing into the sea of humility and self-effacement.

Subsequently, Murâd Khan II closely observed the path taken by his son, Mehmed. When the prince reached the age of twelve, he handed over the sultanate to him. His desire to witness the conquest of Istanbul intensified, and he was able to eliminate the dangers that would come from the west through the agreements he forged.

When Sultan Murâd Khan II abdicated the sultanate and retreated to Manisa, he declared that he was doing so only for Allah’s pleasure and recited the following couplet:

*Let us come and recollect Allah for a day or two,  
Did they warn us of this deceitful world...*

All this indicates that Murâd II’s underlying reason for renouncing the throne was to see the conquest, foretold by Haji Bayrâm-ı Walî, which would be granted to his son. Thus, with the ongoing counsel, **“Conquer Istanbul**



**and turn it into a rose garden!”** which was given since Osman Ghazi, and with Murâd Khan II’s request to his son Mehmed:

**“My son, you are to conquer Constantinople!..”** is sufficient to demonstrate the intensity of his aspiration and desire.



However, Murâd II’s decision to pass the throne to his twelve-year-old son Mehmed II mobilized all the enemies of the Ottomans. Karamanoğlu even wrote a letter to the Hungarian king, stating:

“You cannot find a better opportunity presented to the Turk than this! The Ottomans have gone mad and put a twelve-year-old on the throne. Let us end the Ottoman cause, you from there and us from here.”

The king of Hungary, who had made a ten-year agreement with Sultan Murâd Khan, wanted to seize this rare opportunity, as he, too, had the same mischievous thoughts.

Even before the ink on the treaty had dried, he began looking for ways to back down from it. However, they had sworn an oath by pressing their hands on the Bible. Therefore, they asked the Papacy for a legal ruling. The ruling stated:

“The Turks are -Allah forbid- unbelievers because they deny the divinity of the Prophet Jesus. If an agreement is made with unbelievers -even if- by swearing on the Bible, it is permissible to break it!”

Upon receiving the legal ruling that the oath made against the Muslims had no validity, the king of Hungary gathered a large allied crusader army and attacked the Ottoman borders, swiftly advancing inland.

Mehmed II, the clever thirteen-year-old sultan at the time, assembled the imperial council, assessed the situation, and decided to summon his father back to the throne. When a delegation conveyed the decision, Murâd II, being the humble person he was, did not accept it and said:

“My purpose in handing the sultanate over to my son, Mehmed II, is to spend the remainder of my life in worship and obedience. If the sultanate under his reign is necessary for its own sake, may he protect the religion and the state!..”



In response, Mehmed II sent the well-known and unforgettable reply to his father, Murâd II:

**“–My father, ruler of the state! The religion and the state are under threat. If you are the sultan, then lead your army!.. If I am the sultan, I appoint you commander-in-chief of the military!..”**

Thereupon, due to the force of circumstances, Murâd II accepted his son’s request and immediately took action. After a short while, he confronted the enemy in **Varna Square** with an imposing army. The Crusaders were surprised by this sudden and rapid course of action, and when they saw a powerful Ottoman army under Murâd’s command in front of them, they trembled in fear.

Before the campaign, Murâd Khan II performed two cycles of ritual prayer, raised his hands to the heavens, and with complete sincerity, made the following supplication:

*“O my Lord! Do not let the believers who have come so far for Thy pleasure become weak at the mercy of the unbelievers because of my weighty sins! Protect this Ummah in honor of the Prophet ﷺ; make it triumphant and victorious!”*

He then had the **Szeged Peace Treaty** hung on the end of a spear to show his soldiers the treachery of his enemies and to declare that Allah would punish those who broke their oath.

The war started fiercely and resulted in the decisive victory of the Ottomans. The enemy was devastated, and the Hungarian king was killed. As an example, the sultan had the king’s head severed from his body and placed it on the spear where the peace treaty was hanging. On that day, the cries of **“This is the Divine punishment of those who violate their covenants!”** echoed through the city of Varna, causing it to groan. The cry spread like waves, making all of Europe tremble.

As a result of the Battle of Varna, many important places in Europe were captured and remained under Ottoman rule for centuries. With this victory, Murâd II restored the Ottomans to their former glory.

While walking around the battlefield in the aftermath of the war, the Sultan noticed that most of the enemy dead were young. He turned to **Azap Bey**, who was accompanying him, and said:





“–Azap! There is not a single old man among so many dead! What a shame I do not see a man whose hair and beard have turned gray.”

Azap Bey, understanding the subtle point the Sultan wished to convey, said:

“Yes, Your Majesty! None of them have white beards. And if that had been the case, would they have dared to wage such a war and would this disaster have befallen them?!. Your Majesty! With the lessons they learned from the late Yildirim Khan, it is obvious why their elders did not participate in this war!..”

After the victory, Murâd II wrote a treatise detailing his conquest and had it sent everywhere. This conquest against the Crusaders was welcomed with great joy in all Muslim cities. The Mamluk Sultan of Egypt expressed his appreciation and satisfaction by having the name of Sultan Murâd read instead of his own name after the caliph in his Friday sermon.

Murâd II wrote the following in his treatise on the conquest of Varna:

*“Allah the Exalted, who encompasses all beings with His blessings and beneficence, has entrusted our rulership with bringing comfort and peace to Muslims by fulfilling our duty to solve their problems and remove difficulties. With the Lord’s grace and sublime protection, He made our state unshakable, our reign ineradicable, and the system within our nation orderly. He wished that we would have as much compassion as we are gracious in these acts of service. In every moment and time, He has always manifested to us all kinds of help. He has made us knowledgeable, wise, prudent, merciful, and generous. He placed in our hearts the divine command of the sixty-ninth passage of Şûrah al-Ankabût, in addition to blessings us with glad tidings in the 169<sup>th</sup> and 170<sup>th</sup> passages of Şûrah Âli ‘Imrân:*

**«Think not of those slain in Allah’s way as dead. Nay, they live, finding their sustenance in the presence of their Lord».**

*To exercise gratitude for His eternal and countless favors, we have devoted all our days and years to serving the religion of Islam and bringing felicity and soundness in spirit, thought, body, and wealth to the people entrusted to us by Allah. Since humanity’s worldly and otherworldly bliss and salvation can only be achieved by obeying the religion of Islam, we have dedicated our entire lives and everything we have to elevate the religion and banner of Muḥammad Muştafâ ﷺ, convey his teachings to all people, and spread and revive his Sunnah.*





*This is our sole purpose and objective in the world. With this pure intention, we conquered cities and provided solutions to the troubles and wounds of Allah's servants. We did not delay in supplying everything needed in preparing the best of all kinds of tools, supplies, and weapons necessary for struggling in the way of Allah and to fight against those who cause strife and mischief on earth. We did not waste a single moment. We never failed to deal justice and mercy to all peoples of every nation under our rule and trust. We have always acted with compassion and clemency. This has always been our intention and state, from the founding of this blessed state until now. Under our rule, millions of people have attained bliss, peace, and prosperity, and have been treated with justice and compassion. We have sent our blessed sword and all kinds of weapons to the stubborn, wicked, and foolish enemies of our religion and to unbelievers who will vanish into the ground. May Allah destroy the achievements of those miscreants! May they be defeated, and may tribulation befall them! So much so that not one of those accursed peoples will remain on this earth but will perish along with the vestiges of their works...*

*Therefore, it is necessary for the whole world, for all Muslims, to pay tribute to Murâd II's treatise on this great conquest and make it known to all Muslims in the pulpits. They should contemplate this great blessing from Allah, understand its value well, and give thanks to Allah in proportion to their strength and means. They should give charity and do good works so that Allah may increase the favor He has given to the religion of Islam, strengthen our religion and state, and not deprive us of this heavenly bliss!*

*Let this conquest be communicated to all Muslims; may they pray for the well-being and continuation of our state. Let them never refrain from supplicating.*

*Peace!..”*

Murâd II, who won the Battle of Varna as the commander-in-chief appointed by his son Mehmed II, returned to Edirne after the victory. He renounced the sultanate again a year later and withdrew to his retreat in Manisa. However, he had to become the head of the state for the third time upon the insistence of Mehmed II and other state dignitaries.

One of the reasons why Murâd Khan II insisted on having his son, Mehmed II, assume the throne was the fine abilities he saw in him. When Şehzâde Mehmed was still a child, he did things that even some people of mature age



could not comprehend and asked penetrating questions to his father. Once, while playing in the palace garden, he suddenly saw his father and ran to him. After inquiring about his state and well-being, he said:

“O my father, ruler of the state! It is a blessing that, despite all the heavy burdens and afflictions you bear, I do not see the signs of old age in you as one finds in other elderly folks. You, like other people, are old, but you have not become hunched and bent over. Despite all kinds of toil and trouble, you apply your will and intellect properly with a young man’s vigor, heroism, and bravery. I see that you are a triumphant commander on the battlefield; I see that you are a profound master in the assemblies of knowledge; I see that you are a true, sincere dervish who serves the people!.. You have no day and night! How can you find strength in all these things without distorting your neck like a sapling and wearing out your soul? How is this the case, father?!. Your constant preoccupation with the mind, which destroys a person, has not been able to effect a change in you or disturb your state of peace!.. What kind of medicine do you use for the exceptional character you possess, and what kind of syrup do you consume for your superior mind? Can you please teach me these things? Until I, too, walk in your path...”

Although Sultan Murâd Khan II was astonished by these questions, as he never expected them to come from a young child, he was nevertheless pleased and gave the following remarkable advice:

*“O my dear son! You have made me happy. May the Almighty, to whom the universe and all beings serve, increase the excellent virtues He has given you. Continue your line of thinking and investigation of such grand and profound matters.*

*O my son! No matter what anyone says, I believe that those who have spent their lives in righteousness will attain the infinite blessings of the hereafter when they leave this world. I have not the slightest doubt in my belief. For this reason, I perform acts of worship for Allah sincerely, with my heart and soul. I believe that the rewards for what I have suffered in this world of pain and agony will be given by Allah in another world to come, and I seek refuge in Him in every matter. Also, I consider His providence and destiny a source of great ease for me.*

*O my son! It is imperative to avoid being deceived and believing everything that is said, to reflect on and understand the internal matters of every isolated case, and to draw closer to its essential truth!..*



*As it is apt to eat a nut only when it is ripe. Likewise, people who have experience, knowledge, and accomplishments are always preferred. Otherwise, it is out of the weakness of the mind to eat unripened grapes when a cluster of tender and delicious grapes is available.*

*O my son! Every once in a while, I think about my great ancestors. I ponder over the fate of our next generation. I praise Allah that we have come this far, observing love, reverence, and devotion. It is hoped that we continue in the same way hereon in, and all leave this world just as we came into it...*

*You should know that nothing can be achieved by using brute force, the sword, gallantry, and crushing might alone. Intelligence, precaution, patience, foresight, examination, and back-breaking experiences are vitally important. The first way has many drawbacks and is not always valid. The second alone does not work either. It is necessary to carry out both in tandem for great triumphs!.. Do not forget that the triumphs of our noble ancestors, though seemingly realized under the shadow of the sword, were also a result of the forces of reason, logic, and affection.*

*O my son! Do not dare to relinquish justice even for a moment! Because Allah is just, and He loves those who are just. In a sense, you are His vicegerent on earth. He has given many blessings to you from His own will and has made you the commander-in-chief of His servants; do not forget this!..*

*O my son! **There are three kinds of people in this world:***

***The first group** consists of people with sound intellects and ideas who see and think more or less about the future and have nothing unnatural about them.*

***The second group** is those far from knowing which path is correct or wrong. However, they ended up in this condition not of their own volition but due to the influence of their surroundings. When given counsel, they take the right path; they accept the truth and heed what is said. However, they often live by following what they hear and feel.*

***The third group** is unaware of everything and pay no heed to warnings and admonitions. They follow their desires and think they know everything. These are the most dangerous.*

*O son! If Allah created you from those I have listed in the first place, I will rejoice and give thanks to Him. If you are one of the latter, I recommend you*

*listen to the advice and warnings of others. Do not be of the third group! They are not in a good position in the sight of Allah and the people.*

*O son! Sultans are like those who hold scales in their hands. However, the real sultan is the one who keeps the scale aright in his hand. When you become a sultan, I advise you to keep the scale properly. Then Allah will also intend good for you. He will make you among the righteous. Everything is known to Him...”*



The most brilliant victory of Sultan Murâd Khan II was the second Kosovo war. As a result of this war, the will and ability of the Crusaders to attack were completely broken, and they became incapacitated for 150 years.

The second Kosovo war, which the Crusaders launched intending to avenge Varna and uproot the Ottomans from Europe, lasted for three days and three nights, and practically the entire Crusader army fell to the sword. Even the enemy’s well-known commander, Jan Hunyad, barely escaped the battlefield in the middle of the night with a few surviving soldiers. More or less, all European states participated in this war, except for the French and the British. This was owing to the lessons they learned from Niğbolu, and thus they knew that the war with the Ottomans was only an exploit for the Crusaders.

The second victory of Kosovo was the last major step toward securing the Balkans and conquering Istanbul. In addition, this battle prepared the necessary ground for world domination; subsequently, the Ottomans gained and maintained the designation as the world’s largest and most powerful state for centuries.



Historians mention that Sultan Murâd ascended the throne at a very young age. Although he did not sacrifice his extraordinary intelligence and humility as his reign progressed, like some conquerors. He was a highly devout sultan, observant of his Islamic duties, just, truthful, scholarly, and supported public works. He was a poet and patronized the ulema and the arts. He built many mosques, madrasahs, and almshouses. The famous **Üç Şerefeli Mosque** in Edirne and the **Murâdiye complexes** in Bursa are his works. Murâd II was a sultan who followed in the footsteps of his grandfathers since he, like them, remained faithful despite his great magnificence. He distributed food to the



poor in his almshouse and lit the lamps of the mosques, as his grandfather Orhan Ghazi had done a hundred years ago. His purpose was to cultivate the homeland as much as it was to build for the hereafter.

He was a merciful, compassionate, and gentle ruler. His life of armed struggle, which began when he was twelve, continued until his death. However, he never fought with the intention of engaging in a meaningless conquest. The Frenchman Betrandon expresses the following opinion about him:

*“I have been told he has a great hatred for war (even though he spent his life on horseback), which seems more true. That great Sultan could have easily conquered almost all of Europe had he mobilized the forces and the vast economic resources he possessed, for he would have received less resistance from the Christians because of his justice...”*

The Byzantine historian **Dukas**, who was famous for his hostility to the Turks, could not find anything to say against Sultan Murâd Khan and described him as follows:

*“Sultan Murâd was more lenient toward his enemies than a father and did not hold grudges. God knows that Murâd Khan was always gracious to the people and generous to the poor. He showed these favors not only to the people of his own nation and religion but also to Christians. He abided by the peace treaties he signed with the Christians. Murâd Khan’s anger and fury would not last long. After securing victory, he would not want to leave any nation in utter ruin. Unlike our people, he was never spiteful and inhumane...”*

Sultan Murâd was a ruler whose knowledge, acts of worship, world renunciation, ethical scrupulousness, and piety were abounding. This is why he could give up the throne to his son twice while still in good health. Otherwise, the state was not incapable and wavering to govern. The brilliant victories it secured demonstrate this most clearly.

The reign of Sultan Murâd II was marked by a period of outstanding progress in every field and saw the Ottomans become the most powerful state in the world. Although the Sultan spent almost his entire life on the battlefield, he did not neglect the charitable acts of faith and received the nickname **“The Father of Pious Deeds”** (*Abu al-Hayrât*) due to the abundance of good works he bequeathed. His respect for knowledge and scholars, and his honor for the saints, were flawless. Thus, in his time, the Ottoman territories became the



home of scholars and saints. This is also when Fâtih's teacher, **Molla Gürânî**, arrived in the Ottoman state.

Everyone prayed to Allah for Murâd Khan II. Valuable works were written in this era, including **Molla Ârif Ali's** *Dânişmendnâme*, **Yazıcı-zâde Ali Efendi's** *Tevârîh-i Âl-i Selçuk*, **Yazıcı-zâde Mehmed Efendi's** *Muhammediyye* and *Envâru'l-Aşîkîn*, and **Eşref-i Rûmî's** *Müzekki'n-Nüfûs*, all of which are extant and have been benefitted from to the present day. When all the other works written during this epoch are considered and examined, it may be observed that Sultan Murâd Khan II's reign was marked by an era in which written works were most prolific in the Ottoman state.

Sultan Murâd Khan's achievements in both the sword and the pen were due to his exceptional religious zeal. Because the fear of Allah in his heart did not allow him to be lax in the slightest, and it also served as a protective force against all kinds of injustices and violations of human rights.

*One day, the Sultan required money for some of his personal needs. He fulfilled his wants by borrowing money from his vizier, Çandarlı. Seeing this, Fazlullah Pasha said with great wonder:*

“–Your Majesty! The sultans need a private treasury. If you consent and issue an edict, we will provide a treasury for you.”

The Sultan asked:

“How and from where will you obtain the treasury?”

Fazlullah Pasha replied:

“–Your Majesty! The people of this province have an excess of goods. The sultans should find a way to appropriate those goods from time to time!..”

Upon hearing this proposal, Sultan Murâd leaped up from his seat and angrily said:

“–Pasha! What kind of assertion is this? What kind of idea is this that you utter and propose?! Do you not know that our province has three religiously lawful sources of provision?! One is the mines, one is the jizyah tax, and one is the spoils of war. Do you not know that our soldiers are an army of warriors?! They require religiously lawful provisions. Do you not know that whichever sultan has his soldiers consume what is religiously unlawful will render them sinful?! What is religiously unlawful has no permanency. When he sees a mi-





*nor adversity, he begins to run away. It will not be difficult to see our condition from hereon in!"*

After making these statements, the Sultan immediately dismissed Fa-zlullah Pasha, who had proposed an unlawful treasury arrangement, on the grounds that he might violate the rights of the people.

Sultan Murâd Khan II was not thinking about his comfort but about the pleasure of Allah. He was so resolute and determined that he did not hesitate to sacrifice his life for this cause. His greatest concern was to be able to breathe his last breath with faith and to be able to appear before Allah on the Day of Judgment upright and free of sin. As a matter of fact, after marrying his son and daughters, he said to his vizier **Çandarlı İbrahim Pasha**:

“—O Çandarlı! Praise be to Allah, I have fulfilled my worldly duties toward my children. All that is left is to depart from this world with religious faith (*îmân*)...”



One day before his passing, Sultan Murâd Khan II went for a walk and encountered a dervish at the head of a bridge. He greeted him, and the dervish approached the Sultan and whispered:

“—Your Majesty! Death is near; increase your supplications and repentance!..”

The Sultan thanked the dervish and offered his prayers. He had great respect for those who reminded him of death and listened closely to the advice he was given for the sake of Allah’s pleasure.

The Sultan fell ill sometime after this encounter and prepared a will, which he gave to Çandarlı. He appointed his son, Şehzâde Mehmed, to succeed him as sultan.

The following was written in his will:

*“Praise be to Allah, and peace and blessings be upon His Messenger. Like every soul, Sultan Murâd will experience death. Because Allah says:*

*«Every soul shall taste death...»*





*If one has something to bequeath, it befits a Muslim who is alive and abides by the prescriptions of our Prophet ﷺ to write down a will in advance and to keep it with him. As for my final request, it is this:*

*Ten thousand gold coins will be allocated from one-third of my property; three thousand five hundred will be distributed to the poor of Mecca and three thousand five hundred to the poor of Medina...*

*Of the remaining three thousand gold coins, five hundred will be distributed sufficiently between the Kaaba and the Hatîm to those who will utter seventy thousand times the declaration of faith and to those who will recite the khaṭm al-sharîf. The other five hundred gold coins will be distributed sufficiently for the Prophet's tomb in the Masjid al-Sharîf in Medina to those who will utter the declaration of faith seventy thousand times and recite the Noble Quran in its entirety... Of the remaining two thousand gold coins, one thousand five hundred are to be given to the poor in Jerusalem, and the last five hundred gold coins to those who utter the Islamic declaration of faith in the Dome of the Rock and Masjid al-Aqṣâ...*

*Whoever changes this testament of mine, may the curse of Allah, the angels, and all people be upon him!..”*

Furthermore, realizing that he would soon pass away, Murâd Khan II added the following to his will:

*“–Put my body directly in the ground! May Allah's mercy and rain pour down on me! Do not build domes on me as they do for monarchs! It is enough for you to build places around my grave for those who recite the Noble Quran to sit. It is my wish that my burial is on a Friday... As of now, all I possess is the ring on my finger. This is my lawful property... Sell it and use the money until it runs out to have the Noble Quran recited at my bedside...”*

Murâd Khan, who had expanded the Ottoman lands to 880,000 km<sup>2</sup>, died after being ill for three days, entering into the eternal mercy of Allah.

**May Allah have mercy on him!..**

**O Allah! Bless us to live a life of sincerity and piety in the way of Thee, like those of our glorious past, and make our fate in this world and the hereafter successful!..**

**Âmîn!..**





*The One Who was Honored with the Prophet's ﷺ  
Glad Tidings by Conquering Istanbul*

## **FÂTIH SULTAN MEHMED KHAN**

*(1432-1481)*

He was the seventh Ottoman sultan.

He was blessed with the praise of the **Messenger of Allah ﷺ**. In addition to being a sultan, he was a scholar who had mastered the religious and natural sciences and, at the same time, was a fine-spirited poet and a gentle person with a profound heart and the spirit of a dervish.

He ascended the Ottoman throne in 1451 and became the Conqueror of Istanbul in 1453. He passed away in 1481, and his funeral prayer was led by **Shaykh Abû al-Wafâ**. He was buried in the tomb of the Fâtiḥ Mosque, which he had built, on the side facing the qiblah.

During his thirty-year reign, he dismantled two empires, four kingdoms, and eleven principalities with outstanding efforts toward spreading and elevat-

ing the Word of Allah. He expanded the territory inherited from his father from 880,000 km<sup>2</sup> to 2,214,000 km<sup>2</sup>.



**Fâtiḥ**, who underwent a meticulous education from a young age, completed his inner cultivation under the spiritual care of **Akṣamsaddîn**. His spiritual training began as follows:

**Haji Bayrâm-ı Walî** had come to visit Sultan Murâd II. He was accompanied by his disciple and spiritual offspring, Akṣamsaddîn. Sultan Murâd Khan wished for his son, Şehzâde Mehmed, to benefit from the wisdom of this blessed person. Like every victorious sultan, Murâd Khan dreamed of the conquest of Istanbul. When he asked Haji Bayrâm-ı Walî:

“To whom will the conquest of Istanbul be granted?” he replied:

**“Witnessing the emphatic conquest will be vouchsafed to this prince and Akṣamsaddîn!”**

Touched by this wonder, Murâd Khan, upon Haji Bayrâm-ı Walî’s intimation and authorization, sent his son to be brought up under the spiritual care of Akṣamsaddîn. Akṣamsaddîn took the responsibility of spiritually cultivating **Şehzâde Mehmed**, preparing him for the emphatic conquest.

The roles played by his other teachers in preparing him were also extremely crucial.

Once, his teacher **Molla Gürânî** noticed that the light was on in Şehzâde Mehmed’s room, even though it was midnight. He approached him and asked:

“–My prince, why have you not slept?”

He responded by saying:

“–My dear teacher, I was studying...”

His teacher asked:

“–Which lesson were you studying?”

Fâtiḥ remained silent.

Curious about what he was studying, his teacher rummaged through the pile of documents on his desk and discovered they were future conquest proj-





ects for Istanbul. Şehzâde Mehmed was mapping out how the conquest could be realized. After his teacher asked:

“–What are these, my son?” Compelled to reveal his secret, Fâtih replied:

“–Sir! Provided it remains a secret, I can confide to you what I have been working on while depriving myself of sleep for some time.”

Seeing his teacher shaking his head with a smile, he continued:

**“This affair has been burning inside of me for a very long time. I wonder why this city of Constantinople, which has been besieged many times since the early Muslims and was watered with the blessed blood of the Companions ﷺ, cannot be conquered?.. How is this city to be conquered? That is why I have been losing sleep and devising plans until morning...”**

His teacher, who listened to these solemn words, highly commended the young Fâtih. He also gave the following advice to him to reach the necessary quality, virtue, and level as soon as possible for him to accomplish this task:

“–My son! I truly desire that you be honored with this great victory. However, I do not want you to be an unlearned sultan, but a ruler who is a scholar and among the people of discernment and the heart. Centuries ago, the Prophet of the End Times, Muḥammad ﷺ, informed us that the city of Constantinople would surely be conquered:

***«Indeed, Constantinople will be conquered! What a wonderful leader will that leader be, and what a wonderful soldier will that soldier be»***

*In this respect, the great and glorious conquest heralded by the Prophet ﷺ will surely be carried out by a wise, just, skillful commander who will possess many other outstanding qualities. Therefore, it is the greatest desire of my soul to prepare you to mobilize for that great conquest after completing all forms of rational and spiritual education...”*

Grasping the fine points in his teacher’s sincere advice that overflowed from his heart, young Şehzâde gained spiritual strength from it for many years. He strived day and night to achieve the wisdom and perfection he desired.

Şehzâde, mentally preoccupied with the conquest of Istanbul at a very early age and practically engrossed in this matter, increased his efforts on the path of knowledge learning **Arabic, Persian, Latin, Serbian, and Greek** over a short period.



He put his life and state affairs in order by applying the outward and inward disciplines he had studied. And with his scientific and technical knowledge, he had the military weapons that he would use in wars developed further. He is famous for using the first mortar, which was part of a project that belonged to him, in his conquest of **Istanbul**.

Busying himself with history, he had a unique philosophy of history by reflecting on “*the causes and consequences of the formation and development of principalities, and finally their disappearance from the stage of history..*”

*As a result of his level of scholarship and spiritual depth, **Fâtih** occupied an exceptional place in history as a great sultan, a great warrior, and, at the same time, a magnanimous dervish and a poet with a gentle heart.*

Fâtih Sultan Mehmed Khan was a sultan who took lessons from the greatest scholars of his time. He participated in scholarly discussions and demonstrated his proficiency by expressing his thoughts on occasion. In addition to the higher spiritual education he received from **Akşamsaddîn**, he partook in lessons given by **Molla Hüsrev** in *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), **Molla Gürânî**, **Molla Yegân**, and **Hızır Bey Chelebi** in *tafsîr* (Quranic exegesis), **Hocazâde** in *kalâm* (speculative theology), and **Ali Kuşçu** in *riyâziye* (mathematics).

Thus, Fâtih, who received an exceptionally high scholarly education, put in great efforts in the path of knowledge and wisdom and allocated considerable sums from the state treasury to the madrasahs that raised personalities who would shape the world. The following incident reveals this truth very well:

Fâtih Sultan Mehmed Khan was discussing the state budget with his viziers. The figure amount allocated by the Sultân for the madrasahs was rather high. When the treasurer was made aware of this figure, he became bewildered and fell into utter silence. Fâtih Sultan Mehmed Khan, who took notice of the vizier’s demeanor, said:

“–Pasha! Why did you not speak when the person who should have spoken on the state budget issue is the vizier of finance?..”

The vizier, not wanting to reveal his thoughts, said:

“–I resign, Your Majesty....”

Fâtih said:



“–Pasha! Perhaps, in your estimation, the amount I allocated for the madrasahs was too much!..” the Sultan said, making the vizier feel that he was aware of his thoughts. In response, the vizier explained why he had kept silent, saying:

“Yes, Your Majesty! While the state has all sorts of problems, you have allocated beyond what is necessary to education, which is one of them!..”

Upon hearing this, Sultan Fâtiḥ, who wished not to offend his vizier while settling the matter, calmly and persuasively stated:

“–Pasha! Every profession results in losses. The losses incurred by scholarly professions, in particular, are greater. The Prophet ﷺ said:

*«Scholars (who have perfected their external and internal and turned their knowledge into wisdom) are the heirs of the prophets»* (Abû Dâwûd, ‘Ilm, 1).

Being a deputy of the Prophet is not a status one can easily obtain. In this way, the loss brought about by scholarly professions would be greater than all the others.

I think of other professions in this way. If I dip a black, gray, or brown cloth in soiled water and it dries, I can wrap it around like a turban since its color will not show any stains. But can I do the same with a white muslin? Even if a fly lands on it, it becomes noticeable, just like the profession of scholarship,” Sultan Fâtiḥ continued.

At this point, the Sultan asked the vizier:

“–Pasha! How many of the hundred students we are providing for are progressing? Are there three to five men who will emerge from them?”

The head of treasury replied:

“–Yes, Your Majesty! They are indeed making progress... But what can become of them?!”

Smiling in a meaningful way, the Sultan said:

“–Pasha! Do you know that these three or five individuals will educate and raise so many people...”

Acknowledging this, the vizier bowed his head before him and said:

“Yes, Your Majesty; that is correct...”




Having resolved the matter with his prudence and wisdom, Fâtih's heart became filled with joy, and he said to the vizier:

“–Pasha! Since only three or five out of every hundred students in our madrasahs can raise important men to educate the people, we should be willing to take care of others for their sake, even if they are considered a loss!..”

By assigning great importance to knowledge and wisdom, Fâtih Sultan Mehmed Khan laid an impeccably strong foundation for the Sublime State.

Fâtih had madrasahs built in the form of a complex around the mosque that bore his name, which marks the origins of Istanbul University. When Fâtih requested the allocation of a room for himself here, he was required to pass an exam like all other students.



**Fâtih Sultan Mehmed Khan** was the commander-in-chief to lead the last of the strategic advances to conquer Istanbul, which had been ongoing and pursued with great enthusiasm since the time of the Companions . His natural abilities and the rational and spiritual education he received had already prepared him for the emphatic conquest (*feth-i mübîn*) of Istanbul. Consumed by this subconsciously since childhood, he was always preoccupied with conquest projects with pen and paper in hand. In a prayer-like manner, he said:

**“Either Byzantium conquers us, or we conquer Byzantium!..”**

Immediately after becoming a sultan at twenty-one, he gathered the ulema and leaders and consulted with them on the conquest of Istanbul. However, the majority of those present disagreed, stating:

“The conquest of Constantinople is solely the affair of the **Mahdî!**”

Hearing their verdict, Akşamsaddîn intervened and said:

“–Nay! Our Sultan, Mehmed Khan, will conquer Constantinople!..” ensuring that the final decision was that the conquest ought to be attempted.

Sultan Mehmed Khan, whose heart had passionately longed for the conquest of Istanbul since he was a child, was also very pleased with this decision. He ordered preparations for the conquest without delay.

By fulfilling the good news foretold by the Prophet  900 years ago, the hearts of soldiers, commanders, sultans, scholars, and saints became a wa-



terfall of great spiritual ecstasy and excitement, striving to be among those praised in the Prophet's glad tidings. The real strength of Fâtih and his soldiers stemmed from this. In fact, since Khâlid bin Zayd ؓ, every indecisive campaign and attempt to conquer Istanbul did not break the hopes and courage of the Muslims. On the contrary, in addition to the blood of the blessed Companions that was spilled, it became a powerful force that strengthened the resolve of those who struggled in the path of Allah. The previous unsuccessful advances and inconclusive efforts turned the conquest, like rain-filled clouds emptied with an inescapable descent, into an inevitable phase. The blessed bloodshed during the successive conquests, beginning with the Companions, seemed to be a debt of loyalty to Fâtih and his soldiers.

Evidence of Fâtih's unrivaled genius could be seen in the transportation of ships by land and the positioning of the mortars. Hearts felt the excitement of entering Byzantium as soon as possible and reciting the call to prayer in the Hagia Sophia.

One soldier said:

**“Whatever happens, victory is ours, if Allah wills it!..”**

**“From now on, we will either become martyrs and enter Heaven, or we will enter Byzantium as victors!..”**

As each of them climbed the Byzantine walls with lava poured over them like fire, they experienced the love and excitement of martyrdom, saying:

**“Today, it is my turn to be martyred!”**

‘Ubaydullâh Ahrâr, the highly influential Naqshbandî shaykh, participated in this conquest from Central Asia by way of *ṭayy al-makân* (‘folding of space’, or the act of traversing without actual movement) as narrated by his grandson **Muḥammad Qâsim**:

“On a Thursday afternoon, all of a sudden, ‘Ubaydullâh Ahrâr ordered that his horse be prepared. He mounted his horse and left Samarkand in a hurry. He said to his disciples: «–Sit here!».

A disciple of his known as **Mawlânâ Shaykh** followed him for a while. He reported that ‘Ubaydullâh Ahrâr had disappeared after maneuvering his horse to the right and left. ‘Ubaydullâh Ahrâr returned after some time. His



disciples eagerly asked him about the wisdom behind this sudden journey. He said:

“The Turkish sultan Mehmed Khan called upon me and asked for help. So I went to help him. By Allah’s permission, victory was secured.”

‘**Abd al-Hâdî**, the son of ‘Ubaydullâh Ahrâr, who came from Khorasan and participated in the conquest of Istanbul, narrates:

“When I went to Istanbul, Sultan Bâyezîd II described the form and features of my father, ‘Ubaydullâh Ahrâr, as follows:

«Fâtih explained: I took refuge in my Lord in the most grueling moment of the conquest and asked that the saint of our time come to the rescue. He came before me on a white horse with such and such attributes and said:

**“–Do not fear, for victory is yours!..”**

That sage said:

“–There are too many unbelieving soldiers!”

He opened his cloak to me and said:

“–Look inside!”

I was astounded when I saw an army like a flood of water through the sleeve of his cloak. He said:

**“–This army has come to your aid,”** and continued by saying:

“–Now, strike the kettledrum three times over that hill! And give the order for the entire infantry to attack!”

This is precisely what I did. *“That sage also joined his army in the attack, and the conquest was achieved...”*

The inspiration Fâtih received through the patronage and spiritual presence of all the saints during the conquest was crucial. Akşamsaddîn, in particular, provided significant assistance in both spiritual and earthly matters. Apart from the prayers and supplications for the young Sultan, Akşamsaddîn’s advice proved invaluable in resolving some of the issues that had arisen. At one point, Fâtih rode his horse to the sea to confront the challenge of obstructing the enemy fleet and the supplies it brought to Byzantium through the Bosphorus. Akşamsaddîn advised him as follows:



*“After conveying the noble greetings, it is submitted to our Sultan that the incident arising from the negligence of the navy crew caused great sorrow and discontent in the hearts of the people. We are saddened that an opportunity has been missed. I believe the reasons for this mistake are the following;*

***Firstly**, it displays weakness, even momentarily, in one’s sincere efforts and neglects or violates our Sultan’s instructions in administrative matters.*

***Secondly**, this humble servant failed to regard the Prophet’s glad tidings of conquest that he gave based on his supplications and certain spiritual signs.*

*Many more objections can be enumerated.*

*In that case, Your Majesty, do not show leniency while on the offensive, and maintain discipline! Whoever has disobeyed, whoever is negligent, must be investigated, severely punished, discharged, and reproached. If this is not done, they will show indifference and laxity when the fortress is attacked tomorrow, and the ditches at the bottom of the walls need to be filled. You know that some people fear punishment.*

*We hope you will be solemn and diligent as possible, both in terms of actions and giving orders and ruling, and never lose your determination. In the same way, leave the task of punishing those who behave negligently to someone who has little mercy and tolerance so that they may enforce their punishment as necessary! Allah says:*

*«O Prophet, strive against the disbelievers and the hypocrites, and be tough with them. Hell is their final home, an evil destination» (Şûrah al-Tawbah, 73).*

*There is weakness in the hearts of those who do not lead. They are judged as hypocrites and will be with the unbelievers in the torment of Hell.*

*Keep your patronage high for the greater good! Let us not be dejected, ashamed, and wretched in the end... Let us enter into the Divine presence content, favored, and triumphant...*

*Judgment belongs to Allah. However, a person should not fail to strive and work as much as they can. This is the way of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and his Companions.*

*Your Majesty! Tonight, I went to bed reciting the Noble Quran with a broken heart. Praise Allah that the glad tidings, which have not occurred for*

*many years, have come to materialize. Let not what is said to you be regarded as superfluous! These are from our love for you, our Sultan.”*



The emphatic conquest prolonged with time. Unrest ensued among those who opposed the expedition from the beginning. To the extent that they came to Sultan Fâtiḥ and said:

“–Your Majesty! So many soldiers have perished due to the words of a dervish. Yet, aid from the land of the Franks still reaches the unbelievers. There is no longer any hope for conquest...”

Extremely annoyed by the delay of the conquest and the pressure exerted by those who did not support him, Fâtiḥ sent his vizier, **Ahmad Pasha**, to his teacher, Akṣamsaddîn:

“–Pasha! Inquire from your Shaykh if the fortress will be conquered and victory will be granted?”

In response to this question, Akṣamsaddîn sent the following message:

“–So many Muslims and warriors from the Ummah of Muḥammad have attacked an unbeliever’s fortress. By Allah’s permission, the conquest will be successful!...”

However, since Fâtiḥ Sultan Mehmed Khan did not receive the answer he wanted from this message and his desire for conquest and victory, due to his state of mind, forced his patience and temperance, he said to Ahmad Pasha:

“–Pasha! This message is not enough! He must also inform us when the victory he foretells will take place!..”

Akṣamsaddîn, who understood the young Sultan’s inner state well, delved into deep contemplation and sought refuge in his Lord for an extended period. He felt the need to mentally reinforce the will and determination of the Sultan to ensure the conquest would not fail. Finally, as a result of his revelation, he relayed the information requested from him, saying:

**“–On the twentieth day of Rabî‘ al-Awwal, at dawn, launch the attack from such and such direction!.. May the conquest be granted on that day! May the call to prayer fill the city of Constantinople!..”**



Sultan Mehmed Khan, upon receiving this good news, launched a major assault on the morning of May 29, 1453, with terrific determination from land and sea. The powerful sounds of the kettledrum, tabor, and band of musicians, rising to the skies amidst the sound of cannons, merged with the chant of *tak-bîrs* (“Allah is the Greatest”), propelling Fâtih and his soldiers into Istanbul like a flood driven by the Prophet’s glad tidings.

Yaḥyâ Kamâl beautifully expresses the enthusiasm of Sultan Fâtih and his army as follows:

***Vur pençe-î Alî’deki şemşîr aşkına  
Gülbangi âsmânı tutan pîr aşkına***

“Strike, for the sake of the sword in the hands of ‘Alî (named Zulfiqar), the Lion of Allah. The divine chant that encompasses the heavens!..”

***Ey leşker-î müfettihi’l-ebvâb vur bugün  
Feth-î mübîni zâmin o tebşîr aşkına***

“O heroic soldier who opens doors! Reflect today the love of that (sublime and honorable) glad tidings that conceal (in it) the emphatic conquest!..”

***Vur deyr-i küfrün üstüne rekz-î hilâl için  
Gelmiş bu şehsüvâr-ı cihângîr aşkına***

“Strike at the love of this horse-mounted conqueror (Fâtih Sultan Mehmed Khan) who came to plant the crescent (of Islam) atop the unbelievers’ church (esp. the Hagia Sophia)!..”

***Düşsün çelengi Rûm’un eğilsün ser-î Firenk  
Vur Türk’ü gönderen yed-i takdîr aşkına***

“Let the crest worn by Rumelia fall in reverence to the power of divine providence that sent the Turk. And let the Franks (i.e. the Europeans) bow their heads!..”

***Son savletinle vur ki açulsın bu sûrlar  
Fecr-i hücûm içindeki tekbîr aşkına***

“(Go on, O valiant one!) Strike in the morning and attack with all your might for the sake of exalting Allah (which covers the heavens and the earth) in such a way that the last fierce attack (will make victory a blessing) and these (brutal) walls, (which have not been conquered for years and impede

*the Prophet's glad tidings), may (now be unable to resist you) and be opened (and overcome)! May the emphatic conquest be granted to us! So that you may be the soldier and the commander whom the Prophet praised; go on, strike today!..)"*

With the attack carried out in such a state of excitement and enthusiasm, the flag that **Hasan of Ulubat** planted on the city walls finally began to wave in all directions. Constantinople was now conquered. The conquest of this city, which had been besieged many times, was granted to the young ruler **Fâtiḥ Sultan Mehmed Khan**.

After the conquest, the **world-conquering Sultan** entered the city from the gate of Edirne with a magnificent ceremony, with scholars, spiritual leaders, and pashas, including even Hızır Bey – the qadi who would later judge him.

On his white horse, he gave his final instruction to his soldiers as follows:

*"–My Ghazis! Praise be to Allah that you have become the conquerors of Istanbul! Never touch those who do not resist and ask for forgiveness! Do not harm women, children, the elderly, and the sick in the slightest! Take from the spoils only that which is lawful for you!.."*

These injunctions, proclaimed long before the declaration of human rights, are one of the most illustrious documents of our nation's history. The patriarch of Constantinople, filled with admiration by this just attitude, fell at Fâtiḥ's feet. Fâtiḥ raised him up and said:

*"In our religion, it is forbidden to bow down in front of people as if prostrating to Allah. Get up! I grant you and all Christians their rights and freedoms. From now on, fear no wrath for your life and freedom!.. The Patriarchate, as the leader of the Greek Orthodox Community and all the privileges it has gained in history, will be protected..."*

Fâtiḥ Sultan Mehmed Khan later repeated these words in an imperial edict he issued, aiming to sustain the disintegrating patriarchate more robustly. This is one of the brilliant examples of Fâtiḥ's foresight. Because the patriarchate in Istanbul was the center of world orthodoxy. The Russians and Serbs, among the enemies of the Sublime State, were connected to this center. There was hostility between the Catholic Papacy and the Orthodox world since its early beginnings. If the center of the orthodox sect had been abolished, then





Christianity could have united under the leadership of the pope over time. For this split to be maintained, the Papacy would have to continue as its equivalent and counterpart. This meant breaking up Christian unity. For this reason, Fâtih also accepted the ecumenical character of the patriarch, that is, its universal status, in his edict.

Another aspect of the policy pursued using this approach was the positive effect that the just and tolerant attitude of Muslims toward Christians would bring to the Christian world. Indeed, this is the main factor underlying the basis of the peace and tranquility that the Ottomans were able to provide even though they were a minority in Rumelia until the nationalist movements that started with the Great French Revolution. Additionally, this justice has been instrumental in guiding many Christians to Islam.



Fâtih progressed by following in the footsteps of Şehzâdebaşı, Bâyezîd. The soldiers stood on the side of the road to greet him, while the Greek girls showered the young Sultan with flowers. Meanwhile, a dervish appeared in the middle of the road and said to Fâtih:

**“–Do not give yourself so much credit just because you conquered Istanbul! You seized Istanbul due to the supplications of dervishes like us...”**

In response, Fâtih said:

**“–You speak the truth... However, if a war acts jointly with the soldier of supplication and the soldier of the sword, victory will be achieved. In the hereafter, hell awaits those who abandon supplication. It would also be a shame for those who abandon the sword! Supplication is the basic incentive. However, those who take the initiative should be added to it so that results can be achieved! This was the case today. Together we prayed and swung our swords, and victory was granted. The secret of obtaining victory is to follow in the footsteps of the Prophet ﷺ...”**

In this way, the Great Sultan beautifully conveyed to the next generation the necessary conditions of victory, which would only be possible if the sword was used in line with the Quranic spirit.

That is why, throughout Ottoman history, in the cities conquered by the sword, at least one mosque used to read the Friday sermon where the preacher



would lean on a sword, representing the conquest (*an-fetih*). The meaning of this was that the right and freedom of speech of the preacher was made possible by having strength and power in his hands. Even today, in the Bâyezîd Mosque, preachers go out to the sermon with a sword. On the other hand, if the conquered town had been taken peacefully without a sword, the preacher would come out to the Friday sermon with a Quran in his hand, representing the homeland (*an-vatan*).



Fâtih Sultan Mehmed Khan attributes the conquest of Istanbul to the help of the spiritual folk as well as to worldly reasons. Therefore, he showed his teacher, Akşamsaddîn, to the Greek girls who cast roses at him and wanted to declare that these compliments belonged to him, that is, the spiritual leader who supported him in the conquest.

The respect he showed to Akşamsaddîn was considerably high. So much so that on the day he conquered Istanbul, he told those around him, in a way that deserves attention, the following:

“–This joy and peace which you see in me is not only from the conquest of this fortress; it is because a beloved and blessed friend of Allah like Akşamsaddîn is in my time and with me...”

In the following two couplets reflecting the spiritual depth of the Sultan, who wrote his poems under the pen name “Avnî,” it is seen that he bases his cause of elevating the Divine Word on the prophets and saints of Allah:

***İmtisâl-i «câhidû fillâh» oluptur niyyetüm  
Dîn-i İslâm'ın mücerred gayretidür gayretüm***

*“My intention is to observe the command, «Strive in the way of Allah!»  
My struggle is the great and sublime struggle of the religion of Islam.”*

***Enbiyâ vü evliyâya istinâdım var benim,  
Lûtf-i Hak'tandır hemân ümmîd-i feth u nusretüm***

*“I am committed to the prophets and the friends of Allah. My hope of conquest and victory is always from the grace of Allah.”*

His devotion and ambition toward the prophets and the religious devout enabled him to be forever humbled by their patronage and blessings. All ‘friends of Allah’, with Akşamsaddîn at the forefront, provided him with vari-





ous worldly and spiritual assistance, especially during the conquest of Istanbul. So much so that Akşamsaddîn had even given Fâtih information about the future before his triumph. Then, after establishing his rule, the Sultan asked Akşamsaddîn:

“Why did you predict the conquest and reveal things about the future?”

He said, “*We had learned from my brethren Khidr ؑ when the conquest would take place!..*”



In the wake of the conquest of Istanbul, Fâtih Sultan Mehmed Khan began to identify the graves of the Companions who had previously come to conquer the fabled city and were martyred there. Among them, he wished to find the grave of **Abû Ayyûb al-Anşârî ؑ**, who hosted the Prophet ﷺ in Medina. However, this blessed grave, which was hidden to protect against the encroachments of the enemy, could not be found. Thereupon Fâtih, appealing to Akşamsaddîn, said:

“—Your Majesty! How can we find the tomb of Abû Ayyûb al-Anşârî?”

After arriving at the ceremony for a few minutes, Akşamsaddin pointed to the location of the tomb of that blessed Companion. A stick was erected there as a mark. However, Fâtih changed its location at night, not because he distrusted his teacher, but only so that his heart would be completely at ease. The next day, when he came to excavate the site which was identified earlier, Akşamsaddîn again examined it and said:

“—Your Majesty! The location of our mark has changed!..” and then, to Fâtih’s astonishment, Akşamsaddîn put the stick back in its place.

There was not a shred of doubt left in the Sultan’s heart at this point, and the place shown began to be excavated. A little while later, a tombstone belonging to Abû Ayyûb appeared, and Akşamsaddin’s wondrous deed was now finally ascertained.

Upon the order of Sultan Fâtih, the grave was completely unearthed, and over it, a tomb was built, and right beside it, a mosque and a madrasah.

Fâtih Sultan Mehmed Khan loved and respected his teacher, Akşamsaddîn, who raised him under his spiritual care. He often visited him and would return with his heart tranquil and at peace after being in his presence.





When Akşamsaddîn came to visit him on occasion, Fâtih would stand up and greet him with reverence. Mahmûd Pasha, one day with wonder and amazement asked:

“–My noble Sultan, you show Akşamsaddîn the respect and gratitude that you have not shown to any scholar! You are overcome by a different state when you are next to him. What distinguishes him from other scholars?..”

Fâtih replied:

*“–I see in this person the majesty and spiritual attraction that I have never seen before, in any time, space, or person. This majesty and affectionate bond ravel my heart. It takes me into an entirely different realm. How do love and majesty unite in my soul, even though they are two opposite states?! I am amazed by that... What is this state? What exactly is this? I understand that this is not because of his corporeal existence but because he is the manifestation of the Truth. In his presence, my hand trembles, my tongue wanders, and I am left like a helpless child. Through the window of his heart, I behold different realms, different adornments. This is how his inner spiritual world affects me. It also demonstrates his own spiritual depth.”*

After the conquest, Akşamsaddîn left Istanbul and settled in his hometown of Göynük to avoid causing any disruption to the state affairs with the inspiration that the Sultan would receive from communing with him. However, the spiritual guidance and affectionate bond between Akşamsaddîn and Sultan Fâtih continued through written correspondence. The following letter, which exhibits this high affection between the Sultan and his teacher and a closeness that goes beyond the father-son bond, is an example of beautiful advice overflowing from the depths of Akşamsaddin’s heart:

*“The comfort of the world is practically nonexistent compared to the comfort of the hereafter. Bodily pleasure is nothing compared to spiritual pleasure. Do not give your attention to that which is nothing! The most severe tribulations befall the prophets, then the saints, and then the caliphs. Know that you are a traveler on the path of prophets and saints, and the greatest blessing is to know that you are in tribulation and to feel not sorrow but pleasure from it! In the Noble Quran, “a difficulty” is mentioned between two eases. If Allah wills it, the difficulties will end soon, and the enemies on all sides will be humiliated and held in contempt. Do not break what you promised to Allah in my*





*presence! If you adhere to this, by Allah's leave, you will always be successful and triumphant!*

*The state of the nation is subject to your state of being. Because sultans, when compared to the nation, are like the soul in the body. It is the soul that directs the body. Do not think you are like other people and do not be concerned with anything other than the unity of the nation! Peace...*"

Fâtiḥ Sultan Mehmed Khan, whose life was guided by such profound spiritual guidance, was meticulous in his devotional practices. He desired that those in his administration should not show any negligence in their worship. The following imperial edict, which he sent to the provinces regarding the performance of ritual prayers, beautifully expresses his sensitivity on this matter:

"May Allah enable us to fulfill His commands and prohibitions! He says in His divine command, «**Perform the ritual prayer!**» And I must therefore order the good and forbid evil, in accordance with the Prophet's ﷺ declaration:

«...Prayer is the pillar of religion». I appointed someone for this task. He will take the necessary actions in this regard. Thus, whoever abandons the prayer will be duly reprimanded. May the state authorities see to this!.. Thus, may there be no place for laxity and laziness in fulfilling the sacred rulings, commandments, and prohibitions of Islam! May the mosques and madrasahs not be left without a congregation and fall into ruins! May those blessed places become filled and thriving! Until the religion of Islam is strong and firm so that worldly and spiritual triumphs will manifest!.."

This attitude reflects the morality of Islam, as commanded in the Quranic passage where Allah decrees:

الَّذِينَ إِن مَّكَّنَّاهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ  
وَأَمَرُوا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَنَهَوْا عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَاللَّهُ عَاقِبَةُ الْأُمُورِ

"Those who, when We establish them in the land, keep up the prayer, pay the prescribed alms, command what is right, and forbid what is wrong: Allah controls the outcome of all events" (Sūrah al-Ḥajj, 41).



Fâtiḥ Sultan Mehmed’s sincere effort in the path of Allah and his mindset of serving the Muslims, undeterred by any troubles and hardships, serves as a magnificent example for the descendants of that blessed lineage:

He embarked on a campaign to the **Greek empire of Trebizond**, which required crossing a mountainous and forested terrain to reach the city from the rear. At times, loggers led from the front. In an area where the road was unsuitable, Fâtiḥ’s horse slipped, and he struggled to hold onto a rock, causing his hands to bleed. Sârâ Hatun, the mother of Uzun Hasan, who witnessed this situation, thought it was an opportune moment and said:

“–Son! You are the heir of a khan, the Khan himself! You are a supreme ruler! Is it worth enduring so much trouble for a small fortress like Trabzon?”

Since Uzun Hasan had established a relationship with the Greek empire of Trebizond, his mother was sent to Fâtiḥ to persuade him to abandon the expedition. Despite his hands being full of abrasions, Fâtiḥ stood up and replied:

*“–O elderly mother! Do you not know that what we hold in our hands is the sword of Islam. Do not think that all the troubles we have suffered are for a mere piece of land. You should know that all of our efforts are in service to the religion of Allah. It is to guide people to the right path. It is so that our faces will not be disgraced when we are in the presence of Allah tomorrow. If we do not endure certain hardships and prefer the comfort of our skin when we have the means to preach and glorify Islam, would it be appropriate for us to be called ghazi? If we do not bring Islam to the people of unbelief and prevent their cruelty, with what face will we enter the Divine presence?!”*



Fâtiḥ found great peace when the saints visited him. His heart would become filled with spiritual joy from their wisdom and blessings.

One day, he longed to visit Shaykh Abû al-Wafâ, one of the saints of the time. He went to the door of the lodge with his men, but unfortunately, the door that was open to everyone was closed for him.

The Sultan felt saddened, and his face turned pale.

Inside, Abû al-Wafâ was in the same state. Out of respect, the disciples did not ask anything, but they were amazed and wondered about the reason behind this incident, saying, “What is the secret behind this matter?” How





could it be the door that was open even to a drunkard be closed to the person who was the manifestation of a noble hadith?!

Fâtih returned in a downhearted manner...

**The great Khan, who brought an era to a close and ushered in a new one, and who demolished the Byzantine walls, returned before he could open the mysterious door of the lodge.**

After some time had passed, the Sultan, filled with excitement from the depths of his sensitive heart, prepared to visit Abû al-Wafâ again and went there with his men. But the sight was the same once more – the door remained closed!..

The Sultan's dismay increased. He said to the assistant:

“–Come before me with perfect decency! Understand, what is wrong with this? What is this mystery? What a strange situation is this?”

The assistant came before him. Abû al-Wafâ said to his assistant:

**“Our Sultan Fâtih has a sensitive and passionate heart. If he enters here and tastes the pleasure in our world, he will never want to leave again and will not return to administering the state! However, this homeland and the Ummah are entrusted to him. If a person as capable as himself cannot come and replace him, the homeland and the Ummah will suffer. Both he and I will become sinners!..**

**Afterward, his spirit will be filled with the spiritual atmosphere of this place, and all of his possessions will be given away. The wherewithal, which is supposed to be for the widow, the orphan, the poor, the helpless, and the unattended, will flow here! At the same time, the love of the world will enter the hearts of the disciples and our order will be subverted!..**

**We are in a state of supplication and assistance to our Sultan from here. His heart is in our hearts...”** he said.

When the assistant left his presence and conveyed these words to the Sultan, who was eagerly awaiting at the door of the lodge, the Sultan asked:

“How was he when expressing these feelings?”

The assistant said:



“–Your Majesty! While uttering these words, Abû al-Wafâ’s heart must have been burning with sorrow since tears were falling from his eyes...”

Fâtih bowed his head in front of him. His stares, which did not fit into the horizon, turned to another realm, like a deep, moonlit night. His eyes became moist, and tears began to fall, like dew accumulating on leaves in the spring. He never had the chance to meet with Abû al-Wafâ...

However, when the news of Fâtih’s death arrived, Abû al-Wafâ went to the palace and led the funeral prayer of the Sultan.



Ghazi Sultan Fâtih Mehmed Khan was a sultan of the outward and the inward, one who deepened the more he probed and became more profound the more he deepened. His activities and success in every field are based on the cooperation between his pen and sword with exceptional skill.

He transformed the invasions that had occurred until his time into a well-planned conquest. He never deployed his army in a disorderly manner without a plan, and he never shed blood with the intention of exploitation. There were days when he engaged in warfare with five, ten, or even more states simultaneously, on multiple fronts, but he would overcome them with his wisdom and through political negotiations and military tactics. Even during the most critical moments of the wars he participated in, he would personally lead the charge against the enemy and never retreat. In a fierce attack during the battle of Belgrade, he sustained significant wounds to his forehead and knee.

Fâtih Sultan Mehmed Khan assessed some of the dangers and errors that the state had previously encountered and formulated the laws known as «**The Code of Laws of Fâtih**» (*Fâtih Kâunnâmeleri*). However, it should not be presumed that they represent his personal opinions or the prevailing mindset of that era.

Many of these laws address various subjects such as state administration, debated issues of the past, the arbitrariness of fratricide, and the transfer of political power from viziers to executioners.

It can be observed that there are two primary motivations behind this law, which specifically applies to members of the dynasty and individuals holding the rank of vizier:





*1. As they possess the authority to divide the state if necessary, prompt decision-making regarding state matters is crucial. The procedural regulations of regular courts do not allow for swift action, and in cases of treason, by the time procedural obligations are fulfilled, it is often too late, resulting in irreparable damage. This is why the Sultan proclaimed:*

*He was granted the right to exclaim “–Executioner!..”.*

*2. Since they hold the highest position of authority in the state, it is only the Sultan who possesses an authority superior enough to handle them without fear. The Sultan’s ability to assign someone the role of an executioner solely depends on their involvement in the army during military campaigns. Even a single soldier in a warring army can be the cause of defeat.*

This practice, originating from these fundamental reasons, was always grounded in the legal ruling of the shaykh al-Islam to prevent the emergence of self-serving sentiments.

These reasons stem from a justified concern for safeguarding the unity of the state and ensuring its survival. It is extremely challenging for an expanding state to avoid fragmentation. Considering the limited means of communication available during those times, the magnitude of this challenge becomes more apparent.

With these measures in place, it can be argued that the issue of fratricide, which Fâtiḥ legalized to establish a centralized source of governance for the state and prevent the division of the Muslim community into weak principalities, played a significant role in prolonging the existence of the Ottoman state. It ensured the state’s enduring strength in the face of unbelievers.

The article regarding this issue is as follows:

**“Whoever among my children assumes the sultanate has the authority to sacrifice his son (if necessary) for the sake of maintaining world order. Even the ulema, on the whole, have given their approval. Let them take appropriate action when the need arises...”**

This indicates that Fâtiḥ did not personally command this act but rather allowed it through legal means, which can be implemented in cases of revolutions, anarchy, and when circumstances deem it highly necessary.



It is not important not to hastily accuse even the sultans of the Ottoman state, who held the position of custodianship, of being – Allah forbid – murderers without fully understanding the nuanced aspect of this practice. The act of sacrificing one’s own children and brothers for the benefit of their subjects, which is unparalleled in world history, requires a thorough analysis based on comprehension, intention, and historical facts rather than solely relying on emotions.

Furthermore, it should be noted that the total number of casualties resulting from fratricide during the 623-year imperial period was approximately sixty individuals. Without this practice, the number could have been much higher, potentially reaching hundreds of thousands or even more.

A notable incident highlighting this issue is the conflict that took place on the Konya lowlands during the reign of **Yavuz Sultan Selîm Khan** and **Şehzâde Ahmad**, who rebelled against him. In this struggle, approximately ten thousand Muslims lost their lives on both sides. This serves as an example of fratricide being employed in a state of hopelessness, driven by the necessity of choosing the lesser of two great dangers when no alternative exists. Similar instances of such desperation can be observed in many critical situations.

Yavuz Sultan Selîm Khan, who had fought alongside his brother Şehzâde Korkut and mourned his loss, expressed his sorrow by saying:

“–O my brother! Neither would I have wanted this to happen to you, nor would I have chosen to do it myself!..”

After the unfortunate event of his son Şehzâde Mustafa’s death, Kânûnî desired to offer the funeral prayer but was overcome with tears that prevented him from completing it. Kânûnî was a devout believer who sought guidance even on matters as trivial as whether it was permissible to harm an ant found inside a fruit, demonstrating his sincerity in seeking religious rulings from the shaykh al-Islam, Ebussuûd Efendi.

These sorrowful and conflicting incidents, along with others of their kind, are painful memories that have left their mark on the history of the Ottoman state. They were like thorns in the wounded souls of the valiant warriors who led the wars. Consequently, the dedicated sultans did not treat unjustly the families and relatives of the princes whom they had to dispose of out of necessity. Alongside bestowing abundant blessings, they provided necessary sup-





port to the families of the princes and assigned their close attendants to various offices and positions within the state.

Despite the painful and somber outcomes associated with this practice, it is worth noting that without it, the world state established by the Ottomans could have fragmented into weak principalities, similar to the tragic fate of Andalusia and the Seljukids, which would have greatly affected the Ummah. Furthermore, the Islamic conquest in the West may not have occurred, and the Crusaders' attempts to annihilate the Muslims could have led to disastrous consequences. The post-defeat danger following Yildirim Bâyezîd Khan's Battle of Ankara serves as a notable example in this context.

On the other hand, the sultans who made the difficult decision to sacrifice their beloved children exemplified great acts of sacrifice in their unwavering loyalty to their religion, state, and nation. After all, no one willingly sacrifices their own child, who is an integral part of themselves, for the sake of another. When considering that even history's most heinous criminals turned feeble when confronted with their own children and were rendered powerless despite their cruelty, the Ottoman's sacrifice to safeguard the integrity of religion, state, and nation, as well as the strength of the Islamic community, becomes more understandable.

Hence, it is completely misguided to view the practice of fratricide by the Ottoman sultans, who were known for their compassion even toward the tiniest creatures, as a mere power struggle. If their sole intention was to secure their own lives, would they have willingly engaged in battles with the enemy, risking either victory or martyrdom? The sultans, who dedicated their entire reigns, particularly during the early years, to warfare and tirelessly sacrificed themselves day and night in the name of spreading and elevating the Word of Allah, were undoubtedly engaged in a meaningful endeavor.

To truly understand the Ottomans, who have left us a remarkable legacy filled with glory and honor, and to comprehend the circumstances that compelled them to resort to fratricide, it is essential to carefully examine the historical context. Just as there is no need to delve into the power struggles that sought to disintegrate the state, it is inconceivable for one's intellect and conscience to accept the shedding of thousands of Muslim lives in these internal conflicts as normal. Hence, those who approach the issue of fratricide solely based on emotions, without recognizing the imperative of preserving





the state and nation and eliminating princes who could potentially cause harm or be manipulated to do so, would they not be displaying insensitivity toward a crisis where religion, state, and nation are at stake and thousands of Muslims may suffer as a consequence?

Despite everything, we cannot always look for a justification when it comes to the issue of murder. Perhaps, from time to time, unjust killings have occurred due to individuals being deceived by certain schemes in the name of humanity's needs and the struggle against the carnal self.

It has been stated that an emotional mistake occurred in the case of princes, some of whom were still infants, who were eliminated by Murâd III and Mehmed Khan III immediately upon ascending the throne. However, punishment cannot be justified in the absence of a crime. No conscience can accept the extrajudicial execution of those innocents on the basis of certain revelations! In fact, for these and similar reasons, Sultan Ahmad Khan I, a soft-hearted sultan who was a dervish in spirit, did not enforce this practice. Later, the requirement of *akbar wa arshad* (the oldest and wisest of the dynasty) was introduced to the sultanate, partially addressing the issue of fratricide among the members of the khanate. However, it was observed that the upward mobility and military campaigns of the Ottoman state weakened with the appointment of older sultans, who reduced their activities compared to their predecessors. In other words, the *akbar wa arshad* condition brought an end to the path of "*tegallüb ve hakk-ı seyf*" (becoming a ruler by being victorious over others and through the right of the sword), which was previously required to ascend the Ottoman throne.

Individuals may occasionally make errors in judgment when applying the principle of fratricide. However, the overall objective is to prevent the division of the homeland, avoid the shedding of Muslim blood on a large scale, and maintain strength in the face of unbelievers. It is important not to view the wisdom behind this principle in a negative light or make unfair judgments.

It is advisable to exercise caution in these discussions, as hasty and unreasoned criticism of these esteemed individuals in various matters can infringe upon the rights of others.

**When considering the issue of fratricide, it is important to assess the successes and shortcomings of the six-century-old Ottoman world state. On a final note, this matter may be briefly summarized as follows:**



The effectiveness of legal principles, including religious laws, depends on the integrity, maturity, and righteousness of those who apply them. Laws are like sharp knives or weapons, which can be used to dispense justice or commit atrocities depending on the intentions and character of the individual wielding them. Thus, the same instrument can have both positive and negative outcomes depending on the person's mindset. It is a remarkable principle that something can become undesirable when in the hands of a person dominated by their ego. This has been observed throughout history, even during periods when the Shariah prevailed, where oppressive individuals misused those laws. For example, **Abû Ḥanîfah** and **Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal**, two of the most prominent Muslim jurists known for their piety and devotion, faced persecution and imprisonment for refusing to participate in acts of oppression and being uncompromising in their beliefs. Abû Ḥanîfah was persecuted for declining the position of Qadi of Baghdad, while Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal was incarcerated for rejecting the idea that «the Quran was created». However, these great personalities, from the standpoint of the Shariah, did not commit any wrongdoing. On the contrary, they were deeply concerned with safeguarding the laws of Allah from its subverters. In essence, they were completely innocent. Nevertheless, the caliphs responsible for upholding the Shariah declared them criminals. This serves as a reminder that principles and the exalted law should be examined independently of their application.

Hence, when we evaluate the issue of fratricide in light of these considerations, it emerges as a practice that was enforced during specific circumstances within the Ottoman state. However, its implementation, as stated above, heavily relies on the competence and wisdom of those responsible, along with their sensibility and meticulousness in matters of religion. Therefore, while recognizing the necessity of this practice, we neither endorse nor oppose the events and outcomes that occur during its execution in accordance with divine law. Similarly, we neither support nor oppose those who may have acted out of personal motives or those whose actions cannot be definitively ascertained.

The question of fratricide as applied by the Ottomans is subject to the following **three categories**:

1. Putting the members of the rebellious khanate to death is entirely within a Shariah framework. These fall under the crime of *'iṣyân baghi* ('seditious rebellion') in Islamic law, the punishment of which necessitates death.

In this regard, the Prophet ﷺ said:

“There will be some mischief after me. Know that when this Ummah is united under a person, whoever wants to intervene and break that unity, strike him (his neck) with a sword, whoever they may be!” (*Muslim*, ‘Imârah, 59-60).

2. Some practices of fratricide fall under the institution of *ta‘zîr bi’l-qatl* (killing in order to prevent further violence). This aligns with what Sultan Fâtiḥ stated in his *Kânunnâme*, where he mentioned that «**Even the ulema, on the whole, have given their approval**». Although it may not be conclusively established whether the individual in question actually rebelled, the killing of members of the dynasty who showed signs of revolt falls within this category.

The justifications for this implementation are not as straightforward as those in the first article. In general, the following reasons have been put forth as a basis:

a. “**Injustice is far worse than killing...**” (Sûrah al-Baqarah, 217)

b. “*Specific harm is preferred over general harm, and general harm is avoided.*”

c. “*The mildest of the two harms is preferred.*”

In addition to these, there is fratricide. This practice could be understood through the legal principle of «necessity renders permissible those things that are forbidden» (*zarûretler, memnû olan şeyleri mübah kılar*), which has also been explained with concepts such as *istiḥsân* (juristic preference), *maşâliḥ al-mursalah* (benefits unregulated by source texts), and *istişlâḥ* (public benefit).

In response to the above, it is argued that the practice described in this clause is based on customary law and relies on individual evidence rather than being firmly grounded in religious law where «innocence is presumed» (*berâet-i zimmet asıldır*) until proven guilty. Customary law, although derived from religious law in its content, can sometimes go beyond its original scope.

3. This section deals with incidents of killing, within the context of fratricide, that are not attributed to crimes of rebellion or political motivations. Such practices have no legitimacy and are considered a serious offense.

In assessing the issue of fratricide, it is crucial to consider and evaluate these three points and, accordingly, provide approval, criticism, or impartiality. The attitudes of the ulema and those in the position of shaykh al-Islam





who witnessed these events indicate that they followed this approach. Based on their expertise and knowledge, they openly issued legal rulings that were in line with the Shariah and declared killings carried out for political reasons to be based on customary law. However, they never permitted or provided legal rulings for illegitimate or perverse killings, even if it meant facing their dismissal. In fact, they strongly opposed such actions.

It is widely accepted among scholars that the first article is integral to the Shariah. The third article is clearly inconsistent with the Shariah. However, the second article, which involves killings based on political reasons, presents the most challenging and contentious aspect. In such cases, it is practically impossible to determine right or wrong in any strict way. Therefore, it is advisable to exercise caution and avoid taking biased or opposing positions on this matter. Considering the complexities and uncertainties involved in assessing individual situations, even in the analysis of contemporary political events, it becomes evident that reaching a conclusive judgment on controversial events that occurred centuries ago is highly challenging. Hence, we maintain the stance that:

**Only Allah possesses absolute knowledge and truth in all matters...**



Fâtih Sultan Mehmed Khan was a highly respected and renowned ruler who was praised even by his enemies. His unwavering goal was to have Islam prevail throughout the world. The map of Europe would not leave his side.

Known as *dhul al-janâhayn* (“two-winged”; two-sided), Fâtih was a multifaceted figure, displaying both outward and inward greatness. He possessed a sensitive, kind-spirited, and compassionate nature. His concern for his people was so profound that he can be likened to a temporal and spiritual father to his society. Fâtih’s mercy and compassion were evident in his numerous philanthropic endeavors, which aimed to uplift the Muslim community and raise his era to the highest understanding of social justice. The deeds of trust of these pious foundations showcase the subtleties of his noble heart:

In one of his deeds of trust, it writes:

**“In the almshouse I have built, the impoverished residents of Istanbul will be provided with food! The families and orphans of those who were martyred in the conquest of Istanbul will receive their meals discreetly in sealed containers after dark, ensuring their privacy, honor, and dignity!..”**



As we have seen, Fâtih introduced these lofty principles centuries ago, embodying the highest standards of decency and compassion for the vulnerable members of society in need of protection.

His concern for the families of the fallen martyrs exemplifies an unparalleled sense of loyalty. It serves as a profound lesson in kindness, moral responsibility, compassion, and treating others with dignity, especially for the people of our present time.



During the reign of Fâtih Sultan Mehmed Khan, justice, rights, and rule of law prevailed throughout the entire country. All people were equal before the law. It was as if the expression:

*“Justice is the foundation of power...”* had come to life during his time.

The rich and poor, the sultan and the peasant, enjoyed the same rights. The rights of non-Muslims were even more respected, as they were regarded as the trust of Allah (*vedîatullâh*), individuals who required protection and were entrusted to the state by Allah. Consequently, no harm would come to non-Muslims. The Christians held great admiration for the Ottomans upon witnessing this remarkable justice. Especially in the rapid expansion of conquest in Rumelia, the Ottomans’ exceptional commitment to justice left a deep impression. To such an extent that when Istanbul was under siege, Notaras, one of the nobles of that period, opposed the idea of asking help from the Papacy and famously declared:

**“I would rather see the turban of the Turks than the cardinal’s hat [worn by the Christians] in Istanbul!..”**

Because of this noble understanding and practice of justice, many priestesses embraced Islam and adopted the veil, following the custom of Ottoman women. The Christian population, living under oppression, even spied on behalf of the Ottomans, eagerly desiring to attain peace and justice as soon as possible in unconquered territories. The Ottomans, as an expression of loyalty, did not forget those who assisted them and rewarded them generously.

After the conquest of Istanbul, Fâtih declared a general amnesty and released the Byzantine prisoners. Among them were two learned philosopher priests. Fâtih inquired about the reasons for their punishment, and they responded:



*“We were the most prominent priests of Byzantium. We admonished the king for his cruelty, torture, disgrace, and depravity. We said that his fate was bad, his downfall was imminent, and his state would collapse. He became angry over our admonition and threw us into the dungeon.”*

These statements caught Fâtiḥ’s attention. He asked the priests what they thought of the Ottoman state. They, too, declared that they would only express their views after some time had past.

The priests went in and out everywhere with a warrant in their hands. They visited a store early in the morning to buy groceries. The owner of the grocery store said to them:

**“–I made my first sale of the day. Go and buy from my neighbor who has yet to make his first sale!”**

*They roamed around, down to the most crowded and deserted places. They chatted with everyone. They observed the state of all the people, exhibiting only the highest level of goodness and morality.*

*They entered a bazaar where the call to prayer was being recited. The shopkeepers went to the mosque without locking up their shops. No one was envious or jealous of another. It was as if everyone was under each other’s protection. They peacefully performed the ritual prayer as if it were their last.*

*No one was offending each other or violating anyone’s rights. On the Day of Resurrection, no one wished to be in the presence of Allah having infringed on the rights of His creation. Everyone, without exception, was thinking and speaking about, and living for the pleasure of Allah. They prayed for the sultan’s long life and the triumph of his army. The community was full of kind-spirited, gentle hearted, and profound people.*

The priests were astonished upon seeing this. No matter how many cities they traveled, they did not find a legal case in the courts where a severe punishment was given. Theft, murder, rape, and fraud were practically unheard of. A particular trial caught their attention and had them amazed.

A plaintiff and a defendant came to a qadi. The plaintiff raised the following issue:

“Sir, I bought a field from my brother in faith. While plowing for crop, I came across an earring full of gold there. I took the earring to this brother of mine from whom I bought this field and said:

«Here, it is yours; take it!»

He then responded saying:

«I sold this field [including whatever lies] below and above!.. It is not lawfully mine!..» and refused. However, if he knew that this earring would come out from under the ground, he would not have sold it.”

The qadi allowed the other person to speak, who then said:

“The situation occurred just as my brother stated. However, I believe once I sell the field to him, all that is below and above will be included. Just as I have no right to the crop above it, the same applies to what is below it!..”

While the priests were stunned with amazement by this situation, it was an ordinary occurrence for the qadi.

The qadi had no difficulty in judging between these two true Muslims. When he learned that one of them had a righteous son and the other a righteous daughter, he became an intermediary for the two of them. With the consent of both parties, he officiated the marriage of these two young people. He also had them sell the gold earring to cover their wedding and dowry expenses.

**Here, one finds on display the understanding and justice of Islam.**

After witnessing all this, the priests sent their daughters to a madrasah in the evening. The girls said to the young men who opened the door:

*“–After it became nightfall, we lost our way. Will you provide us with accommodation tonight? We are helpless...”*

The students thought it over and, ultimately, gave their rooms to these two girls. They placed a curtain between themselves and the girls and spent the night near the fire. In the morning, they bid farewell to the girls.

The priests curiously asked their daughters how the night went. They described the incident as follows:

*“–They left their place to us. They themselves retreated to the end of the room. They picked up the charcoal and left it in their hands, and said to each other terrified:*

*«May our Lord protect us from the torment of Hell! Lest you be among the fools who exchange the moment with the future!..»*

*They were not even turning back and looking at us...”*





This example illustrates that the preservation of chastity and honor was ensured in the Ottoman state. There are numerous instances of such practices. For instance, in an edict issued by Fâtih after the conquest of Bosnia, he explicitly stated:

*“When the Serbian girls come to the fountain to get water, my soldiers should not be there!..”*

This statement further demonstrates the commitment to upholding chastity and honor within Ottoman society. With this edict, Fâtih protected both his soldiers and the chastity of the daughters of the Christian subjects under his protection.

The priests, who were tasked with visiting the Ottoman lands, could not help but see the Christian quarters. They went for a stroll toward the district of Fener. Even the Christians they were familiar with had undergone transformations, and the streets were noticeably cleaner. Oppression had ceased, and people were able to go about their lives peacefully. Public disturbances caused by drunkenness were no longer observed. Furthermore, even poor Christian families were provided with houses as a form of support.

After this long survey and inspection, the priests took a leave of absence and went to Fâtih’s court. He presented his observations one by one and said:

**“This nation and state, if it continues like this, will last until the end of time. The religion of people who possess such morality and lifestyle is, indeed, the true religion...”**

They professed the Islamic declaration of faith and became Muslims.

In the years following the conquest of Istanbul, there were remarkable incidents that exemplified the exceptional history of justice during Fâtih’s era. One such incident involved the cutting off of the arm of a Christian architect who had disobeyed Fâtih’s orders. **Hızır Bey**, a close friend and companion of Fâtih, held the position of qadi in Istanbul and was appointed by Fâtih himself.

The Christian architect, whose hand was cut off, went to Qadi Hızır Bey and filed charges against Fâtih. While the style of address to Fâtih was «**al-Sultan ibn al-Sultan al-Ghazi Abû al-Fatḥ Muḥammad Khan Thânu**», Qadi Hızır Bey addressed the Sultan as he did any of his subjects as follows:

**“Mehmed, son of Murâd, come to court at this hour!”** and sent the summons.





On the day of the trial, Fâtih went to court humbly like an ordinary citizen. He sat on the defendant's chair. Hızır Bey took his place. And the case began.

In the courts, the judge would sit because he was exercising justice, and the others would stand up and give their statement. When Hızır Bey saw Fâtih sitting down, he cautioned him saying:

**“–You are about to commit a crime, stand up!”**

Upon this warning, Fâtih stood up to make his statement. The judgment resulted in Qadi Hızır Bey finding Fâtih guilty and the Christian architect innocent. He recited the Quranic passage of *qisâs* (‘retributive justice’). And he decided that Fâtih’s arm should be amputated in the same way.

Fâtih, the sultan who brought the whole world to its knees, reacted to the decision with calmness and resignation and said:

**“–The judgment is of the noble religious law!..”**

The Christian architect, touched by this scene of supreme justice, said in tears:

**“–I relinquish my right and will accept a compensatory payment (*diyyah*)!..”**

After the affair was settled in an amicable manner, Fâtih said to Hızır Bey:

“I congratulate you for fearing Allah and not me!..”

Qadi Hızır Bey then pulled out a mace from under the cushion where he was sitting and said:

“If you had not accepted my verdict, I would have hit you on the head with it”

In response, Fâtih showed the sword he had hidden under his robe and said:

“And if you had not ruled justly, I would have hit you in the head with this...”

In addition, Fâtih donated a house from his personal property to the Christian architect who exclaimed:

**“–There is no precedent in the world for this level of justice. I am now a Muslim from this moment onward...”** and professed the Islamic declaration of faith..



Fâtiḥ assigned great importance to justice and judges that dispensed it and helped them to enforce the law and the rights of others.

In this regard, the following example serves as an excellent case in point:

The Qadi of Edirne received a complaint about an injustice committed by **Davud Pasha**, one of the dignitaries of the time. The Qadi initially cautioned Davud Pasha to rectify the situation and warned him about the potential punishment he could face. However, a dispute ensued between them, and Davud Pasha, in his escalating anger, physically assaulted the Qadi by slapping him multiple times. Upon learning of this incident, Fâtiḥ stated:

**“Whoever beats the qadi, the dispenser of justice, is insulting and damaging the religion...”**

As a consequence, Fâtiḥ administered severe punishment to Davud Pasha, emphasizing the gravity of disrespecting and harming the religious institution responsible for upholding justice.

Davud Pasha, after enduring financial and spiritual hardships as a consequence of his actions, found himself bedridden. Overwhelmed with remorse, he sincerely repented and expressed deep regret for his past behavior. He made a solemn promise to never again oppose the commandments of Allah and to avoid repeating such mistakes. Following his repentance, the strained relationship between him and Fâtiḥ was restored, and he eventually attained the esteemed position of vizier. During the reign of Bâyezîd II, he even rose to the rank of Grand Vizier.

This account highlights the spiritual maturity of Fâtiḥ and the transformative power of repentance. It exemplifies the profound truth expressed in the adage, «*The people follow the path of their rulers*», which suggests that Fâtiḥ’s virtuous qualities resonated within his state. His era stands as a remarkable embodiment of Islamic principles of trust and justice. It serves as a timeless legacy and guidance for future generations and as a reminder of the virtues that modern society has long lost and struggled to regain.

The contrast between the noble character of Fâtiḥ and the current state of society is evident, leaving us to ponder our current condition. We find ourselves immersed in a world driven by self-interest and material pursuits, devoid of compassion and spiritual values.

His example reminds us of the deterioration of our spiritual structure and the need to rebuild it. We have lost touch with our true selves and are burdened by the anguish of searching for meaning and purpose. However, there is hope in the young warriors of faith who possess the determination and vision to restore our nation to its original path, following in the footsteps of Fâtiḥ. These individuals are blessed, as they dedicate their efforts and energy to revive the values and principles exemplified by their forefathers.



Fâtiḥ Sultan Mehmed Khan spent his life exhausting his efforts toward realizing lofty ideals, demonstrating remarkable efforts in various fields. Alongside his involvement in twenty-five wars, he tirelessly engaged in reconstruction projects and scholarly pursuits, consistently achieving excellence.

Fâtiḥ especially gave importance to developing Istanbul. He undertook the construction of numerous structures, including four thousand shops in various parts of the city. Palaces, mosques, madrasahs, almshouses, aqueducts, bazaars, foundations, and baths were also among his notable contributions. Additionally, he established twenty-four madrasahs alongside the grand mosques, twelve inns, forty fountains, and implemented water facilities in Halkalı. Furthermore, he oversaw the construction of two shipyards and military posts.

His last expedition remained concealed from everyone, which resonates with what he always told himself:

“If even a single hair in my beard knew where I was going, I would tear it off!..”

He set out with a magnificent army of three hundred thousand men. Tragically, he was poisoned at the beginning of his journey and attained martyrdom in Gebze. Throughout his life, the Venetians had made fourteen previous attempts to poison him, but each time their plots were thwarted. However, by divine providence, the final poisoning went undetected. Thus, the esteemed Sultan, in addition to receiving the glad tidings of the Prophet ﷺ, attained the honored rank of martyrdom and returned to his Lord.

**May Allah’s mercy be upon him!..**





Following Fâtih's death, a profound sense of sorrow permeated the entire Islamic world, while it brought jubilation to the people across Christendom. The Pope even ordered the church bells to ring for a month in celebration. This contrasting reaction was a result of Fâtih's ambitious plans, which included not only the conquest of Istanbul but also the subsequent conquest of Rome and subjugation of the Pope. Fâtih had taken significant steps toward realizing this plan, such as the capture of Otranto and strategic maneuvers in Italy. Aware of Fâtih's might and power, other European Christian states hesitated to engage in war with the Ottomans and were forced to abandon their calls for help, leaving Italy vulnerable. The conditions for the conquest of Italy seemed favorable. It is speculated that Fâtih's intended next campaign would have been in Rhodes, as evidenced by Italy's urgency and the attempts to poison the Sultan while he was en route to conquest. The conquest of Rhodes, which was under Venetian control, would have facilitated the subsequent conquest of Italy.

Indeed, it was not destined for Fâtih Sultan Mehmed Khan to complete this strategic advance and fulfill his deep desire and ambition to receive the glad tidings from Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ regarding the conquest of Rome, in addition to Istanbul. **Although he did not live long enough to see it through, just as the conquest of Istanbul was fulfilled in accordance with the noble ḥadīth, the conquest of Rome will undoubtedly occur as a miraculous event ordained for the believers. Like all conquests, it awaits its appointed time, predetermined by divine decree.**

If Fâtih Sultan Mehmed Khan had succeeded in his last campaign, the geopolitical landscape of Europe would have transformed entirely. It is conceivable that Islam would have reached even the farthest corners of the continent...

**O Lord! Grant nobility and righteousness to the descendants of Fâtih Sultan Mehmed Khan, who have been neglected for centuries and deprived of the noble virtues embodied by the great world conqueror. Bestow upon them the lofty qualities that were bestowed upon him, the one blessed with the glad tidings of the Prophet ﷺ, particularly due to his strategic prowess and religious fervor! May Islam and Muslims regain their prominence and excellence once again through their righteous endeavors!..**

Âmîn!..





*The One Who Established the Throne in the Hearts of the People  
with His Rule Brimming with Morality, Virtue, and Justice*

## **SULTAN BÂYAZÎD KHAN, THE SAINT**

*(1448-1512)*

He was the eighth Ottoman sultan.

From a young age, he received meticulous upbringing and care. At the tender age of seven, he was already appointed governor of Amasya under the supervision of **Hadım Ali Pasha**. This early training ensured that he would grow into an exceptional statesman.

Bâyazîd Khan II possessed not only the qualities of a great statesman but also an artistic temperament and personality. He also excelled in various artistic pursuits, demonstrating his talents as a composer, poet, and calligrapher.

He was one of the most erudite of the Ottoman sultans. Even as a young prince, he displayed a thirst for knowledge and not only delved into the natural sciences but also benefited from the guidance and teachings of esteemed spiritual masters. His association with revered figures like **Muhyiddîn-i İskilîbî**,



the father of **Ebussuûd Efendi**, garnered their blessings, support, and prayers. By establishing numerous charitable institutions and governing with a strong sense of morality, virtue, and justice, he earned a special place in the hearts of the people. This led him to being honored with the title of *walî* ('saint') and affectionately referred to as "**Bâyazîd-i Walî**."

Bâyazîd Khan II's sincerity and piety were truly remarkable and played a significant role in his elevated status as the Sultan of both the outward and inward realms. His level of devotion was exemplified by his practice of collecting the dust that splattered on his clothes and shoes during military campaigns. Such was his reverence that he requested the collected dust to be placed under his cheeks after his passing, hoping to receive the blessed news from the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, as mentioned in the Prophetic traditions.

The couplets from Bâyezîd Khan II's poems, written under the pseudonym *Adlî* ('Juridical'), reflect the depth of his heart and his profound desire to know and connect with Allah. They express his understanding of the divine and his humility as a servant of Allah:

*Allah, divineness is worthy of Thee,  
And neediness is befitting of me.  
You are the Sanctuary, of all people in the world,  
The people's refuge is befitting of Thee..."*

*"O Allah, as You are worthy of divinity, so is servitude to me (in Thee's path and presence)."*

*"For it is Thou art (the Protector) who is the refuge of all people of the world. (Therefore) it is befitting of all creatures to take refuge in Thee."*



After Bâyezîd-i Walî became the Sultan in 1481, he spent the first fourteen years of his reign dealing with his brother Cem Sultan, who also sought to become the sultan. This situation forced Bâyezîd II to adopt a more cautious approach toward the Christian world. In an attempt to resolve the conflict, Cem Sultan offered the following proposition to Bâyezîd Khan:

*"—Let us divide our country in two, you will rule one half and I will rule the other half!.."*

Bâyazîd-i Walî said:



“–My brother, the homeland is the property of the Ummah. The state will lose its power. Eventually, we will return to becoming weak principalities. That would be a great tragedy. My body can be divided in two, but the land of the Ummah can never be divided!..” and rejected his offer.

This attitude alone demonstrates how idealistic Bâyezîd-i Walî’s temperament was. In addition to his insight and foresight, he was full of concerns about the future of Islam and its mission.

Having received a rejection to his proposal, Cem Sultan, despite his many great virtues, engaged in long and futile struggles with his elder brother Bâyezîd Khan II due to his incompetence in administrative matters. He did not heed his brother’s prudent advice and reasonable offers, expressing his disapproval through one of his poems:

*You lay enthusiastically in a rose-like bed with great joy  
I lay in a furnace of suffering on a bed of ashes, why is this?..*

Bâyezîd II, who was a spiritually mature and pious person, also responded to his brother’s greed-filled question in a verse reminding him of Allah’s divine providence and warning him of wrongdoing:

*Because the state has been given to us as a blessing,  
What is the reason for not consenting to divine providence?  
Insisting that you are the pilgrim of the two sacred sites;  
What is all this demand for sultanic rule?..*

Subsequently, Cem Sultan, deceived by the gracious invitation of **Pierre d’Aubusson**, the leader of the knights, went to Rhodes. According to the mutually signed agreement, Cem could leave the island any time he wished. However, the knights of Rhodes fell back on their promise and treated him as a prisoner.

It was a grave mistake and misfortune for Cem Sultan to take refuge with the **Rhodes** knights in the way he did, like a dagger stuck in the heart of himself and the Ummah. It became an obstacle in conquering the West. Moreover, the loss of the fortress of Otranto hindered the path toward the conquest of Rome.

The knights, who managed to capture Cem Sultan through deceit, eventually handed him over to the Papacy in exchange for a sum of money, as if they were selling a slave. The Papacy also had plans to use Cem in the Crusades.





Bâyazîd Khan, on the other hand, was able to avert this danger by threatening to wage war with the Christians in response. Consequently, he had to allocate large sums of money from the state treasury to the Papacy as a result.

In this situation, Pope Innocent VIII, recognizing that he could not launch a crusade against the Ottomans using Cem, presented him with an offer to convert to Christianity.

This proposal weighed heavily on Cem Sultân. He felt embarrassed and responded to the Pope:

**“–If you were to offer me the Ottoman sultanate, or even the whole world, I would not change my religion!..”**

Because, no matter what, Cem Sultan held his religion above everything. His love for Allah and His Messenger was beyond measure. The following couplet, which he wrote after completing the pilgrimage, clearly exemplifies this truth:

*Arriving at the House of Allah and circumambulating it once,  
Amounts to a thousand Karaman, a thousand Persian, and a thousand  
Ottoman lands...*

On the other hand, when he understood that the Crusaders wanted to use him against Islam, Cem Sultan’s prayer to Allah was sufficient to demonstrate his spiritual perfection. He trembled even over the possibility of being used against Islam and pleaded with His Lord:

*“O Lord! If the unbelievers want to use me to harm Islam, do not let this servant of yours live any longer! Take my soul to the exalted abode at once!..”*

His prayer was met when he died in Naples at the age of thirty-six. When he died, he made the following last request to those next to him:

*“Announce the news of my death to all sides by all means! Make sure to this so that the unbelievers’ plot against the Muslims by using me as a pretext will come to an end! Afterward, go to my brother, Sultan Bâyezîd. Ask him that no matter how difficult it may be, he will have my body taken to the motherland. I do not want to be buried in a heathen country. Whatever has happened until now has happened. May he not refuse this request! May he be graceful and pay all my debts. I do not want to go to the presence of Allah as a debtor.*





*May He forgive my family, my children, and those who serve me. May He make them be pleased with their state..”*

And his elder brother, Bâyezîd Khan, fulfilled this request.

After Cem’s death, Sultan Bâyezîd Khan had the opportunity to shape his foreign policy with fewer constraints and undertook significant efforts to rebuild the country. He commissioned the constructions of the magnificent **Bâyezîd Mosque**, situated on one of the seven hills of Istanbul, designed by the architect **Kamâladdîn**. The foundation of this mosque was laid in 1501, and it took five years to complete the complex.

**Evliyâ Chelebi** documents several details about the Bâyezîd Mosque in his *Seyahatnâme*, stating:

“When the chief architect was hesitant about the direction of the Kaaba, Sultan Bâyezîd Khan exclaimed:

“Step on my foot, right now!”

When the chief architect stepped on his foot, he beheld the grand **Kaaba** directly in front of him. He fell at the feet of Sultan Bâyezîd-i Walî. Thus, establishing the direction of the qiblah.”

The following is another incident that took place during the construction of the mosque:

The daily wages of the craftsmen and workers involved in the construction of the mosque were determined and placed in jars each day. These jars were left in a corner, and everyone would take their share accordingly. However, every day there was a surplus of one day’s worth of wages in the jar. Upon investigating who did not receive his share, it was finally discovered that a poor worker was responsible for this. It turned out that in the evening, the man would somehow leave the construction site without taking his money. They asked him why he was doing this.

The poor worker, embarrassed that his secret was out, said:

“–I have no possessions or property! For this reason, I am always sad that I cannot do a good deed monetarily as I wish in this fleeting world. I thought that at least I would work on the construction of this mosque without receiving payment, I would have done a sincere charitable act...”



To this poor man with a rich heart the people said:

“–Brother, this mosque is a charitable endeavor of the sultan. You must be paid for your work. Continue to contribute physically here, but also take your due wages and donate them wherever you desire!..”

Sultan Bâyezîd Khan often personally participated in the construction of the mosque named after him. During one of the work shifts, he noticed a worker who was exceptionally fast and skilled in building and raising the walls. Upon careful observation, he realized that this worker was none other than **Khidr** عليه السلام as the poet says in the expression:

“It is not reasonable for the **People of the Heart** to not know each other”

He immediately approached him, grabbed him, and after holding his hand tightly, said:

“If you do not promise to visit this mosque at every prayer time, I will now shout and declare to the world that I have caught Khidr!..”

Khidr عليه السلام apologized, explaining the magnitude of his work, and asked to be forgiven for the inconvenience. Although Bâyezîd lightened his plea from every prayer to once a day, Khidr عليه السلام did not agree to this either. Eventually, Khidr عليه السلام agreed to visit once a week, and Bâyezîd released him.

As a result of this tradition, it has been believed that for centuries Khidr عليه السلام visited the Bâyezîd Mosque once every week. According to a *tawâtur* (‘widely authenticated’) report, Khidr عليه السلام used to pray near the red striped minaret whenever he visited.

The mosque was opened for worship on a Friday, and Bâyezîd Khan II led the first prayer. Evliyâ Chelebi describes this incident as follows:

“When the construction was completed, the mosque opened for worship with a grand ceremony on a Friday. Bâyezîd-i Walî said:

“Whoever, throughout his life, has never neglected the first Sunnah prayer of the afternoon and night prayers, let him lead the prayer at this blessed time!”

However, when no one from the community came forward to take up the role, Bâyezîd Khan felt obliged to lead the prayer himself and remarked:

**“–All praises be to Allah! In war and peace, I have never neglected these Sunnah prayers!..”**

Thus, Bâyezîd Khan demonstrated remarkable renunciation and piety.



There are many similar stories of Bâyezîd-i Walî among the people. Let us take a look at another one:

During his youth, Bâyezîd-i Walî often visited Shaykh Abû al-Wafâ. This close connection may have caused some gossip, prompting Bâyezîd to caution his daughter and forbid her from visiting the shaykh. However, Sultan Efendi (referring to the women that belonged to the khanate from the father's side) obtained permission for one last visit. Shaykh Abû al-Wafâ, who was aware of the situation and Sultan Efendi's internal state, gave her a gift to be presented to her father. It was a snuffbox. Since Bâyezîd was highly fond of snuffboxes, Shaykh Abû al-Wafâ elected to send this as a gift to Bâyezîd-i Walî.

When Bâyezîd-i Walî opened this box, which was presented with the Shaykh's greetings and prayers, he was amazed! Because instead of snuff, the box contained a small piece of cotton with an ember, symbolizing fire. This message was a response to the rumors and was intended to demonstrate that Bâyezîd's love was not worldly but divine.

This incident deepened Bâyezîd-i Walî's desire to visit Shaykh Abû al-Wafâ. When his request was not granted, he, like his father Fâtih, must have felt a surge in his sultanic spirit. One day, he quietly and discreetly went to the lodge with his men. As their palace cars approached the lodge, the dervishes hurriedly informed Shaykh Abû al-Wafâ of the Sultan's visit. While the Shaykh exclaimed:

“–It cannot be! Such a thing is not possible!” the dervishes insisted:

“–Here he is!.. He is coming!..”

Upon being informed, Shaykh Abû al-Wafâ leaned toward the qiblah on the divan and uttered the Islamic declaration of faith. When Sultan Bâyezîd Khan entered, he discovered that the Shaykh had already passed away. It seemed that the Shaykh had foreseen their meeting would not occur in this world, for he had repeatedly declined the Sultan's requests to meet, saying:



**“It is not destined for us to meet in this world!”**



**Mesih Pasha**, a respected statesman who held a similar position to Shaykh Edabali for Bâyezîd Khan II, would occasionally deliver stern warnings to the Sultan. He would explain to the Sultan the unIslamic demeanor of his viziers and remind him of his obligation to rectify such mistakes. Mesih Pasha emphasized that the Sultan’s piety alone would not be enough to save him from the torment of Hell.

Bâyezîd Khan II would readily listen to these admonitions. In a meeting at the imperial council, he warned his viziers as follows:

*“–O Pashas! Every individual under my authority will surely be questioned about me on the Day of Judgment. I hear that you have introduced practices in my administration that are contrary to Islamic principles! Do you know that by doing so, you are not giving me a place to rest in the hereafter! How will I answer for these actions on the Day of Judgment? Be aware and refrain from committing acts that go against divine law!..”*

Bâyezîd-i Walî placed great importance on Islamic scholarship, culture, and the establishment of pious foundations, complexes, hospitals, and charitable services. His reign marked a significant period in the foundation of Ottoman culture and civilization. When the renowned Italian architect and painter Leonardo da Vinci wrote a letter to Bâyezîd II and offered to personally design the plans and projects of the mosques and other structures in Istanbul, it generated excitement among the viziers of Kubbealtı (‘under the dome’ in the imperial council hall at the Topkapı Palace). However, Bâyezîd Khan II, with his deep understanding of spirituality, rejected this offer and said:

**“–If we accept this proposal, then an architecture that resembles church architecture in terms of style and spirit will dominate our country, and our Islamic architecture will not develop and acquire its distinct character!”**

This perspective reflects the mindset of an intelligent, insightful, and internally cultivated Muslim leader. During Bâyezîd-i Walî’s Islamic reign, the Islamic lands expanded to cover twenty-four million square kilometers, and Islamic art reached its zenith. With this understanding, the spirit of Islam left its mark on architectural geometry, resulting in landmarks such as the **Su-**



**laymâniye Mosque** complex and others that continue to hold immense value until the Day of Judgment.



Bâyazîd-i Walî was widely known in history for his knowledge, humility, compassion, dignity, and forbearance. He held great respect for the ulema and saints, and he allocated a separate budget to support them. With this initiative, he encouraged the production of scholarly works and fostered an environment that turned Istanbul into a city of scholars.

The scholarly pursuits that had began during the reign of Sultan Fâtih flourished under the profound understanding and intelligence of Bâyezîd-i Walî. His interest in scholars and sages extended beyond Ottoman borders and into other Islamic countries. For example, he provided a salary from his personal wealth to **Mollah Jâmî**, a renowned scholar in Herat, as well as to other shaykhs and disciples of the **Naqshbandî** lodge in Bukhara.

Furthermore, ‘**Ubaydullâh Ahrâr**’ visited ‘**Abd al-Hâdî**, the son of Ahrâr, in Istanbul and presented him with many gifts, signifying Bâyezîd-i Walî’s respect and recognition of esteemed scholars and spiritual figures from other regions.

Shaykh al-Islam Kamâl Pashazâde, while expressing the inward and outward greatness of Sultan Bâyezîd Khan, writes:

*“He was the protector of justice and equity. Owing to his ingenious politics, the nation became prosperous. His wondrous deeds had clearly become manifest. With his dignified state and demeanor his enemies were subdued.”*



Although **Bâyazîd-i Walî** was one of the greatest Ottoman sultans, he was a figure whose value could not be adequately appreciated.

The reason for this, as explained above, is a general feeling of pity for his brother, “**Cem Sultan**,” due to his unfortunate fate!

Another reason is that he assumed the role of ruler after his father, **Fâtih Sultan Mehmed Khan**, a monumental figure the likes of which rarely emerged across many centuries. It was expected of him to continue the path of conquest laid out by his father and complete the conquest of “Western Rome,” which had already been initiated. However, incidents such as the “Cem Sultan” affair



and the “Şahkulu” rebellion of Alawite origin prevented him from achieving this. Had it not been for these circumstances, he would have certainly been a conqueror like his father, Fâtih Sultan Mehmed Khan, and his son, Yavuz Sultan Selîm Khan. Nevertheless, despite all these unfavorable conditions, splendid victories were also achieved during his reign. One remarkable triumph was the victory of “**Abdina**” (**Kirbova**).

The poet Yakup Pasha, a distinguished commander, was returning after he had made a foray into Istiria under the orders of the Sultan. They had acquired a considerable amount of war booty and taken captives. When the mujahids reached Kirbova, they were confronted by a large enemy army. Despite the fatigue and sparseness of his soldiers, Yakup Pasha was compelled to engage in battle. With the help of Allah, they launched a fierce attack and managed to overpower the enemy army, despite being outnumbered. On that day, approximately six thousand enemy combatants were killed by eight thousand selected soldiers, and around twenty-five thousand were taken as prisoners.

This victory achieved by the Ottomans is a rare moment in history. The fact that a small army force, weary from raids, and burdened with war booty and captives, dared to face an incomparable enemy force in battle demonstrates a temporal and spiritual valor of an extraordinary kind that is beyond imagination.

During the reign of Bâyezîd Khan II, the Ottomans made significant efforts to assist the Muslims of **Andalusia** to the best of their ability. Although the Ottoman fleet was not yet capable of confronting all European navies at the time, they managed to rescue hundreds of thousands of Muslims from the brutal Christian massacres and transport them to Africa. Additionally, the Spanish coasts were consistently bombarded as a retaliatory measure for the loss of Andalusia.

Unfortunately, further assistance could not be provided to the Muslims of Andalusia, who had already formed principalities and engaged in infighting for their own interests. They had even repeatedly summoned the Christians for aid in their internal conflicts, a betrayal of the Quranic spirit that resulted in division and fragmentation. An incident that exemplifies this situation is as follows:

**Abû ‘Abdullâh**, the last ruler of **Granada**, gazed at his city for the last time as he left it in the hands of the enemy, accompanied by his mother. While

witnessing the destruction of the magnificent Islamic artistry of the al-Hamrâ palace and the burning of this precious Islamic land, the ruler could not help but sigh and weep. Observing her son's sorrow, his mother made the following poignant remark with her eyebrows furrowed:

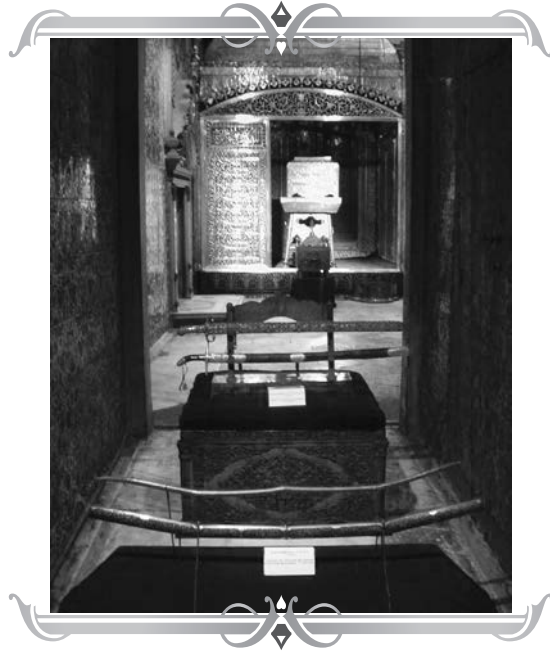
**“–Cry, O heedless one, cry! Weep like a woman now for this blessed land of yours that you could not protect like a man!..”**

From that day onward, the hill was remembered by a name meaning «**the final lament of the Arab**» or the «**hill of the Arab's lament**».

Accusing the Ottomans of being mere bystanders to the catastrophe of the Muslims of Andalusia demonstrates a lack of understanding of these historical circumstances or malicious intent. It should be noted that reaching Spain by land via Germany and France was not feasible. The Ottomans could only carry out intruder missions against the entire Spanish landmass through naval operations, which they did.

Considering the thirty-one-year reign of Sultan Bâyezîd Khan II, it becomes evident that his period was not as militarily inactive as previously believed. Despite being constrained by the need to avoid provoking the Christian world due to the incident involving Cem Sultan, he achieved significant victories. These include suppressing the “**Shâhkulu**” rebellion, defeating “**Sapienza**” in major naval battles, conquering İnebahti, and capturing the fortresses of **Koron**, **Modan**, and **Navarin**. These accomplishments highlight his active military engagements during his reign.





*The Unparalleled World Conqueror and Renunciant Who  
Established the Unity of Islam, Servant of the Two Noble Sanctuaries*

## **YAVUZ SULTAN SELÎM KHAN**

*(1470-1520)*

He was the ninth Ottoman sultan.

Even as a prince, he studied the religious and natural sciences with the most distinguished scholars of his time.

He began his political career as the governor of **Trabzon**. Despite being at an early stage of his administration, he earned admiration from and provided comfort to Muslims, while striking fear and terror into his enemies with his imposing stature and unwavering determination. During this period, he participated in three campaigns against the Georgians, and in the territories he conquered, he played a significant role in converting some of them.

Yavuz was well aware of Shâh Ismâ'îl's nefarious ambitions concerning the Ummah, especially due to Trabzon's proximity to Iran. As a prince, he



recognized the need to take decisive and effective measures against the Shâh. However, he believed that it would be difficult to confront Shâh Ismâ‘îl solely as a prince, without the title and power of the Ottoman Sultan.

Therefore, he took the drastic step of eliminating his brothers **Şehzâde Ahmad** and **Şehzâde Korkut**, and ascended the Ottoman throne in 1512.

Upon his arrival in Istanbul and his invitation to the throne, he delivered a speech to the state dignitaries and the notables of the janissary corps. In this speech, he expressed his genuine intention and willingness to sacrifice and endure hardships:

*“If I become the Sultan, I will solemnly take to the path of Islamic unity. If Allah gives me the power, I will go to India and Tûran and strive to spread and elevate the Word of Allah in both the East and the West. I will have no mercy on the oppressors, even if they are my children. There will be no comfort in my time, we will all work very hard, and no injustices will be committed against the people. This is my current state!.. My brother, on the other hand, has a penchant for comfort and is gentle-natured. If you are not afraid of jihad and are prepared to suffer in the path of Allah, pledge your allegiance to me! Otherwise, choose my brother Şehzâde Ahmad for the sultanate so that you will be preoccupied with comfort and pleasure in his era!..”*



Despite his renowned valor, Yavuz Sultan Selîm was also a deeply sensitive person with a gentle soul. When he found himself compelled to eliminate his brother Korkut for the sake of the state’s survival, he was overcome with grief and remorse. He went under Korkut’s coffin and, while crying, uttered the following words:

“–O my brother! Neither if you had done this to me, nor if I had to do this!..”

Yavuz Sultan Selîm demonstrated his appreciation for loyalty and rewarded one of Şehzâde Korkut’s faithful men, **Piyâle**:

“–I forgive you because of your faithfulness to my brother, which is a great virtue! As a reward for your loyalty, allow me to appoint you to the position of your choice. Be my vizier if you wish!”

He thanked the Sultan and replied:





**“Your Majesty, my duty from now on is to be the caretaker of Şehzâde Korkut’s tomb!..”**

This incident serves as a testament to the moral character not only of the sultan but also of the entire Ottoman state, from the people to the highest ranks of power.

Yavuz Sultan Selîm showed great respect to his father, Bâyezîd Khan II, by personally escorting him to **Komotini** and allocating a yearly sum of two million *akçe* for his support. He accompanied him in a carriage and bid him farewell. When his father passed away, Yavuz Sultan Selîm brought his body to Istanbul and had a tomb built in front of the Bâyezîd Mosque, where he was laid to rest.



In the illustrious history of the Ottoman state, spanning six hundred and twenty years, Yavuz Sultan Selîm Khan’s reign lasted only eight years. Yet, within this relatively short period, he achieved remarkable feats, the scale of which is difficult to comprehend. Even scholars well-versed in the **philosophy of history**, which seeks to unravel the mysteries and wisdom behind historical events, struggle to explain the material and spiritual contributions of Sultan Selîm Khan to Ottoman history.

He traveled a distance of 2,500 kilometers by crossing mountains, hill-sides, deserts, and forests and devastated the mighty army of the Şafavids, one of the time’s most powerful states. Additionally, his conquest of Egypt poses an enigma as it defies explanation how he traversed the daunting **Sinai Desert**, considered unnavigable during that era, with the limited resources available to him.

Thanks to Yavuz Sultan Selîm Khan, the institution of the caliphate regained its esteemed status and achieved lasting significance. Moreover, the sacred trusts were honored with the reverence they deserved. His grandfather, Sultan Fâtih, had recognized the exceptional physical and spiritual prowess of his warrior-grandson from an early age and bestowed upon him the name “Yavuz.”

The portrait of this extraordinary warrior-ruler has been immortalized in the annals of history.



Throughout his life, Yavuz Sultan Selîm Khan refused to succumb to despair and weakness. Instead, he sought solace in his unwavering faith in Allah, firmly believing that solutions could be found through reliance on divine guidance.



Upon ascending the throne, Yavuz Sultan Selîm Khan wasted no time in taking decisive action. **Shâh Ismâ‘îl**, who had seized control of **Azerbaijan**, **Iraq**, and **Iran**, posed a significant threat to Anatolia. Using Shi‘ism as a pretext, he continuously incited conflict, jeopardizing the unity and solidarity of the Muslim community.

In a grand council convened by Yavuz Sultan Selîm, he explained at length the dangerous activities of Shâh Ismâ‘îl. Following intense deliberations, the imperial council, supported by a legal ruling from **Ibn Kamâl Pasha**, decided that a military campaign to Iran was necessary.

On April 20, 1514, Yavuz Sultan Selîm traveled to Uskudar and joined the imperial army for the expedition to Iran. Despite being called upon to display courage, Shâh Ismâ‘îl continued to evade confrontation.

Şafavid territories were invaded, with Shâh Ismâ‘îl persistently fleeing in the opposite direction. As the journey grew long and arduous, the soldiers became weary, and supplies began to deplete. Within the army, discontent started to spread, and some rebelled, proclaiming:

“Shâh Ismâ‘îl has fled. Even this is a victory. Let’s go back..”

In a shocking turn of events, arrows were shot at Yavuz Sultan Selîm Khan’s tent by the rebellious soldiers. In response, Yavuz emerged from his tent and delivered one of the most remarkable speeches in the history of warfare:

*«The goal has not yet been reached; there will be no turning back from this expedition in the least. Only those who prioritize their personal interests would consider going back from this jihad. I desire to have only the brave by my side, and I would fight even if I were alone...»*

Yavuz Sultan Selîm’s voice echoed loudly as he continued:

**“–Those who wish may return to their wives and don their garments! I, however, am prepared to confront the enemy alone!”**

With those resolute words, Yavuz spurred his horse forward.



Yavuz Sultan Selîm Khan, a fearless warrior who always had a shroud around his neck since he was a prince to remind him of his mortality, stood at that moment where he could have been struck by a thousand arrows. His unwavering trust, acceptance of fate, and realization that every solution rested with Allah instantly changed the course of this incident. His impassioned speech, emanating from the depths of Yavuz's spirit, ignited a flame of determination in the hearts of his soldiers, cascading like a powerful waterfall. With renewed resolve and boundless energy, they advanced toward the **Chaldiran Plain**. In a woeful defeat, Shâh Ismâ'îl fled, abandoning his wife and crown on the battlefield.

After the victory at Chaldiran, Selîm Khan entered **Tabriz**, where he paid homage to the four caliphs by having a sermon read on his behalf. He displayed a deep interest in the skilled and learned individuals of Tabriz and extended an invitation for them to come to Istanbul.

That year, Selîm Khan spent the winter in Karabakh, Azerbaijan, to consolidate the conquest of the region.

Overcoming a distance of 2,500 kilometers from Istanbul to Tabriz on foot, amidst numerous financial challenges, and achieving a resounding victory, stands as a rare event in history. It was a blessing actualized by the unity of the Ummah and with the belief that «hearts attached to a single spiritual axis must be one».



Indeed, the efforts of **Idris-i Bitlisî** in supporting Yavuz Sultan Selîm Khan's initiative for Islamic unity were highly commendable. Idris, a tribal chief in Southeastern Anatolia, decided to join forces with the Ottomans and annex his lands to their state.

Yavuz held Idris-i Bitlisî, originally a Kurd, in great esteem and expressed deep affection for him at every opportunity. He not only honored him with titles and high regards but also demonstrated unwavering trust and security by granting him unfilled imperial edicts, allowing him to appoint individuals of his choice to govern the principality. Idris-i Bitlisî proved himself to be highly deserving of this trust.

Despite the authority granted to him, Idris-i Bitlisî had nevertheless sought the Sultan's permission to fill in the imperial edicts, demonstrating

his loyalty and commitment to the Ottoman state. He played a pivotal role in thwarting the ambitions of the Şafavids in the eastern provinces and safeguarding the unity of the Ummah. With his ability to rally the people under the Ottoman banner, he decisively defeated the Şafavid army, including soldiers from Shâh Ismâ‘îl’s retinue.



The belief that the tomb of Muḥyî al-Dîn Ibn ‘Arabî, a renowned Sufi mystic and philosopher, would be discovered when the Arabic letter “*Sîn*” entered the Arabic letter “*Shîn*” is a popular story associated with his prophecy.

Thus, when Selim Khan entered Damascus, the tomb of Muḥyî al-Dîn Ibn ‘Arabî was miraculously found.



One day, Yavuz Selim Khan summoned his confidant **Hasan Can** to come before him. During the conversation, he asked him:

“–Tell me, Hasan, what kind of dream did you see tonight?”

When Hasan Can said that he had not seen a dream worth sharing, Yavuz insisted:

*“–Does a person sleep the whole night and never dream? You must have had a dream..”*

Hasan Can could not remember anything and felt embarrassed. Later, by chance, he learned that **Kapıağası Hasan Agha** had seen a dream and he asked him to relate it. Agha said:



“–Tonight the Harem was filled with people with saintly faces. In front of the Sultan’s door stood four people with a banner in their hands. The person at the front was holding the Sultan’s banner in his hand. That person said to me:

«–Do you know what we have come for?»

So I said:

«–Go on!»

In response, he said:

«–These blessed individuals you see are the Companions  of the Prophet . Our Prophet has sent us all to greet and salute Sultan Selim





**Khan and said: “The service of the Ḥaramayn (Mecca and Medina) has been given to him, let him come!..”**

**One of these four people you see is Abû Bakr al-Şiddîq ﷺ, and the other two are ‘Umar al-Fârûq ﷺ and ‘Uthmân Dhu al-Nûrayn ﷺ. I am ‘Alî bin Abî Ṭâlib ﷺ. Convey this glad tidings to Sultan Selîm Khan!..»** and then all together they disappeared suddenly.”

Hasan Can recounted Hasan Agha’s dream to the Sultan exactly as it was. The Sultan’s blessed face turned red, and tears of joy streamed from his eyes as he said:

**“–O Hasan Can! Have I not told you that I do not take action unless commanded? Each of our ancestors has experienced their share of saintliness. And each of them had performed many wondrous deeds...”**

It turned out that the Sultan had seen the same dream that very night!

Yavuz, strengthened by these spiritual signs, declared:

*“–Hasan Agha should also be included in the imperial council! Let the preparations for the **Egyptian** campaign begin!”* And in 1516, he set out on a military expedition to Egypt.

Yavuz had previously made a covenant with the **Mamluks of Egypt** that they would not support Iran. When they violated this covenant, Yavuz advanced toward them. He confronted the Mamluk army on the **Marj Dâbiq Plain** and defeated them decisively.

However, in order to solidify this victory, it was strategically necessary to reach Egypt. This required crossing the daunting **Sinai Desert**. Yavuz accomplished this remarkable feat in just thirteen days without any casualties and resupply. Even **Napoleon**, who was considered a great military genius, failed to achieve this task three hundred years later, as the French soldiers turned on each other in a desperate frenzy for water. When considering that even with modern techniques during the First World War, the desert could only be crossed in eleven days, the magnitude of Yavuz’s accomplishment becomes even more apparent.

There was great hesitation among the pashas and the soldiers about how to cross the desert. This unforgiving desert was scorching hot during the day



and freezing cold at night, with temperatures ranging from over 50 to below 20 degrees. It resembled a vast sea of sand.

However, with Yavuz's unwavering determination and decisive leadership, they set out into the desert. After a while, Yavuz dismounted from his horse and began walking. The military officials were both awestruck and fearful, whispering amongst themselves, «Why did the Sultan get off his horse and start walking in this desert where even the horses' blood boils and they can hardly move?».

In a state of fear, the military officials dismounted from their horses and began to walk. The Pashas urged Yavuz Khan's dear friend, Hasan Can:

“–Please, ask the Sultan what is happening.”

When Hasan Can curiously asked Yavuz what was wrong, Yavuz said:

“–Hassân, do you not see; in front of us is the Messenger of Allah, the ‘Pride of the Universe’ ﷺ?! How can we be on horseback when that Sultan of all the worlds is walking on foot?..”

From the blessing of Yavuz's intense love and reverence, his army miraculously crossed the daunting Sinai Desert by the grace of Allah's Messenger ﷺ under a cloud in thirteen days and conquered Egypt.

On January 22, 1517, Yavuz again defeated the Mamluks at **Rîdâniyyah**, firmly establishing the conquest of Egypt.

The Great Sultan demonstrated his noble character by carrying the body of the Mamluk sultan on his shoulders.

The capture of Egypt did not mark the end of the struggle. The Mamluk soldiers continued to resist and spread terror in the streets. The Mamluk Fadâiyyûn, a special force assigned to assassinate enemy generals, targeted Yavuz as their main objective. They declared that «If we kill Yavuz, we will win the war». Hearing this, **Sinan Pasha** informed Yavuz about the situation. Sinan Pasha, wearing Yavuz's clothes, lured the Fadâiyyûn toward himself. Meanwhile, Yavuz approached from behind and eliminated the Fadâiyyûn, but tragically, Sinan Pasha was martyred in the process.

When Yavuz entered Egypt, he was deeply saddened, saying:



“–We conquered Egypt, yet we lost Sinan Pasha!..” These words reveal how he saw the conquest of Egypt equivalent to the loss of a valiant warrior and scholar.

Yaḥyâ Kamâl expressed his sorrow with the following words:

*Ten Egypts would not have been equal to one Sinan, o misfortune  
This put the mighty Sultan in this dreary state*

Throughout history, there have been exceptional individuals who have risen to greatness because of their distinguished companions.

On February 15, 1517, Sultan Selîm Khan entered the palace of the Mamluks in Cairo with a grand ceremony. The royal historian of the time describes the people’s reception of Yavuz in Cairo as follows:

*“The streets and windows were filled with people eager to witness the magnificence of Yavuz. They anticipated him to be different, dressed in unique attire with a distinctive turban. However, Yavuz did not stand out at the front; instead, he was among his warriors. His clothing and turban were no different from those around him. He walked humbly, looking ahead.”*

In the sermon delivered at the **Malik al-Muayyad Mosque** on Friday, February 20, it mentioned:

«*Hâkim al-Haramayn al-Sharîf* (Ruler of the two Noble Sanctuaries, Mecca and Medina)». Yavuz immediately interrupted the Imam and said replying with tears in his eyes:

«–**No, no! On the contrary, *Khâdim al-Haramayn al-Sharîf*** (Servant of the two Noble Sanctuaries)»

He then removed the carpet and fell to the ground in prostration in gratitude to his Lord. To express his status as the Servant of the two Noble Sanctuaries, he wore a **broom-shaped crest** over his turban.

The following words he later said to Pîrî Pasha, who served as the chief qadi in the sacred cities, reflect his sincere and profound love for the Prophet ﷺ:

“–*Pasha! The sultanate of Mecca and Medina is in the hands of the son of the Leader of the Universe. I did not reach and conquer that land with soldiers. They obeyed me in the path of Islamic unity because of their excellence,*



*utmost propriety, and goodness. The reward for this honor is incumbent on me. I thank Allah day and night that my name will be remembered in the sermons delivered in those blessed cities. I would not exchange this bliss for becoming ruler of the whole world! In this respect, let us not spare whatever is needed for the people of Mecca and Medina! And do not interfere in the affairs of those two blessed cities!”*

One of the most important events that took place during the Egyptian campaign was the following:

During the expedition, the funds from the treasury had not yet arrived and a loan had been taken from a wealthy individual to cover some expenses. When the money came from the treasury and the receiver-general (*defterdar*) presented the debt, the creditor made the following offer:

“–I have a lot of wealth. I have no one but a son. If you agree, I will donate my money to the treasury. In return, give my son a position in the state government!..”

When the receiver-general presented this offer to the Sultan, Yavuz became extremely angry and shouted furiously at him:

*“I swear that because of your illicit proposal, I would have you and the merchant slaughtered. But I am afraid they will say, «Sultan Selim had the merchant and the receiver-general killed because he coveted his money». Return the money and never again propose such unlawful things in my presence!”*

Following this incident, an investigation was conducted, and it was discovered that the merchant was a Jew. He was subsequently removed from his position within the central state.



Yavuz Sultan Selim Khan was a sultan who was extremely irritable by impropriety and reckless behavior. However, this anger, like his sense of justice, was tempered within the bounds of the Shariah. On one occasion, he ordered the execution of about forty individuals due to a theft that occurred as a result of negligence within the treasury. Shaykh al-Islam **Zenbilli Ali Efendi**, who learned about the situation, came to Yavuz hastily and without permission before the verdict was given to prevent the execution. He also demanded a detailed account of the incident from the Sultan. Yavuz sternly replied:



“–Your Majesty! What you have heard is true, but you have no right to interfere in state affairs...”

Thereupon, Shaykh al-Islam Zenbilli Ali Efendi replied with the same firmness:

**“–Your Excellency! I have come to inform you of the Shariah. Our duty is to safeguard your hereafter...”**

Before the Shariah, whose measure is thinner than hair and sharper than a sword, Yavuz Selim Khan became relieved and asked:

“Is it not permissible to kill a faction to ameliorate the general state of affairs?”

Zenbilli Ali Efendi said:

“There is no relation between killing them and restoring order. They should be punished in accordance with their crimes...”

The Sultan who had brought huge armies to their knees bowed his head before him and retracted his decision. Zanbilli, who was very pleased with this, was about to leave but he returned again. He said to Yavuz, who was looking at him with curiosity:

“–Your Majesty! My main request was to preach the Shariah. I have a second demand, which is only an appeal...”

He then added:

“–Your Majesty! The crimes of these criminals belong to them. But who will care for their innocent families while they are in prison? Therefore, I ask you to pay alimony to the families of these criminals until they are released.”

Yavuz fulfilled his second request as he was undoubtedly aware of his responsibility before Allah.

In a similar incident, Zenbilli Ali Efendi had warned Yavuz Sultan Selim. However, as the Sultan believed he was justified in his decision, he responded to the Shaykh al-Islam by saying:

“It is not your duty to interfere in state affairs!..”

In the face of this intimidating response, Zenbilli Ali Efendi fearlessly replied:



**“–Your Majesty! These are matters concerning the hereafter, and we have the right to intervene. If you do not repeal the wrong decision you have made, be prepared for severe punishment on the Day of Reckoning!..”**

After uttering these words, the Shaykh al-Islam turned away and left without saluting the Sultan.

Although Yavuz Sultan Selîm Khan, who was about to embark on a military campaign, was initially taken aback by the Shaykh al-Islam’s unprecedented behavior, he understood the truth in his words, accepted his advice, and acted accordingly. Moreover, he wrote a letter apologizing to Zenbilli Ali Efendi.

For a world conqueror like Yavuz, who was known for his quick temper and lack of consideration for others in matters of state and country, to demonstrate patience and consolation toward a person of knowledge and wisdom showcased his exceptional and noble soul.



When Yavuz was returning to Istanbul from Cairo on September 10, 1517, the astute and powerful commander remarked:

**“The heart desires that I may ascend from the north of Africa to Andalusia and then return to Istanbul through the Balkans!”** This statement reflected his insatiable desire for conquest and exemplifying a true Muslim’s outlook.

This scene conveys not Yavuz’s pride but rather his love of *jihâd* and the majestic spirit that resides within him. The poet Yaḥyâ Kamâl described his unwavering enthusiasm for *jihâd* in the following words:

*If death did not subjugate Sultan Selîm I;  
He would have conquered the world for the Muḥammadan glory!*



On his return from Egypt, Yavuz visited Damascus and held a ceremony to inaugurate the shrine and mosque of **Muḥyî al-Dîn Ibn ‘Arabî**, for which he had built a tomb. During the ceremony, the caretaker of the mausoleum quietly declared to those nearby that Sultan Selîm Khan would not live long after.

As Yavuz and his victorious army advanced toward Istanbul, they faced great exhaustion from their two-year, one-month, and twenty-day campaign



in Egypt. Their fatigue was exacerbated by a lack of water in the region they were passing through, causing significant distress. Even their mounts were in danger of perishing.

In this state of distress, Yavuz Sultan Selîm Khan fell into prostration and sought refuge in Allah, saying:

*“My Lord! Make it easy for me and my soldiers! Send us Thy mercy, O Allah!..”*

At that very moment, rain began to fall heavily from the sky, as if a mercy-filled cloud had opened. The harsh drought and its damages were lifted by the grace of Allah.

Absorbed in Allah’s grace and mercy, Yavuz Sultan Selîm Khan and his army also encountered heavy rain near Adana. The surroundings turned into a muddy terrain. At one point, while conversing with **Kamâl Pashazâde**, one of the renowned scholars of the time, on horseback, Kamâl Pashazâde’s horse became startled, splashing mud all over Yavuz from head to toe.

Kamâl Pashazâde was deeply apologetic and visibly distressed. Yavuz, with a smile on his face, turned to him and said:

**“–The mud that leaps from the hooves of the horse of an esteemed scholar and stains us is an honor and a blessing. Wrap this muddy robe around my chest when I pass away!”**

This incident is an apt expression of the respect and honor that **Yavuz** showed to both scholars and sages.



Upon their return to Istanbul, they arrived in Uskudar during the daytime. Yavuz had received news that the people of Istanbul were going to have a grand public demonstration in his honor. He turned to his confidant, Hasan Can, and said:

**“–I will enter Istanbul after dark, when the streets are empty and everyone has returned to their homes. Let us not be swayed by the applause, triumphant chants, and praise of mortals, as it may lead to pride and destruction!..”**



Subsequently, the Egyptian and Ottoman ulema came to Istanbul and decided that Yavuz would become the “**caliph**.” Later the Caliph **al-Mutawakkil III** ascended the pulpit in the **Hagia Sophia Mosque** and officially declared Yavuz as the caliph. He took off his garment and placed it on Yavuz, symbolizing the transfer of caliphate. From this point onward, the Ottoman sultans were given the title of “caliph” along with the title of sultan.

The great warrior Sultan expanded the Ottoman territory to 4,182,000 km<sup>2</sup>, five times the size of present-day Türkiye. Egypt and the Arabian peninsula came under Ottoman rule. It stretched as far as the Indian Ocean. With the domination of North Africa, the Ottoman border rested on the Atlantic Ocean. Ottoman services were made available to countries of the Hejaz and the Middle East. Blessed relics of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ were brought to Istanbul, and the caliphal city gained honor and dignity. They were placed in a special room in the Topkapı Palace where forty hafizes were appointed to recite the Noble Quran uninterruptedly for twenty-four hours. Yavuz himself was the first to recite from the sacred scripture.

It is important to remember that the primary driving force behind outward and inward greatness and magnificence lies in reverence for the secrets and wisdom of the spiritual realm. The splendor of the Ottoman state, which lasted for six hundred years and was unparalleled among Islamic states, can be attributed to the significance placed on foundational spirituality. According to a well-known tradition, it is said that Osman Ghazi would not extend his feet at night in a room where the Noble Quran was present, showcasing his respect. Similarly, the honorable act of Yavuz Sultan Selim Khan bringing sacred relics to Istanbul with great honor and appointing forty hafizes to recite the Noble Quran uninterruptedly for centuries was a significant driving force behind the fabled greatness of the Ottoman state.

Allah has always bestowed prosperity upon those who respect and honor Him, His prophets, and saints, showering mercy upon their societies.

Sultan Yavuz, filled with gratitude due to the successive victories and the arrival of blessed relics of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, such as his sword and mantle, engaged in a conversation with **Pirî Pasha**. He asked him the following question:

*“–With the permission of Allah, we have achieved many great conquests and attained the title of Servant of the two Noble Sanctuaries. Allah has blessed*





*us with victories at all times and in all places. Our treasuries were filled with gold coins. Will this state collapse from this point onward?"*

Pîrî Pasha replied:

“–With Allah’s permission, this state, with its strength, spirit, determination, and resignation, will not be easily destroyed! However, if the rewards and blessings bestowed by Allah are not appreciated during the time of your grandchildren, if the trusts conferred to us are not honored, and if rights are not observed, it will collapse. I am primarily concerned about these three things:

1. If the office of Grand Vizier is not appointed according to his merits and instead falls into the hands of the ignorant and foolish in return for some material gain;

2. If material wealth occupies the hearts, if the gateway to bribery is opened, and if all kinds of detestable acts are realized by paying someone off, and, therefore, the positions of authority are given to the unqualified;

3. If statesmen fall under the influence of their wives and they begin to influence the administration, then this state will gradually collapse.”

Upon these words of Pîrî Pasha, the brave Sultan, after a period of silence, supplicated saying:

**“May Allah protect us from suffering such a fate!..”**

It was as if Pîrî Pasha’s observations carried a profound lesson in the philosophy of history, foreseeing the challenges that would arise in the coming ages. It seemed as though he was unveiling the significant factors that would contribute to the period of decline.

Many cases demonstrate the moral superiority of Yavuz Sultan Selîm Khan’s era. On the way to Egypt, the imperial army passed near Gebze, where many vineyards were located. Sultan Selîm Khan thought to himself:

**“Have my soldiers taken grapes and apples from these vineyards and consumed them without seeking permission from the owners?!”**

Then he summoned the chief Janissary and issued the following command:



*“–Agha, I order you to search the bags of all the janissaries, cavalry, and infantry! If any soldier is found with an apple or a bunch of grapes in their bag, bring them to me immediately!”*

The chief Janissary promptly carried out the order and searched their bags. He then returned to the Sultan and reported:

*“–We did not find any traces of apples or fruits that had been taken!..”*

Yavuz was delighted with this news. The weight on his shoulders and the concerns in his mind were alleviated. He raised his hands and supplicated:

*“O Allah! Praise be to Thee! You have bestowed upon me an army that does not consume what is religiously unlawful!..”* He continued:

*“–If my soldiers had taken fruit without consent, I would have abandoned the expedition to Egypt. For it is not possible to conquer lands with an army that indulges in what is unlawful!..”*

As a result of this magnificent state, Yavuz always received manifestations of divine assistance and grace.

According to tradition, during his expedition to Egypt, Yavuz gave his army a break while passing through the Çumra plain in Konya. While walking around with a few of his men, he encountered an elderly man. He greeted him and asked:

*“I have come from afar and feel hungry. Do you have any food?”*

The old man, continuing his work, pointed to a pot and said, «Here you are».

This time, Yavuz responded by saying:

*“But I am not alone. I have a huge army with me.”*

The saintly-faced old man calmly replied:

*“My son, by Allah’s permission, the food in the container is enough for all of you!”*

Indeed, the entire army was fed from this container, and there was still food left over. Yavuz, deeply moved by this miraculous event, asked the old man to pray for him and then continued on his way. After the victory, he stopped to visit this person again and asked if he had any wishes. That blessed ‘friend of Allah’ whispered:





“–Your Majesty! If you could give me my handkerchief back, I would be grateful. It was the only one I had.”

Yavuz was taken aback at first, but then realized that he was the one who used the handkerchief to bandage his wound during battle. With tears in his eyes, Yavuz handed back the handkerchief and expressed eternally gratitude to Allah for his countless blessings.

This incident is one of the clearest examples of how the ‘friends of Allah’ supported Yavuz both materially and spiritually in return for his sincerity.



The warrior Sultan led a simple life. Since he slept little, he spent most nights immersed in reading books. He preferred to eat only one type of food during each meal and used wooden plates. He had little interest in worldly delights.

One day, when he saw his son Sulaymân (Kânûnî) dressed in extravagant attire, he humorously remarked:

**“–Son, you are so decorated that you have left your mother nothing to wear!..”**

He dressed very plainly. When asked why, he would respond:

“–Dressing in a fancy and extravagant way is nothing but a burden. Why should we burden ourselves in vain?”

He would wear a garment until it became worn out. All state officials were expected to follow this practice. On one occasion, it was announced that the Venetian ambassador would visit Istanbul to be graced by the Sultan’s magnificent presence. The viziers, feeling the need to change their worn-out clothes, expressed their concerns to Yavuz through the Grand Vizier. However, Yavuz did not show any anger and simply responded:

“–It is appropriate.”

On the day of the ambassador’s arrival, all the viziers appeared before the Sultan with their new outfits. However, they were astonished and could not believe their eyes when they saw that Yavuz Sultan Selîm Khan was wearing his old clothes again. He sat on his throne, drew his sharp sword, and placed it on the step of the throne. The sunlight that entered through the window opposite





him illuminated him with a dazzling glow. The viziers were left bewildered and felt ashamed of their stylish attire.

After the meeting was over and the ambassador departed, Yavuz looked at the Grand Vizier and instructed him:

“–Pasha! Ask the ambassador, what his impression of us was?”

The Grand Vizier complied with the Sultan’s orders, returned, and conveyed the ambassador’s opinion:

“–Your Majesty! The Venetian ambassador said: **«The radiance of that sword caught my attention so much that I could not even see them...».**”

Yavuz smiled, pointing to his sword and index finger, saying to the Grand Vizier:

**“Behold, as long as the blade of our sword cuts, the eye of the unbeliever can never depart from it, and he will not see us! But Allah forbid, if one day it does not cut nor shine, then the unbeliever will despise us and look down upon us!..”**



Yavuz was a deeply religious and humble ruler, free from pride. He recognized that real strength and power belonged solely to Allah, and he saw himself as a mere instrument to victory. He tried his best to overcome his own ego and connect with his subjects, seeking to understand their struggles. He possessed extraordinary energy and had profound knowledge of history. The enduring impact of his victories for four hundred years is a testament to the magnitude of his achievements.

**Yavuz Sultan Selîm Khan possessed the bravery of a lion, venturing through the daunting Sinai desert. As he entered Egypt, he did so with humility, tears in his eyes, and as a grateful believer. In Uskudar, he appeared as a darwish, immersed in divine and spiritual pleasures that guided him in his personal struggle.**

He would recite the following verses to Hasan Can:

*Being sultan of the world is a vain struggle;  
Being with a saint surpasses them all!..*





When in the presence of saints, Yavuz Sultan Selîm Khan displayed great decency and humility, often choosing not to speak unless necessary. During his visit to **Muḥammad Badakhshî**, a renowned saint from Damascus, he listened attentively without uttering a word, and then respectfully departed. Surprised by this behavior, someone asked the fearless Sultan:

“–Your Majesty! You remained silent. What wisdom is it that you did not speak?” Yavuz replied:

**“–It is not appropriate for anyone (even the Sultan of the world) to speak when the esteemed ‘friends of Allah’ are addressing the gathering. Even as the Sultan, I am always in need of the spiritual assistance of such revered individuals. If I needed to speak in their presence, they would have given me the opportunity.”**

On his deathbed, Muḥammad Badakhshî, filled with love and respect for Yavuz Sultan Selîm Khan, gathered the notables of Damascus and imparted this advice:

*“–Do not fail in your obedience to Sultan Selîm Khan! He is a sultan praised in the sight of Allah. He is the sword of Islam commissioned with conquest.”*



Yavuz Sultan Selîm Khan, known for his deep reverence and devotion to the saints, was undeniably a true servant of Allah, just like his father. Among the facts of history, it is known that many of his notable deeds were of a miraculous nature. Throughout history, many of his notable actions were regarded as miraculous. One such incident unfolded when he entered the palace in a furious state. Without even changing his attire, he paced around the room, expressing his anger. It was revealed that his rage stemmed from **Ferhat Pasha**’s protection and favoritism toward **Iskender Chelebi**, sensing an inappropriate relationship between them. Yavuz Sultan Selîm Khan boldly proclaimed:

“–You will see what the future holds at last, Ferhat! Though you now shield Iskender, you will see the outcome of this protection when you are hung facing each other!..”

Years later, during the reign of Kânûnî, Ferhat Pasha and Iskender Chelebi were indeed hanged facing each other, precisely as Selîm Khan had foretold.



As Yavuz Sultan Selîm Khan approached the end of his life, the viziers, seeking to continue their military campaigns, prepared for an expedition to conquer **Rhodes**. They informed the Sultan of their intention, hoping to gain his approval. However, Yavuz, being a prudent and forward-thinking ruler, asked a crucial question, perhaps not wanting to overshadow the great victories he had already achieved:

“–The most important ammunition in the conquest of the fortress is gunpowder. Tell me, how many months of provisions and gunpowder do you have?”

The viziers replied:

“We have four-and-a-half, at most five months’ worth of gunpowder.”

Thereupon Sultan Selîm Khan made a poignant statement:

“You cannot conquer it in five months, not six months! You cannot conquer it even in seven months! That fortress, by Allah’s knowledge, can only be taken in eight or nine months. Therefore, with the current preparations you have, you cannot proceed. As for me, my journey is now to the hereafter.”

The Sultan’s words reflect the insight of a true believer. After his passing one year later, Rhodes was besieged during the time of Kânûnî, and at the end of an arduous struggle, the conquest was achieved only in the ninth month, as Yavuz had predicted.



In 1520, Yavuz Selîm was en route to Edirne to make preparations for a new campaign. He arrived at the village of Uğraş, the place where his father had passed away. There, he noticed a pimple on his back, and despite being warned against it, he said:

“My soul is not as delicate as that of a woman!”

He then proceeded to squeeze the pimple, causing it to bleed.

Hasan Can, Yavuz’s nephew, recounts this incident as follows:

“There was a carbuncle on his back. The boil soon grew into a gapping wound. We could even catch a glimpse of Yavuz’s lungs through the wound. He endured immense suffering, resembling a wounded lion. He refused to accept his weakness and continued issuing strategic instructions to his warriors. I approached him, and he alluded to his condition, saying:



«Hasan Can, what is this?»

Sensing that his earthly journey was coming to an end and was transitioning into his eternal life, my heart was filled with sorrowful separation, and I replied:

«It appears that it is time for you to be with Allah!»

The great Sultan turned to me, and with astonishment in his eyes, he said:

**«–O Hasan!.. Who do you think I was with until now?.. Have you noticed any deficiency in my devotion to Allah?»**

Feeling embarrassed by his words, I quickly responded:

«May Allah forbid, Your Majesty! I did not mean that. I only spoke out of caution, to acknowledge that the circumstance you are in is different from the others».

Immersed in a different realm now, the great Sultan, in his final words to me, said:

**«Hasan! Recite Şûrah al-Yâsîn!»**

I started reciting, tears welling up in my eyes. When I reached the passage, “*Salâmun,*” his soul departed to his Lord.”

**May Allah’s mercy be upon him!**

Despite the immense victories, worldly glory, and praise from others during his eight-year reign, Yavuz Sultan Selîm Khan remained humble and never lost his sense of awareness.

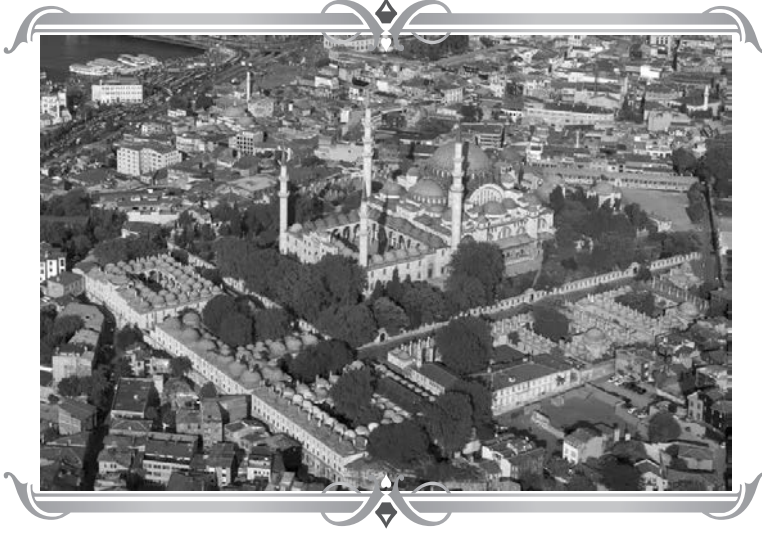
While Yavuz Sultan’s reign lasted only eight years out of the 620 years of Ottoman rule, its impact was profound and enduring, like the long shadows of a late afternoon.

The key to Kânûnî’s achievements can be found in the unwaveringly strong material and spiritual legacy left by his father.

O Lord! Grant us the courage and strength to be like Yavuz Sultan Selîm Khan, brave warriors striving on the path of Allah, and believers who express gratitude and immerse ourselves in celestial and spiritual pleasures in Your presence.

**Âmîn!**





*At the Height of All Forms of Splendor,  
the World Remembers Him as “Sulaymân the Magnificent”*

## **KÂNÛNÎ SULTAN SULAYMÂN KHAN** (1495-1566)

He was the tenth Ottoman sultan.

Born in Trabzon in 1495, his name “**Sulaymân**” was derived from the Noble Quran, specifically in reference to “**Prophet Sulaymân**” ﷺ as mentioned in the thirtieth passage of **Şûrah al-Naml**. This name seemed to carry the promise of a magnificent reign that would encompass both worldly and spiritual domains, even when he was still a prince.

In 1512, when his father, Yavuz Sultan Selîm, ascended to the throne, Şehzâde Sulaymân was called to Istanbul to serve as his deputy during Yavuz’s struggle with his brothers. After Yavuz Sultan Selîm’s victory and establishment of undisputed authority, the young prince was sent to the Saruhan principality, with its center in Manisa. This experience elevated his understanding of state administration. Meanwhile, his mother requested the guidance of **Sünbül Efendi**, a renowned saint of the time, who assigned **Merkez Efendi** as



Sulaymân's spiritual teacher. This marked the beginning of Kânûnî's spiritual nourishment.

Just as Shaykh Edabali trained Osman Ghazi and prepared him to become the material and spiritual foundation of a world state, Merkez Efendi played a similar role in spiritually preparing Şehzâde Sulaymân to govern the state with skill and competence. Under Merkez Efendi's guidance and care, Şehzâde Sulaymân learned the importance of recognizing that success in all its forms comes from Allah, and that he, as a servant, was merely a means to receive these blessings. Merkez Efendi became a constant source of inspiration for him throughout his life. In gratitude for his services, Sultan Sulaymân had a lodge built near Topkapı for Merkez Efendi.

On September 30, 1520, Sultan Sulaymân ascended the throne at a young age. He performed the funeral prayer for his father, Yavuz Selîm Khan, at Topkapı. He walked behind the funeral procession until they reached the Fâtih Mosque. After the funeral prayer, the body of Yavuz Selîm Khan was laid to rest in the Sultan Selîm district near Fâtih. Sultan Sulaymân then ordered **Ali Agha**, the chief architect, to construct a mosque and shrine in honor of his father at this location.

Kânûnî inherited from his father a state with the most superb and powerful army in the world. In a short time, his administration's greatness, moral excellence, and the scale of his conquests left a profound impression, even forcing his European adversaries to call him "**Sulaymân the Magnificent.**" When Yavuz Sultan Selîm passed away and Şehzâde Sulaymân ascended the throne, the Europeans rejoiced, saying: "**The lion is dead, the lamb has come in its place!**" In the eyes of the "Crusader world" he was a young and inexperienced ruler. However, their joy soon turned into disappointment.

This disappointment arose because the westward conquest, which his father Yavuz Sultan Selîm Khan could not complete due to his untimely death, remained, in a sense, a trust and legacy entrusted to Kânûnî Sultan Sulaymân Khan.

Without delay, the young ruler set his sights on Europe. He captured Rhodes in 1522 and in 1526, he achieved a decisive victory at the **Battle of Mohács**, effectively erasing Hungary from the map. He also conquered Budapest, and in 1529, he besieged Vienna. An Austrian expedition was launched in

1532, and in 1533, a treaty with Germany was signed. In 1537, he conquered Esztergom, Istoni, and Belgrade.

At that time, the magnificence of the state was so impressive that Barbarossa Hayraddîn Pasha, who ruled over North Africa, willingly gifted the region to the Ottomans in the name of “Islamic unity.” In return, Kânûnî appointed him as the commander of the Ottoman naval forces. With Barbarossa’s leadership, the Ottoman navy dominated the Mediterranean Sea, expanding its influence across the region. Ottoman naval forces even ventured into the Indian Ocean, providing assistance to Muslims in the area. Military expeditions were carried out in Sudan and Abyssinia, extending the Ottoman borders southward to central Africa. In the north, the Crimean Khans advanced as far as Moscow. In 1548, Tabriz was recaptured for the fourth time, further extending the eastern border to the Caspian Sea.

Barbarossa Hayraddîn Pasha’s devotion to the idea of Islamic unity and his spiritual excellence were truly praiseworthy. His aspiration to become a sultan in Algeria and unite the region with the Ottomans demonstrated his commitment to the caliphate. His deep spirituality influenced his extraordinary character. This is exemplified in a dream he had, which he recounted as follows:

“In my dream, a person approached me and presented a leather cloth, saying:

«—O Hayraddîn! Present this to our esteemed and honorable Sultan Sulaymân Khan!» And then, the person disappeared from my sight.

So, I opened the leather cloth and examined its contents. Inside, I found a white paper with green lettering, bearing the following passage:

نَصْرٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَفَتْحٌ قَرِيبٌ وَبَشِيرٌ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

«...(O Messenger!) Give good news to my faithful servants that help and an imminent victory is only from Allah and that conquest is near» (Şûrah al-Saff, 13). I read the words, pressed the paper against my face and eyes, and exclaimed.

«O Allah! Praise be to You!..» Then, I woke up from my dream.”





During his reign, Kânûnî Sultan Sulaymân Khan not only demonstrated his spiritual qualities but also dedicated his long life to establishing peace and prosperity for humanity. He liberated oppressed people who suffered under the rule of cruel kings and introduced them to the unparalleled mercy, compassion, and justice of Islam. His name resonated with admiration and reverence throughout the Muslim lands. The phrase “*ahd-i Sulaymân*” (the oath of Sulaymân) became a symbol of fulfilling words and promises due to his exemplary justice and righteousness.

No enemy force dared to challenge the mighty Ottoman army during his time. Even **Charlemagne**, who had gathered European powers under his banner, hesitated to confront Kanûni. He could do nothing but evade the Ottoman campaigns, aware that resistance would lead to the loss of Europe up to the Rhine River. Charlemagne’s constant retreats and inability to accept a decisive defeat revealed his weakness in the face of the harmoniously coordinated Ottoman forces.

Despite his ambitions, Charlemagne faced a resounding defeat in his attempt to take Algeria by surprise. The fierce response from Hasan Pasha, a spiritual son of Barbarossa acting as a proxy, along with the divine assistance favoring the Muslims, led to his downfall. In his desperate state, Charlemagne even had to resort to eating his beloved horse due to hunger. Ultimately, he narrowly escaped death by boarding a ship. Overwhelmed by his failures and unsure of his next move, Charlemagne removed his crown and threw it into the sea in a fit of madness, exclaiming his own inadequacy as a ruler:

**“–Leave me, O poor pawn! Go and find a ruler who is more qualified than me!..”**

The Crusader army, assembled by the Pope and consisting of 100,000 soldiers, faced a similar fate in Budapest. Despite their large numbers, they were unable to make an impact against the well-guarded fortress defended by only eight thousand Ottoman forces. In the end, nearly half of the Crusader army was annihilated in a fierce attack by the Ottomans, and the rest scattered in defeat. It was a notable victory where the Ottomans achieved a remarkable ratio of “one against ten.”

Kânûnî, accompanied by a band of two hundred musicians and other organized groups, displayed exemplary discipline and excellence. Historians described this scene as follows:





“The army’s order was so impeccable that not even an egg would be broken or a rooster’s crow heard..”

With this formidable army, Kânûnî expanded the inherited homeland of 6,557,000 km<sup>2</sup> from his father to a vast territory of 14,893,000 km<sup>2</sup>. The Ottoman state’s borders extended across continents and oceans, leaving even the most notorious kings helpless in the face of their power.

When the king of Spain could not keep up with the advances of conquest carried out by Kânûnî’s naval commander, Barbarossa Hayraddîn Pasha, and could not carry out the oppression he wished to inflict on Muslim cities, he decided on a revenge campaign toward Anatolia with senseless courage. At that time, the presence of Sultan Sulaymân Khan in Europe made him very enthusiastic about this situation. However, the German emperor Ferdinand, who learned about this, felt compelled to write the following letter, full of great confessions about the Ottomans, both for the king of Spain to act by seeing the facts and to find an ally for him against Kanûnî:

**“–My brother, King of Spain! I heard that while the Ottomans were on a European campaign, you were going on a campaign to Anatolia by taking advantage of this opportunity! Frankly, I did not find this plan appropriate and correct. Because I have never seen in my life that one of us was able to make a military campaign to Anatolia and conquer a fortress or any place there and hold it in their hands. Those that could be held for a while had always been taken back by the Turks. Aside from Anatolia, we cannot even take back the places they conquered in our country. Think about it; what fortress have we taken and held in all these years? What city or town did we capture and not surrender? Know that for you to embark on such activities in places far away from your hometown is indeed a futile affair. Let him also know that the fact that you go on an expedition to Anatolia because the Sultan and his soldiers are not in their place means that you put your hand in the open mouth of a roaring lion and, in such a situation, you will never tear your hand from his mouth again! Come, desist from this pursuit! Come, help me! If you do not help me, my life and affair will both come to an end. That means it will be your turn.”**

As we have seen, the era of Kânûnî serves as a testament to Allah’s divine assistance showering upon those who sincerely believe and seek His approval.





The glory and victories that unfolded were a clear manifestation of this help, making other kings appear as mere provincial governors in comparison.

One such king was King **Francis** of France, who had been captured during a war with the German emperor Charlemagne. In a desperate plea, Francis' mother sent a messenger to Kânûnî, referring to him as 'The Sultan of sultans'. In response, Kânûnî wrote:

**«I am...»** Starting with the countries in which he ruled at length:

**«...Sultan Sulaymân Khan, son of Yavuz Sultan Selîm Khan, the ruler of Azerbaijan, Anatolia, Rumelia, the Balkans, Karaman, Iraq, Arabia, and Egypt, both on land and at sea»** and continued saying:

**«Thou art Francis, the governor of the state of France.»** After his declaration, he consoled her by stating that it was normal that such an incident could happen to kings.

When Kânûnî proclaimed in his letter, "I am the ruler of the land and the seas!" it was a powerful declaration of the strength and might of faith echoing throughout the world. This resounding cry remained unwavering throughout his reign. During a period when the deplorable practice of dancing was emerging in France, Kânûnî, upon hearing of it, promptly sent the following instruction to the king of France:

*"...I have been informed that in your country, there exists a reprehensible form of entertainment in which men and women embrace each other under the guise of dancing, acting contrary to morality and modesty before the public eye! There is a possibility that this disgrace may spread to my lands, as we share a common border. Therefore, as soon as my imperial decree reaches your hands, eradicate this disgrace! Otherwise, I am fully capable of personally intervening to put an end to this dishonor."*

According to historian **Joseph von Hammer**, dancing was banned in France for an entire century following Kanûnî's letter.

During this period, the Ottoman community, from the highest nobility to the lowest-ranking members, exuded a sense of fervor, seriousness, and joy in their faith. The magnificence and enthusiasm of faith and the elevation to this glory were not only evident in Kânûnî himself but also in all the institutions of the state.



When a naval soldier galloped into the Topkapi Palace to deliver the news of the victory at **Preveza**, his horse momentarily reared up on two legs as he pulled on the reins. Observing this scene, Kânûnî remarked:

“–What a fierce steed you have come with!..” to which the soldier replied:

“–*Your Majesty, the Mediterranean was a raging steed. We have even tamed it!..*” This exchange exemplified the self-assurance that emanated from the power of faith.

The same heartbeat and sentiment resonated from the Sultan to the lowliest soldier, uniting them in their devotion.

**Mîmar Sinan**, with his **Sulaymâniye** complex, maintained an unrivaled position in the field of architecture. **Bâkî** and **Fuzûlî** showcased their excellent poetry, leaving a lasting legacy. **Kamâl Pashazâde** and **Ebussuûd Efendi** provided insightful legal rulings that illuminated the world. **Sünbül Efendi**, **Merkez Efendi**, and **Yaḥyâ Efendi**, who guided hearts to a sublime realm. **Barbarossa Hayraddîn Pasha**, in the pursuit of Islamic unity, liberated the North African kingdom and established Ottoman dominance over the Mediterranean. **Pîrî Reis**, through his world map, unveiled uncharted lands. **Sokullu**, hailing from a family renowned for producing priests, found spiritual fulfillment in Islamic faith and displayed remarkable administrative skills and merit at the highest level. These exceptional individuals contributed to the Ottoman state’s pursuit of perfection.

Grand Vizier Sokullu’s visionary idea of connecting the Don and Volga rivers to reach Central Asia and navigating the navy to the Caspian Sea was ahead of its time. It seemed to anticipate the struggles faced by today’s Central Asian Muslims, even centuries in advance.

Pîrî Reis’ world map remains an enigma that historians have yet to fully decipher. The depiction of “Greenland Island” in three parts, later confirmed by humankind’s landing on the moon, showcases the map’s remarkable accuracy and insights. It is a testament to the intellectual prowess and profound spiritual inspiration behind its creation. These examples exemplify the exceptional caliber of individuals during that era.

The sobriquet “**Kânûnî**” attributed to Sultan Sulaymân stems from his compilation of legal rulings within the framework of Islamic law. These were arranged in the form of a legal corpus known as *Kâunnâme-i Âl-i Osman* un-



der the leadership of Kamâl Pashazâde and Ebussuûd Efendi, the most learned men of the time who provided legal guidance to both humans and jinn. The contents of these canons fully complied with the principles of the Shariah.

Under the rule of the expansive Ottoman state, encompassing territories from the Caspian to Central Europe, and the Indian Ocean to Ukraine, the principles of human rights and justice were diligently upheld. It was such that those who sought refuge from the brutal inquisition courts found solace within Ottoman lands. While Galileo, in order to preserve his life, renounced his scientific beliefs and famously declared, «The world is turning!» In the Ottoman state, there prevailed a noble perspective that even non-Muslims were considered as “*vedîatullâh*,” the trust of Allah to the state.

In Poland, there existed a well-known saying that had turned into a proverb:

**“Until Ottoman horses drink water from the Vistula River, this country will not achieve freedom and independence.”**

Interestingly, Poland attained its independence three times in history, which happened when Turkish horses drank water from the Vistula River.

An exemplary instance demonstrating the loyalty of the Christian subjects to the state due to the justice they received is as follows:

During a Hungarian military expedition led by Kânûnî, some Hungarians attempted to poison the Sultan, acting in the interest of the German emperor. They approached the Sultan’s personal cook, the **Armenian Manouk**, with the proposition, using Christianity as a cover. However, the Armenian cook adamantly rejected this heinous offer, displaying great loyalty by expressing admiration for Kânûnî’s justice and humane approach.

As evident from these examples, Kânûnî was a remarkable sultan who won the love and loyalty not only of the Muslims but also of his Christian subjects.

During these trying times, the Muslims of Andalusia in Spain found refuge from the bloody persecution of Christians by migrating to North Africa.

In the Ottoman state, privileges were not granted based on birthright or favoritism; every individual had to earn their position through merit and rightful qualifications. The wise father could become the vizier, while the less in-



telligent son might work as a street sweeper. Even a slave could rise to the esteemed position of Grand Vizier through achievements and loyalty. The Ottoman princes received meticulous and effective training under the guidance of distinguished scholars of the time.

The palace served as an educational institution for individuals at all levels, from apprentices to the sultan. Wealth, poverty, friendship, and affiliation were not taken into consideration in the appointment of government officials, and merit was always kept at the forefront.

**Busberk**, the Austrian ambassador of the time, expressed this truth as follows:

“In the Ottoman state, everyone is the craftsman of his position and success. Turks do not believe that virtue is inherited. Unscrupulous and lazy people can never rise and are regarded with disdain and contempt.”

King **Henry** of England sent a delegation to examine the Ottoman court, known for its immediate and fair decisions, in an attempt to learn from their practices as an example for his own country.

The era of Kânûnî exemplified a genuine and sincere practice of Islam, showcasing its “magnificence” in all aspects and leaving its mark on the world.

Kânûnî, with the guidance of Merkez Efendi, demonstrated that he was not only a sultan in terms of reason, will, and strength but also in the spiritual realm, aspiring to become self-effacing. A remarkable example illustrates this:

After Barbarossa Hayraddîn Pasha defeated Andrea Dorya in Preveza, leaving him distraught, Andrea Dorya abandoned his fleet and barely escaped death, saving his life.

Barbarossa entered the Golden Horn from Sarayburnu, leading the enemy galleys with their masts lowered, accompanied by tens of thousands of captives. The sea was laden with enemy galleys full of prisoners.

Kânûnî, along with his viziers and pashas, witnessed this magnificent sight from a seaside palace in Sarayburnu, which no longer exists. In the midst of the excitement, one of the pashas exclaimed:

“—Your Majesty, how often has the world witnessed such a scene? You cannot help but feel immense pride!”



Kânûnî, the Great Khan, replied:

**“-Pasha! Is it incumbent on us to become proud or to praise and thank Allah, Who has granted these victories?!”**

Undoubtedly, this spiritual sultanate, which surpasses the worldly sultanate of Kânûnî, is a result of the inspiration and blessings he received from the distinguished servants of Allah.

Similar to his predecessors, Kânûnî held great reverence for Sufi masters and actively participated in their spiritual gatherings. When **Ibrahim Gulshanî**, a saint from Egypt, visited Istanbul due to an illness, the Sultan had his physicians provide him with medical treatment.

The Sultan consistently sought guidance and benefitted from Sünbül Efendi and Merkez Efendi. Additionally, he had a close relationship with his milk sibling, Beşiktaşlı Yahyâ Efendi.

The following incident reflects the strong bond between Kânûnî and **Yahyâ Efendi**:

One day, while Kânûnî was taking a trip on the Bosphorus, he docked his boat near Shaykh Yahyâ Efendi’s lodge and invited him to join. Yahyâ Efendi approached the Sultan but was accompanied by a person with a saintly countenance.

On the boat, while sailing in the Bosphorus, Kânûnî and Yahyâ Efendi engaged in a heartfelt conversation. However, their guest remained distant and continuously gazed at the precious ring on the Sultan’s finger. Observing this, Kânûnî removed the ring and offered it to the guest. However, the guest immediately threw the ring into the sea. Though the Sultan felt a sense of disappointment, he held his tongue out of respect for Yahyâ Efendi.

As the boat neared the shore and the journey came to an end, Yahyâ Efendi’s guest bent down, scooped up a handful of water from the sea, and presented it to Kânûnî, who looked at him in astonishment. To everyone’s surprise, the hand of the saintly-faced person extended toward Kânûnî, holding the very ring that had been tossed into the sea moments before. Without hesitation, the Sultan accepted the ring, though his mind was filled with bewilderment. The saintly-faced person quickly walked away and vanished. Yahyâ Efendi, who had witnessed the entire event, explained with a pleasant tone:

**“–Your Majesty! That person was Khidr , whom you have long yearned to meet.”**

This incident served as a profound lesson for the Sultan, revealing the insignificance of temporal sultanate compared to the sultanate of the hereafter.



During one of his military campaigns in Austria, Kânûnî and his army passed through non-Muslim villages. While taking a break, a Christian peasant approached Kânûnî and said:

“–Your Excellency! One of your soldiers plucked grapes from my vineyard and left money in its place! I have come to express my gratitude and offer my congratulations.”

Upon hearing this, Kânûnî Sultan Sulaymân Khan took immediate action and ordered the soldier to be located and removed from the campaign. The Christian peasant was astonished by this response, and the Sultan explained:

*“–The soldier’s demeanor is the first step to victory and divine grace. If that soldier had not tied the money to the vine from which he took the grape, this army would have been called the army of oppressors, and that soldier would have lost his head. He saved himself because he left the money hanging, but he has now been banned from the expedition for taking goods from the owner without permission.”*

Upon his return from this expedition, Kânûnî was approached by an old woman who held the reins of his horse. She exclaimed:

“–I am pressing charges against you!..”

Surprised, the Sultan asked:

*“With whom will you file charges?”*

The woman said:

*“Your Majesty, I will present my case in the court of the Divine. Your soldiers have trampled my field, whether intentionally or unintentionally, and my crops are ruined...”*





The Sultan became deeply upset, and tears welled up in his eyes. He lowered his head and sought forgiveness from the woman, consoling her for the harm caused to her crops.

Another incident during the time of Kânûnî unfolded as follows:

A woman, whose house had been burglarized by individuals in Istanbul, approached Kânûnî while he was engaging with the public. She pleaded for justice and her rightful due. The Sultan initially responded with anger, saying,

“—O woman! How could you have been so oblivious that you did not notice your house being robbed?”

In response, the woman courageously replied:

“—Our Majesty, we have faith in your vigilance! It is because of this trust that we felt secure enough to sleep peacefully in our home!..”

The Sultan, moved by her words and trust, quickly realized the significance of her statement and said to the woman:

“—You are right!..” and paid for the stolen goods from his pocket.



The distinguished scholar **Ebussuûd Efendi**, renowned for his extensive religious writings and Arabic, Persian, and Turkish poetry, served as the shaykh al-Islam, in addition to his duties as a scholar, qadi, and chief judge, during the reign of Kânûnî Sultan Sulaymân.

One day, Kânûnî Sultan Sulaymân sought a legal ruling from shaykh al-Islam Ebussuûd Efendi regarding the ants that had harmed the pear trees in the palace garden. The Sultan presented the matter in the form of a couplet:

*If the ants have caused damage to the tree  
Is there any harm in killing them?*

Upon the Sultan’s request for a legal ruling, Ebussuûd Efendi responded with the couplet:

*Tomorrow, when you arrive in the court of Allah;  
The ants will demand their rights from Sulaymân!..*

Kânûnî Sultan Sulaymân Khan, who received a flawless spiritual upbringing that instilled in him a fear of causing harm even to ants, possessed





remarkable qualities as a skilled commander, intelligent statesman, scholar, and man of letters.

His ability to select and appoint statesmen was exceptional, and while he was highly tolerant, he never overlooked acts committed against religion and the state.

Respected for his consideration of the sentiments of the people and the soldiers, he was beloved by all. Throughout his forty-six-year reign, his sole aim was to honor the religion of Allah.

The following demonstrates his beautiful justice toward his subjects:

The governor of Egypt, **Mehmed Pasha**, once sent an annual tax to Constantinople exceeding the determined amount. However, Kânûnî did not appreciate and praise the governor as expected. On the contrary, with suspicion and anger, he said:

*“–Did this pasha put heavy burdens on the Egyptian people and collect so much money to gain our favor? If so, he has oppressed the people...”* and summoned the pasha to Istanbul.

Kânûnî subjected the pasha to a rigorous interrogation. Although he outwardly accepted the pasha’s explanation, he still had doubts in his heart. As a result, he directed the surplus funds to public charitable services, such as the repair of aqueducts, as a means of rectifying the situation.



Some ignorant individuals accused Kânûnî Sultan Sulaymân, a remarkably visionary statesman, for the concessions he granted to the French known as **“capitulations.”** However, the German emperor Charlemagne aimed to dominate Europe, and his goal was close to being achieved through the defeat of France. Kânûnî, desiring to prevent this, signed a commercial agreement with France in 1535. This agreement significantly reduced French customs duties to five percent, providing substantial material assistance to France. In return, France paid taxes to the Ottomans. Kânûnî’s policy pursued shattered Christian unity in Europe and increased the influence and prestige of the Ottomans. This is why the reformist **Martin Luther** said:

*“O Lord! Bring the great Turks to us as soon as possible so that we may benefit from Your divine justice through them!..”*





He also regarded resistance against the Turks, who brought rights and justice to the world, as **“blasphemous.”**

This demonstrates that even a Christian leader had to acknowledge the truth regarding Kânûnî’s commitment to justice.

Sultan Sulaymân Khan’s world-encompassing policy inadvertently supported Martin Luther and his followers, leading to the establishment of a new sect within Christianity. This widened the rift between Germany and Spain, as the Protestant movement gained more prominence in Germany. The Ottomans, through their control over France with the capitulations, further disrupted the unity of the Crusaders who would oppose them.

Additionally, the capitulations had the advantage of redirecting the changing world trade routes, which had been influenced by the discovery of America, back to the Far East through the Cape of Good Hope and Ottoman territories. However, it is also known that the capitulations had negative consequences as conditions evolved over time.



Kânûnî was deeply concerned about upholding the rights of all individuals and strived to be a just caliph. Upon the completion of the Sulaymâniye Mosque and its complex, he gathered everyone involved, from the architect to the workers. After praising Allah, he began his speech as follows:

**“–O my brothers and sisters in religion, this mosque has been completed by the permission of Allah. If anyone did not get their wages due to an oversight, let him come and get paid! It could be that he is not here. Inform those who are found; let them know! So they may come and take their due rights from us!”**

Historical documents reveal that even during the most challenging times of the mosque’s construction, a program was established to ensure the well-being of the animals involved. Careful attention was given to the resting and grazing hours of the horses, donkeys, and mules being used, and efforts were made to avoid any mistreatment or infringement upon their rights. The fact that Kânûnî showed such care for the rights of both servants and animals in the construction of this magnificent place of worship perhaps contributed to the elusive and awe-inspiring spirit felt within the Sulaymâniye Mosque.



During the reign of Kânûnî, the remarkable achievements of Islamic-Turkish architecture were brought to life under the skilled craftsmanship of **Mîmar Sinan**. His most renowned masterpiece is the Sulaymâniye complex, which was constructed with utmost care and respect. Even the stones used in the construction were handled with ritual ablution, reflecting the deep reverence for the project. The sentiments expressed by the public truly capture the essence of this magnificent structure:

**“The owner of Sulaymâniye is Sultan Sulaymân, its architect is Sinan, and its essence is rooted in Islamic faith!..”**

The construction of the complex began with Shaykh al-Islam Ebussuûd Efendi placing the first stone on the foundation, and it was completed between 1550-1557.



During the grand opening ceremony of the Sulaymâniye Mosque, Kânûnî displayed great generosity and magnanimity. Recognizing the significant contributions of Mîmar Sinan, he said:

“–Let Sinan open this exalted place of worship! Because he is the one who has contributed the most!”

However, Sinan, with utmost humility, suggested:

*“–Your Majesty! The calligrapher Karahisârî lost his eyesight and became blind while decorating this mosque with its lines. Let us bestow this honor on him!..”*

In accordance with Sinan’s suggestion, the Sulaymâniye Mosque was inaugurated in honor of the talented calligrapher Karahisârî, highlighting the Sultan’s profound appreciation for the diverse talents and contributions of the individuals involved in the creation of this magnificent architectural masterpiece.

The Sulaymâniye Mosque is a true representation of the Islamic spirit. Its view from afar resembles the silhouette of a human being with outstretched hands, engaging in prayer to their Lord. The architectural design seamlessly integrates spirituality and ritual worship, creating a profound connection between the material and the spiritual realms. Within its walls, the interior is dimly lit, creating an atmosphere that elevates the believer’s spiritual fervor.



The mosque holds a sense of blessedness, as if its very stone and soil have absorbed spirituality. It serves as a sanctuary that encapsulates the essence of Islam in its most sublime form. Like a person who imparts deep meaning through silence, the mosque exudes a profound sense of tranquility and spirituality. Over the span of five hundred years, countless individuals have prostrated on its sacred grounds, leaving behind a timeless legacy of devotion. This awe-inspiring structure stands as a testament to its spiritual foundation, evoking a sense of reverence and awe. Throughout history, it has been a place where supplications were offered for triumphant victories and divine blessings. The Sulaymâniye Mosque holds an indescribable magnificence, both in its physical form and its spiritual significance.

Sinan poured all his efforts into ensuring the survival of his architectural masterpieces until the end of time and supplicated to Allah for this. He humbly attached his tomb to a corner of the Sulaymâniye Mosque, symbolizing his modest signature and requesting visitors to pray for him. Sinan's remarkable talent is evident in the 230 works he designed throughout the Ottoman lands, bringing Islamic architectural art to the pinnacle of perfection. Even today, his works continue to astonish the world with their finesse and solidity, leaving a lasting legacy. Only those capable of imitating his genius can truly be recognized as extraordinary artists, as no one has been able to surpass his achievements.

During the Kânûnî period, two remarkable artistic monuments emerged that garnered global admiration. The first is the Sulaymâniye Mosque, a masterpiece of architecture. The second is the elegiac poetry of Bâkî, composed in honor of Kânûnî Sultan Sulaymân. Despite being a powerful and discerning ruler, Kânûnî possessed a delicate heart that led him to engage in the art of poetry. He wrote exquisite poems under the pen name "**Muhibbî**," and his divan contains approximately 3,000 ghazals. One couplet, written during a period of illness, has gained widespread distinction and admiration:


*There is no greater object among the people like the state,  
The state is like a breath of truth in the world...*




During the reign of Kânûnî, pious foundations, which are the institutionalized form of mercy, compassion, and love shown to the created for the sake of the Creator, reached a state of perfection. These foundations encompassed



hospitals, fountains, baths, guesthouses, libraries, and madrasahs that were constructed alongside mosques. The material and spiritual balance of society was established through them, providing opportunities for the needy to find solace within the mosques, where the poor, sick, and healthy could come together and interact. Such efforts and activities bestowed upon the suffering members of the community the comforting embrace of compassion, akin to a mother's love.

It was as if the solidarity illustrative of the Anşâr and Muhâjirîn in the time of the Companions  had filled the society with inspiration and blessings.

During this period, individuals of great spiritual insight were nurtured. They delved into the depths of their inner selves, combining the outward aspects of religion with the inner dimensions. By harmonizing the subtle wisdom of the Quran and the Sunnah, they perfected their spiritual faculties, which serve as the means to eternal life. Among the great personalities who served as guides and sources of blessings for the Ummah during that time were Muḥammed Zâhid Badakhshî, Shaykh Sunbul Efendi, Shaykh Ibrâhîm Gülshanî, Shaykh Merkez Efendi, Khidr , Shaykh Yaḥyâ Efendi, Kara Dâwûd, Şeyhzâde who authored a supra-commentary (*hâshiyah*) on Baydâwî, Ḥalabî who authored *Multaqâ*, and Hattat Mustafa Dede, the son of Shaykh Ḥamîdullâh.

**These individuals, along with their contemporaries, shone as radiant stars of the Sublime State, leaving a profound impact on the hearts of the people. They embodied virtues that were unparalleled in the world, and their teachings shaped the character of those who followed them.** One notable story that exemplifies their influence is the account of the “**martyr who would not surrender his head,**” as recorded by the historian Peçevî:

They reached **Grijgal**, which was a six-day journey from Szigetvár. This place was in the hands of the Ottomans but remained under constant threat of hostility, as Szigetvár had not yet been conquered. On one occasion, the enemy besieged this small town again. The enemy commander, Krachin, sent word to the Ottoman commander, Ahmad Bey, and demanded the surrender of Grijgal. However, the Ghazi refused to accept this and instead decided to launch a surprise attack on the enemy. It happened to be a Friday and the eve of the





sacrifice festival (*'id al-'adḥâ*). Qadi Efendi advised the brave men who were filled with the love of *jihâd* in the way of Allah:

“–It is more appropriate to attack after the Friday prayer...”

After completing the prayer, all the ghazis charged toward the enemy from the fortress, shouting, “Allah, Allah.” **Ghazi Mehmed Bey** commanded one faction, while Ghazi Hüsrev Bey led the other. A fierce battle erupted with the enemy. Amid the intense fighting, Ghazi Mehmed Bey was martyred. His head was separated from his torso. An enemy soldier seized his severed head and began to retreat. Witnessing this, Ghazi Hüsrev Bey, with tears in his eyes, cried out to his dear friend:

**“–O Mehmed! Does it befit a man of valor to surrender his head to the enemy? You gave your life, do not give your head!..”**

When he uttered these heartfelt words, Mehmed’s headless body suddenly rose and caught up with the enemy and knocked him down in one swift blow. Then, he retrieved his head and laid down peacefully.

Watching this wondrous incident, Qadi Efendi found himself lost in amazement. After some time passed, the enemy suffered a devastating defeat. Along with the other martyrs, Mehmed Bey, who kept his head in his armpit, was buried where he lay.



Fortified with such spiritual forces, the genius sultan and the great warrior, Kânûnî Sultan Sulaymân Khan, who ruled the world and directed history with his hand, represents a complete and unique kind of splendor through his personality and actions.

The Szigetvár military expedition, which he undertook despite experiencing a lack of strength and stamina, exemplifies his stride of effort, power of struggle, and unwavering faith in his soul.

As Kânûnî, who commanded numerous military campaigns and conquests of his time, prepared to embark on his last expedition in Szigetvár, the **Grand Vizier Sokullu** came before him and said:

*“–Your Majesty, you have blessed the Ummah with countless victories! You are tired! You have devoted your life to the cause of Islam! It is unreasonable that you endure the hardship of this expedition at this age. You should*



*stay in Istanbul and continue to administer. Allow me, the viziers, and pashas to lead the expedition. You have nothing to worry about!..”*

The Great Khan, Kânûnî, said to Sokullu:

*“–Listen well, Sokullu!.. Pass on this testament to the next generation after me! A sultan must accompany his soldiers on a military campaign. When a soldier sees his sultan by his side, his bravery increases! Moreover, the enemy perceives a stronger army facing them because the sultan is actively engaged in the campaign. His moral strength is broken, and he becomes discouraged. This weakens their morale and discourages them. The true driving force that leads to victory is spiritual strength! I have gained countless experiences in state administration since I was a child. During expeditions, there may arise situations where this experience is crucially needed. Moments and minutes often determine the course of destiny. Therefore, despite my old age, I will partake in the battle!..”*

*If I stay in the palace and perish lying on a pillow, how could I face my predecessors on the Day of Reckoning?!”*

Sokullu responded:

*“–The decision is yours, Your Majesty...”* and then fell silent.

How could the sultan undertake a journey that would take months on horseback, considering his advanced age?!. For this, they secured a girdle around his back, enabling him to sit upright on a horse and appear robust to the soldiers.

The expedition commenced during the rainy season. At one point, the carriage carrying the cannons became stuck in the mud. The animals lacked the physical strength to move the cannons. Although the army had advanced, only a small number of soldiers and pashas were in the vicinity. The Sultan ordered his men, saying:

*“–Let everyone, including the high-ranking officials and pashas, enter the mud! Have them help us in moving the gun carriages!..”*

They all disrobed and entered the mud, pulling the carriages out with their fervent spiritual enthusiasm. The Sultan turned to the historian and declared:





“–Write this down! Let the future generation take a lesson from this and apply it!.. The pashas and viziers of Kânûnî entered the mud. They all gave a helping hand. A tragedy was thus averted, by the permission of Allah.”

Kânûnî’s model example was a gift to history and posterity, constituting the pinnacle of struggle in the way of Allah.

For Kânûnî to ask Allah for martyrdom during this expedition likewise demonstrated the spiritual maturity he possessed.

At Szigetvár, where he left his final mark on his illustrious sultanate, the Great Khan opened his hands and addressed his Lord:

*“O my Lord! For many years you have filled the earth with my victory. There remains no appeal left unfulfilled, no prayer unrealized. For the sake of the Prophet ﷺ, give this needy servant of yours martyrdom and the blessing of witnessing Thy beauty!..”*

A little while after his supplication, Sulaymân the Magnificent went to his Lord as the fourth Ottoman sultan to die during a military campaign.

**May Allah’s mercy be upon him!..**



The body of the Great Khan was brought to Istanbul under the supervision of four hundred guards. It was set down on the *musallâ* stone (on which a coffined corpse is placed during the funeral procession) of the Sulaymâniye Mosque. The funeral prayer was performed with five hundred muezzins taking turns to call the takbir. The congregation extended all the way to the Fâtih Mosque.

As Kânûnî’s body was being lowered into the grave, a chest was brought forward. A person claimed that, “**It is per his will!**” and intended to place it in the grave. However, Shaykh al-Islam Ebussuûd Efendi intervened, stating that it was not permissible to bury something valuable with the Sultan. When Ebussuûd Efendi was informed that this was the Sultan’s final request the day before his passing, he opened the chest out of curiosity. To his astonishment, he found the legal rulings he had issued to the Sultan. Overwhelmed and in disbelief, he exclaimed:

“–**You have saved yourself, Great Khan! What will we do tomorrow in the hereafter?!**” and became sorrowful and started to cry.





Throughout his life, Kânûnî sought legal rulings for every matter he encountered and acted upon them accordingly.



*Our revered ancestors led a noble existence, focusing on spiritual depth and maturity rather than indulging in worldly pleasures. Their conscience was in a state of peace, enabling them to embody compassion and goodness. Through Islam's perspective on creation and humanity, they exemplified qualities of subtlety, sensitivity, and grace. Their elevated conduct served as a guiding light for the welfare of the people under their rule and for generations to come.*

**Our Lord, bestow upon us a share of the spiritual essence and ambience of our glorious ancestors; may the helpless and suffering Muslim world of the twenty-first century be filled with the kind of joy experienced in sacred holidays!..**

**Âmîn!..**





*A Monumental Figure Who had an Intimate and Affectionate Bond with the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ*

## **SULTAN AHMAD KHAN I**

*(1590-1617)*

He was the fourteenth Ottoman sultan.

He ascended to the throne at the age of fourteen and ruled for a remarkable fourteen years. During his reign, the magnificent **Sultanahmad Mosque** was built, serving as a timeless masterpiece and a spiritual testament of his era.

Upon Sultan Ahmad's accession, the Ottoman state faced internal challenges with the "Celâlî rebellions" and conflicts with Iran in the east, as well as Germany and its allies in the west. Germany suffered a severe defeat and sought peace, leading to the signing of the "**Treaty of Zitvatoruk.**" In 1611, the Celâlî rebellions were completely suppressed. The focus then shifted to Iran, where eventually an agreement was reached. The Ottomans also prevailed in crucial naval battles in the Mediterranean.

In 1605, the Ottomans achieved conquests in **Esztergom** and **Uyvar**. The battle of Uyvar is notable for the disproportionate forces involved, leading to the emergence of the phrase “**strong as a Turk**,” which persisted in European parlance for centuries. The same year witnessed a successful Austrian military expedition, the coronation of the king of Hungary, and a naval campaign in Malta.



Sultan Ahmad Khan stands out as one of the few sultans who actively and intimately engaged in state affairs following the era of Kânûnî. Despite ascending to the throne at a young age, he displayed exceptional decision-making skills and administered the state with intelligence and spiritual depth.

He consistently sought the counsel of knowledgeable and wise individuals, having been one of the successful disciples of **Azîz Mahmûd Hudâyî**.

Similar to the pivotal role played by Shaykh Edabali in the spiritual upbringing of Osman Ghazi and the establishment of a great state, Azîz Mahmûd Hudâyî played a crucial role in the spiritual development of Ahmad Khan. Through this spiritual education, Sultan Ahmad became renowned throughout the Ottoman world for embodying justice, mercy, and peace, in addition to his outward virtues.

As a result, Sultan Ahmad held deep admiration for Azîz Mahmûd Hudâyî. This admiration was the catalyst for Ahmad Khan’s spiritual growth, despite the challenges and responsibilities of his sultanate.

The journey of Sultan Ahmad Khan toward spiritual perfection began with a significant dream he had. In this dream, he found himself wrestling with the king of Austria, ultimately falling to the ground with his back stuck. Upon awakening, he felt a sense of unease mixed with excitement due to the seemingly frightening nature of the dream.

Dream interpreters were consulted, but their explanations failed to fully satisfy Sultan Ahmad. At the suggestion of state officials, Ahmad Khan decided to seek the interpretation of his dream from Shaykh Azîz Mahmûd Hudâyî, who resided in Uskudar. He wrote a letter to Hudâyî, describing the details of his dream.

The messenger swiftly carried the letter and hurried to Uskudar. Arriving at the door, he presented an envelope that had been prepared in advance. When





Hudâyî received the letter from the messenger, he handed over the envelope, which bore the inscription:

*“The answer that our Sultan has been waiting for is written here!”*

Taken aback by the unexpected turn of events, the messenger immediately delivered the letter to the Sultan and recounted what had transpired. Ahmad Khan eagerly read the letter, brimming with enthusiasm:

**“Allah created the back in the human body and the soil in the universe to possess great strength. The connection between man’s back and the earth signifies the merging of these two forces. Thus, when the back of our Sultan comes to the earth, these two forces unite. From this dream, it is understood that our Sultan, as the representative of Islam, will prevail over the unbelievers...”**

Ahmad Khan was very pleased with this interpretation and said:

**“Behold, this is the true meaning of the dream I saw!”**

This dream heralded the conquest of the Esztergom Castle.

Filled with joy upon receiving this favorable news, the Sultan wasted no time and had Mahmûd Hudâyî offer supplications on his behalf before embarking on a march toward Austria. The unified Ottoman forces, joined by bordering allies, relentlessly struck the Austrians, compelling them to seek peace. The capture of Esztergom dealt a devastating blow to the Austrians. Thus, the thirteen-year-long Ottoman-Austrian war concluded with the signing of the Zitvatoruk treaty, which spanned twenty years. As per the terms of the treaty, the fortresses of Nagykanizsa, Esztergom, and Eger were relinquished to the Ottomans, and Austria was obligated to pay reparations.

Through these events, Sultan Ahmad Khan recognized the profound greatness of Azîz Mahmûd Hudâyî, further deepening his devotion to him.

This serves as a testament to the fact that in every era, the concentrated attention (*tawajjuh*) of the Sufi master has bestowed compassion and warmth, akin to a mother’s embrace, upon the great administrators whose souls were burdened by the trials of governance. The warriors, who play a pivotal role in shaping the destinies of nations, have always relied on this support. It is not possible to consider the victories of those who lack such spiritual guidance as true success, even if their achievements may appear impressive outwardly,



for they lack a spiritual compass. For instance, although Attila traveled a vast distance of 7,000 km from Karakorum to Central Europe, what he left behind was a trail of blood, suffering, and tears... Such actions do not represent victory but rather acts of oppression.

The battle between Timur and Yildirim at Ankara stands as a tragic example of a self-centered struggle that resulted in a sorrowful fate. It became a drama of disappointment, leaving behind grieving widows and orphans. Tens of thousands of Muslim lives were lost, including the martyrdom of Yildirim Bâyezîd, yet Timur returned empty-handed despite traveling thousands of kilometers.



Witnessing the remarkable deeds of Azîz Mahmûd Hudâyî, Ahmad Khan willingly subjected himself to his spiritual discipline and refined his soul, thus taming his ego.



During a ceremony to lay the foundation of Sultan Ahmad Khan's magnificent mosque, esteemed shaykhs and scholars of the time were invited. Azîz Mahmûd Hudâyî had the honor of being the first to lay the foundation. Sultan Ahmad Khan personally participated in the construction of the mosque, working with a pickaxe and shovel like a humble laborer until the evening of that day.

There is also a narration concerning the spiritual significance of this blessed mosque:

After the untimely passing of Ahmad Khan, his daughter Gevher Hatun saw her father in a magnificent place in heaven. Curiosity sparked within her, and she asked:

“–Father, through what action have you attained this beautiful state?”

Sultan Ahmad replied:

**“–My daughter, I carried stones on my back when this mosque was being built! It is through this deed that I have reached this elevated station!”**





In the same dream, Sultan Ahmad's brother also spoke to his niece, Gevher Hatun, saying:

*"Will you not come to us yet? Go on, give birth to your second child, and come!"*

At that time, Gevher Hatun was indeed pregnant with her second child. She became filled with excitement. Although the dream interpreters provided explanations, the meaning was clear. Eventually, Gevher Hatun passed away a few days after giving birth to her second child.



The era of Ahmad Khan marked a pinnacle of territorial expansion for the Ottomans. The world's kings of the world recognized and revered the glory of the Ottoman state, seeking coronation under the auspices of the Grand Viziers.

Contrary to the misconceptions propagated by some ill-informed thinkers, those were not times of stagnation and turmoil. On the contrary, it was a grand and magnificent period that captured the imagination of European intellectuals. The following letter written by the Italian **Tommaso Campanella**, who rebelled against the oppression and lack of freedom in Europe and languished in prisons for years, and depicted his ideal country in his work *The City of the Sun*, provides us with sufficient information about the state of the Ottomans at the time:

*"I am longing for «The City of the Sun». Let there be no night and people should not know what darkness is. Is it possible to find it on earth? I do not know, but the existence of the Ottomans, who do not interfere in freedom of thought, conscience, and language, and who know how to treat everyone fairly, Muslim and non-Muslim, makes me think that at least tomorrow there will be such a city. Since today, there is a nation that does not confine thought and does not put the love of truth in chains, that is, those brave Turks, then why should not a country where only justice, truth, and freedom prevail!"*

The description provided above aptly portrays the era of Sultan Ahmad Khan. His ability to achieve such remarkable success, to the extent that even his adversaries admired him, stemmed from his spiritual perfection and outward distinction. On occasions, he would seek solitude in his small and narrow cell, situated on the left side of the mosque he had constructed, purposefully engaging in self-discipline and withdrawing himself from the demands of state



affairs. In these moments, he directed his soul toward the spiritual realm, engaging in contemplation and communing with his Lord.

During the mosque's construction, Sultan Ahmad brought the sacred footprints of the Prophet, known as *Naqsh-i Qadam* ("Impressed Footprint"), which were originally housed in the tomb of Sultan Qaytbay in Egypt, to the tomb of Ayyûb Sultan. When the construction of the mosque was completed, he had the sacred footprints placed within it.

However, on the night of its transfer, the Sultan saw the following dream:

*"A grand assembly was established where all the sultans were gathered, and the Prophet ﷺ was sitting in the qadi's chair. It was a court of sorts. Sultan Qaytbay had become a plaintiff of Sultan Ahmad because this Qadam-i Sa'âdah ("Footprint of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ"), which was a reason for visiting his tomb, was taken to Istanbul.*

*The Messenger of Allah ﷺ decreed in his capacity as qadi that the Noble Footprint should be immediately sent back..."*

The Sultan awoke with a sense of horror and fear. He had his dream interpreted by the ulema and shaykhs, including Hudâyî. The explanation provided was unequivocal:

*"—Your Majesty! The dream is clear. There is no need for further comment. The trust must be returned immediately..."*

Sultan Ahmad Khan, who loved the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, accepted with a heavy heart and diligently returned the trust.

However, fueled by his love for the Prophet ﷺ, Ahmad Khan made a replica model of the blessed footprints of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ on marble. He sought inspiration from this replica by wearing it on his turban. The following verses that overflowed from his burning heart reflect the depth of his devotion:

*Even if I carry it on my head like a crown,  
The pure footprint of the Prophet of Allah ﷺ...  
The rose garden of prophethood is the owner of that footprint,  
Ahmad, do not stop, rub your face to this Rose!..*



It is reported that when the Sultanahmad Mosque and its complex were completed, Azîz Mahmûd Hudâyî was appointed to preside over the opening ceremony. On that day, the sea was tumultuous and stormy, causing the ferry-men to be reluctant to venture out. However, Mahmûd Hudâyî and five or six of his disciples courageously embarked on their own boat from the Uskudar pier, heading toward Sarayburnu despite the treacherous waves. By the permission of Allah, the sea surrounding their boat became calm and still, unaffected by the waves. While others remained fearful and unable to sail, Mahmûd Hudâyî crossed the sea safely.

With a grand ceremony, the doors of the Sultanahmad Mosque were opened for worship, accompanied by a Friday sermon delivered by the esteemed saint, Mahmûd Hudâyî, as a blessing for the mosque.

To this day, the sea route between Uskudar and Sarayburnu is known as *Hüdâyî Yolu* (“Hudâyî’s Route”). Ferry-men continue to follow this path during severe storms. This remarkable phenomenon serves as a manifest miracle of Hudâyî that persists in the present day.



On a day when Sultan Ahmad visited Uskudar, he coincidentally encountered Hudâyî in the marketplace. Immediately, he dismounted from his horse and insisted that his shaykh take his place, while he proceeded to walk from behind. Hudâyî, being moved by the Sultan’s humble gesture, could not allow such an esteemed ruler to walk on foot. After a while, he himself alighted from the horse, stating:

*“–I rode the horse merely to comply with the supplication of my shaykh!”*

Then, Shaykh Uftada offered a prayer:

*“–My son, let the sultans walk behind you!”*

And thus, with the Sultan walking behind, accompanied by this short horse ride, the supplication of Hudâyî’s master was fulfilled.

Sultan Ahmad Khan was deeply moved by this graceful episode. He attempted to express his feelings through the following couplets:

*Vârımı ben Hakk’a verdim, gayrı vârim kalmadı,  
Cümlesinden el çeküb pes dû cihânım kalmadı...*





*“Since I have surrendered all that I have to Allah, no trace of my existence remains. I have completely withdrawn myself from everything, from both worlds!”*

*Çünkü hubbullâh erişti çekti beni kendüye  
Açtı gönlüm gözünü gayrı gümânım kalmadı...*

*“Because Allah’s love has been bestowed upon me and has opened the eye of my heart by binding me to Him. I no longer have any doubts...”*

*Evliyâ’nın himmeti yaktı beni kal’eyledi,  
Sâfiyim buldum safâyı dû cihânım kalmadı...*

*“The patronage of Allah’s saintly servants has burned (my heart) and extinguished the ego-self in my soul. So I became pure and found spiritual delight. I no longer have eyes on this world or the hereafter!”*

*Ahmad îder yâ İlâhî Sana şükrüm çok-durur  
Hamdülillâh aşk-ı Hak’tan gayrı vârim kalmadı...*

*“Ahmad says, O Lord! I am very grateful to you. Praise be to Allah that nothing remains of me but divine love.”*

Azîz Mahmûd Hudâyî’s guidance and patronage extended throughout the life of Ahmad Khan. Here is an incident that occurred between them:

Sultan Ahmad Khan went on a tour with a group of state officials. While resting in a wooded area, the servants slaughtered and roasted a sheep and served it to the Sultan. As Sultan Ahmad Khan reached out to take a piece of meat and uttered the *basmalah* (‘in the Name of Allah’), Azîz Mahmûd Hudâyî suddenly appeared and warned:

*“–Your Majesty! Do not eat that meat, it is poisonous!”*

When they cut a portion of the meat and gave it to a dog nearby, it instantly perished upon consuming it.

Sultan Ahmad Khan held great respect for Azîz Mahmûd Hudâyî and treated him with utmost kindness. On one occasion, while conversing with Hudâyî in the palace, a pitcher and basin were brought for Azîz Mahmûd Hudâyî to perform his ritual ablution. Out of reverence for his teacher, Sultan Ahmad Khan personally took the pitcher and poured the water himself. Be-





hind the screen, the Sultan's mother had prepared a towel. In that moment, Vâlide Sultan expressed a heartfelt desire:

*"If only I could witness a wondrous feat from Azîz Mahmûd Hudâyî"*

Upon perceiving Vâlide Sultan's inner thoughts, Hudâyî expressed his astonishment:

*"–It is amazing! Some wish to see a wondrous feat from me. Yet, is there a greater wonder than having the Caliph of the World pouring water on my hands and his honorable mother preparing a towel for me?"*

During their conversation, Ahmad Khan inquired:

*"Sir! There are reports that suggest 'Abd al-Qâdir Jilânî intercedes on behalf of his students and sinful believers on the Day of Judgment. What can you tell us about the truth of these reports?"*

Azîz Mahmûd Hudâyî did not reply right away. After contemplating, he said:

*"Yes, it is true! 'Abd al-Qâdir Jilânî will intercede for the sinful believers among his followers!"*

The Sultan continued:

*"Sir! Do you not have any message or good news for us as well?"*

In response, Azîz Mahmûd Hudâyî raised his hands in supplication, uttering the following words:

**"O Lord! Those who tread the path we follow until the Day of Resurrection, those who hold love for us, and those who come to our shrine once in their lives, reciting Şûrah al-Fâtiḥah for the sake of our soul, let them be counted among us... May those who belong to our path be saved from experiencing poverty in their later years; may they depart from this world with faith intact; may they know the time of their death and inform others, and may they be spared from death by drowning in the sea!.."**

(The ulema and saints have reported that this prayer was accepted, as those who belonging to this path did not meet their demise by drowning in the sea. Furthermore, many individuals passed away on the exact day they had foretold their own death).



In 1617 (1026 H.), Ahmad Khan fell ill. He had a wound on his back. The day before his passing, when **Mâbaynci Mustafa** was in his presence, some people who were not visible in the room claimed to have heard Ahmad Khan say four times:

**“–And peace unto you!”**

When asked why, Sultan Ahmad Khan said:

*“–At this moment, Abû Bakr al-Şiddîq, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmân, and ‘Alî came to me and said:*

*«–You have gathered in yourself the sultanate of this world and the next. Tomorrow, you will be with His Majesty the Messenger of Allah ﷺ!..».*

The following day, like every mortal, Sultan Ahmad Khan’s life came to an end.



His spiritual guide, Azîz Mahmûd Hudâyî, was invited to perform the ritual washing of his body. However, Hudâyî, overcome with deep love for the Sultan, expressed his inability to bear the task, saying:

“–I loved Your Majesty very much. I will not be able to bear it. Pardon me, for I am old!”

In his place, one of his disciples, **Şâban Dede**, performed the duty. Following the funeral prayer, led by **Şaykh al-Islam Hocasâde Mehmed Chelebi**, he was laid to rest in a tomb adjacent to the Sultanahmad Mosque, a testament to his own construction.

**May Allah’s mercy be upon him!..**

Despite ascending the throne at a young age, Sultan Ahmad Khan displayed remarkable judgment and abilities. He possessed physical strength and excelled in horsemanship, marksmanship, and musketry. These virtues were passed on to his sons, **Young Osman** and **Murâd IV**.

He adorned himself in simple attire, reminiscent of his grandfather, **Yavuz Sultan Selîm Khan**. At night, he wore a cardigan made of hair to prevent himself from falling into the throes of sleep. He humbly mingled with the people and personally addressed their problems.





Despite the vastness of his territorial domain and the significance of his position, Sultan Ahmad Khan remained unaffected by the trappings of power and did not succumb to his ego.

His poetic prowess and spiritual depth are evident in his collection of poems, written under the pseudonym “**Bahtî.**”

During his reign, the shroud of the **Kaaba** was meticulously woven in Istanbul and then sent to Mecca. Previously, such cloths were woven in Egypt.

Furthermore, Sultan Ahmad Khan established special workshops in Istanbul to craft **golden grooves** for the Kaaba, demonstrating his devotion to the sacred site.



The stability of world order and the continuity of its moral fabric are contingent upon the strengthening of the inner life. Prosperous nations have honored and revered the sultans, who acted as spiritual guides and were people of the heart, and have attained peace and bliss by knowing there are blessings in following their footsteps.

Throughout his life, Sultan Ahmad Khan chose to prioritize following the path of Azîz Mahmûd Hudâyî above all worldly matters. This path granted him inner contentment, bestowing upon him spiritual blessings and pleasures that surpassed any worldly power or glory. His attachment to Allah prevented him from becoming captive to fleeting pleasures, no matter how alluring they may have appeared. He remained unaffected by the illusions reflected in the mirror of worldly pursuits. His heart remained detached from external factors such as social status and rank. His greatest triumph lay in transcending the desires of the ego and not succumbing to its hidden traps. Through the cultivation of his inner character, he became a reflection of Azîz Mahmûd Hudâyî.

*The spiritual blessings and essence of Azîz Mahmûd Hudâyî and Sultan Ahmad Khan have transcended the passage of time, even after more than 400 years. This reality has been clearly witnessed and experienced. This institution of spiritual grace, established by the Ottomans and tracing its lineage back to the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, has persisted until the present day. It is through attaining this spiritual excellence that individuals can truly fulfill their purpose of creation.*



*Lovers of truth do not perish; their hearts remain vibrant and do not decay. They continually draw nourishment from the eternal spring that lies beneath their roots. They bring life to their surroundings, transforming them into gardens of beauty and fragrance.*

*The Azîz Mahmûd Hudâyî Foundation, which has emerged as a manifestation of this spiritual legacy in our time, strives to support numerous helpless and impoverished individuals, both men and women, who will serve the cause of faith in the future. By meeting their material needs and cultivating their inner worlds with enlightenment, the foundation aims to empower them. The privilege and honor of this endeavor belong to Azîz Mahmûd Hudâyî, Sultan Ahmad Khan, and all those who engage in charitable acts.*

**May our Lord shower upon our hearts the mist of spiritual essence derived from the Masters of the Golden Chain, the luminous spirit of Azîz Mahmûd Hudâyî, from whom we have received immense blessings, and the profound divine love of Sultan Ahmad Khan.**

**Âmîn!..**





*The Martyred Sultan Who Said “Halt” to  
the Downfall of the State with his Fearless Spirit*

## **SULTAN ABDULAZÎZ KHAN**

*(1830-1876)*

He was the thirty-second Ottoman sultan.

His father was Sultan Mahmûd II, and his mother, **Pertevniyal Sultan**, was a great benefactor and philanthropist. He ascended the throne in 1861. During his fourteen-year reign, Sultan Abdulazîz demonstrated exceptional intelligence and unwavering fearlessness. He received a meticulous education from a young age.

Under Sultan Abdulazîz’s rule, the Ottoman state embarked on a path of admiration for the West, marked by the “Tanzîmat Edict.” However, these Westernizing reforms caused initial seeds of discontent among the public. Both **Mahmûd II** and **Abdulgâjîd**, his successor, became a tool in imitating the West, leading to the abolition of the Janissaries, the traditional form of the Ottoman army. Official funerals began to incorporate marching bands. These

reforms, contrary to the inherent character of Muslims, resulted in a growing sense of alienation between the state and its subjects. The state gradually moved away from its spiritual and moral foundations, which had provided structural support. This growing disparity led to resentment among the people, while statesmen grappled with the challenges posed by the progress of the Western world. Furthermore, enemies of Islam engaged in insidious propaganda, attempting to blame Islam for the growing gap between the Ottoman state and the West.

However, the progress witnessed in Europe was not solely attributed to Christianity or the cultural framework that stemmed from it. Instead, it was driven by distinct economic factors, such as the discovery of America and the accumulation of great wealth from it, the opening of new trade routes through the Cape of Good Hope in Africa, and the redirection of Far Eastern goods like spices and silk to the Western markets. These developments, along with the subsequent Industrial Revolution, brought about significant changes in Europe.

In contrast, our adversaries deliberately sought to distance us from our authentic worldview, social order, complete Islamic way of life, and spiritual values by promoting misleading explanations, interpretations, and suggestions. They cunningly presented a false path, asserting that Europeanization was the only remedy for progress. Regrettably, this indoctrination grew to such an extent that it even influenced the sultans, particularly the pashas of that era.

Furthermore, the dismantling of the traditional army structure, marked by the abolition of the Janissaries in 1826, left a void. Within two years, the Russians advanced and reached Edirne with a small force of fifteen thousand men. In 1829, Greece emerged as an established entity, and in 1832, the army of **Kavalalı Mehmed Ali Pasha**, an Ottoman governor, made its way as far as Kutahya. These developments deeply wounded the collective pride and shook the public conscience of a state that had remained undefeated for centuries.

Mahmûd II, afflicted by the calamities of his era, suffered from tuberculosis, which left him frail, sickly, and vulnerable in the face of Western influence. His successor, Sultan Abdulmajîd, followed a similar path of imitation.

However, Sultan Abdulazîz Khan, who succeeded them, possessed remarkable bravery, fearlessness, and determination, both in his mind and spirit. With unwavering determination, he set out to rescue the state from the dire cir-



cumstances it faced due to the trials and tribulations it had endured. Through his wise decision-making, he swiftly transformed the accumulated sorrow within the people's spirits into a sense of joy and optimism. This reignited hopes for the restoration of past conquests. Furthermore, his physically imposing stature, reminiscent of a powerful wrestler, reinforced the sentiment among the people. After two ineffective sultans, the nation was filled with joy, as if the political prowess of Yavuz Sultan Selim Khan had returned.

The fearless Sultan Abdulaziz, who encouraged wrestling throughout his reign, did not hesitate to risk war against his enemies, striving to elevate the Ottoman army and navy to unmatched standards. This period marked a turning point as people began to cast off the frustration that had emerged during the Tanzimat reforms. The primary objective of Sultan Abdulaziz's endeavors was to put an end to the Westernization movements that had influenced the moral, religious, collective, and cultural aspects of society in the name of progress. He aimed to maintain the loyalty to the Ottoman state's distinct ethno-cultural and religious identity and forge ahead on this path.

However, in the years preceding Abdulaziz's reign, the sultanate had deviated from its core principles to a dangerous extent. The French civil law, known as the Napoleonic Civil Code, had been translated, adopted, and applied to the Muslim populace, leading to dire consequences. Recognizing the gravity of the situation, Sultan Abdulaziz joined forces with **Ahmad Cevdet Pasha**, a prominent scholar of the time, to prevent further harm. Their collaboration resulted in the renowned legal text known as *Mecelle-i Ahkâm-ı Adliyye*, or simply *Mecelle*, a civil code comprised of Islamic legal principles. This achievement averted a great catastrophe. Sultan Abdulaziz, inspired by the accomplishments of his grandfather Yavuz Sultan Selim Khan, efficiently utilized all available means to instill hope in his people and achieve similar triumphs.

Upon ascending the throne, Sultan Abdulaziz faced a complex situation in the Ottoman state. The financial crisis had reached a critical point, and there was the threat of war with the Serbs due to the revolt in Montenegro. European powers saw this as an opportunity and offered mediation, fearing that the Sultan would abandon the Tanzimat reforms.

Recognizing the gravity of the situation, Sultan Abdulaziz swiftly issued an imperial decree to address these concerns. The edict stated the following:



*“We have no other purpose than to increase the strength of the state financially and raise the standard of living. State property must not be misused and squandered. Everyone living in our nation, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, will be governed with justice within the framework of the commandments of our religion, and all will be treated fairly and equally.*

*The continuation of the independence of our exalted state and the prosperity of the people is our greatest goal. May Allah grant us success in honor of the Prophet ﷺ!”*

By issuing this decree, the Sultan assured the Western powers that the Tanzîmat reforms would continue. The existing government remained in place, alleviating their concerns. Sultan Abdulazîz also took proactive steps to tackle wastefulness, starting with himself and the palace. He implemented gradual measures to improve the state’s financial situation, demonstrating his commitment to the prosperity of the people and the independence of the Ottoman state.

During this period, Egypt, with secret support from European powers, started to distance itself from the Ottoman state. In response, Sultan Abdulazîz with the guidance of Grand Vizier **Yusuf Kâmil Pasha**, undertook a trip to Egypt. His arrival was marked by a grand ceremony, and he was greeted by Kavalalı Mehmed Ali Pasha, the former rebel, who showed his loyalty by leading Sultan Abdulazîz’s horse through the streets of Cairo. This demonstration of support helped strengthen the authority of the Ottoman state, which had previously been weakened.

Furthermore, Sultan Abdulazîz sought to mend past grievances and improve relations by granting the title of **“Khedive”** to **Ismail Pasha**, the son of Mehmed Ali Pasha. The title signified the hereditary transfer of governorship from father to son. These efforts aimed to reconcile with Egypt and restore stability within the Ottoman state.

Sultan Abdulazîz’s achievements in reinvigorating the military and resolving internal conflicts garnered attention from the international community. As a result, he was invited to visit France and England, further highlighting his efforts to restore the Ottoman state’s prestige and establish diplomatic relations with European powers.





Upon receiving this invitation, Sultan Abdulazîz Khan set off in 1867 in front of the Dolmabahçe Palace on the Sultâniye yacht. This historic journey marked the first time an Ottoman Sultan traveled to foreign countries. He arrived in Marseilles, France, and his presence attracted crowds of people who lined the roads to catch a glimpse of the magnificent Sultan.

As a devoutly religious ruler, Sultan Abdulazîz was concerned about adhering to Islamic dietary laws during his visit. To ensure compliance, he brought his own cooks from Bolu. The splendor and majesty of the Sultan's entourage were so impressive that the French peasants, mistaking the cooks for high-ranking officials or members of the dynasty, bowed down and saluted them.

Sultan Abdulazîz was welcomed by **Napoleon III** with a grand ceremony in Paris. Napoleon III, who sat next to him at the dinner given in his honor, said:

“–Your Majesty! If you would consider abandoning the island to Greece as the best solution for Crete!..” which prompted a strong reaction from the Sultan.

Sultan Abdulazîz displayed his firmness and determination in diplomatic relations. In response to Napoleon III's provocative question, he replied with the following resolute statement:

**“–Your Excellency! The Ottoman state fought for Crete for twenty-seven years, watering every inch of that land with the blood of the blessed martyrs. I must preserve the legacy of my ancestors until there is only one soldier left in my army and only one boat left in my navy...”**

Taken aback by this unexpected asperity, Napoleon III was compelled to apologize to the Sultan.

Upon his return to Istanbul from his successful diplomatic trip to England and France, Sultan Abdulazîz was welcomed with enthusiastic cheers from the people. They saw in him the qualities of past sultans during prosperous eras and held hope that the state would regain its strength and prominence through new victories.

Sultan Abdulazîz Khan recognized the difference in power and magnificence between the era of his ancestors and his period with these words:



**“Our ancestors used to go to the West on horseback for conquest. As for us, we can now go by train and ferry, but only for diplomatic purposes!”**

Through his efforts, Abdulazîz Khan established a formidable navy, ranking as the second-largest in the world, and developed a well-equipped land army of seven to eight hundred thousand soldiers. He understood the significance of a strong navy, akin to today’s air force, and established a major shipyard in the Golden Horn. Furthermore, he promoted industrialization by establishing numerous military and civilian factories.

It was not without reason that Sultan Abdulazîz emphasized the importance of the army and navy. He knew that a victory against Russia would elevate the Ottoman state to the status of a great power and secure its position for at least another hundred years. He also sought to regain Crimea, which had been surrendered ages ago. However, his ambitions were cut short. He was removed from the throne and met a terrible martyrdom before he could achieve his goals, as the state was secretly infiltrated and destabilized.

Sultan Abdulazîz Khan was a man of great piety and integrity. His devotion to his faith was evident in his daily life and practices. It is said that he had enough Zam-zam water, the sacred water from the well in Mecca, to drink instead of regular water throughout his life. There are even rumors that he carried Zam-zam water with him when he traveled to Europe. He maintained regular prayers and frequently recited the Noble Quran. When he was tragically assassinated, a Quran was discovered on the small table in his room. The Quran was open to **Şûrah al-Yûsuf**, and it was found stained with his blessed blood. This Quran, preserved in the Topkapi Palace, serves as a poignant reminder of his devotion.

One day, while lying in bed languished and pale, someone said to Sultan Abdulazîz:

“There is a petition from a resident in Medina!” he said to his aides:

**“–Please, help me rise at once! I must listen to the petitions from the Two Noble Sanctuaries with utmost reverence. It is improper to hear the requests of those who dwell in the proximity of Allah’s Messenger while reclining with my feet extended in such a manner!..”** and thus beautifully demonstrated his deep love and reverence for Medina and the Prophet ﷺ.



He performed ritual ablution and kissed the letters every time mail came from Medina, and would say: «**There is the dust of Medina on them!**» He would then put them to his forehead and hand them to the chief secretary, saying: «Open it and read!»

As mentioned already, during the early years of Abdulazîz Khan's reign, the Ottoman state faced severe internal turmoil caused by a group known as the Young Turks. These individuals, who were enamored by Western ideals and driven by their political ambitions, had received their education in France under the tutelage of missionaries. They returned to Istanbul with their hearts French and their uniforms Ottoman. It seemed as though they had become the Janissaries of the West within the state. This period witnessed not only external invasions but also internal spiritual decay. The Tanzîmat Edict led to a rise in missionary activities and an increase in provocations by Christian minorities, particularly the Armenians. In the Harput region alone, sixty-two missionary centers were established, and twenty-one churches were constructed. In her book *Romance of Mission*, **Maria A. West**, a female missionary, proudly declared:

*“We penetrated the souls of the Armenians. We caused a revolution in their lives!..”*

With the aim of teaching languages, many schools opened all over Anatolia, essentially serving as missionary headquarters. Among the foreign schools where these activities were most intense, leading examples include Antep in Gâziantep, Anatolia in Merzifon, and Robert College in Istanbul. Some of these schools did not accept Turkish students, and priests were appointed as school directors.

These hostile activities led to cultural erosion in the country. However, with the resistance of Abdulazîz Khan, this breakdown was minimized. Unfortunately, his opposition would ultimately become the cause of his martyrdom.

Sultan Abdulazîz Khan was a visionary ruler. He often expressed the belief that unless Belgrade, Istanbul, Baghdad, and Cairo were under their leadership, the Ottomans would not play a critical role in world politics. This view resembles the “7 B” formula the Germans later introduced when their imperialist ambitions were awakened. The Germans advocated capturing seven major centers starting with the letter “B” from Berlin to Bombay in order to become a great state.

Abdulazîz Khan's political ambitions extended even to Turkestan. He actively engaged in the region and took responsibility for establishing schools in Iran and Turkestan that provided Turkish education to the Turkic population.

The Red Sea section of his navy had intercepted the British fleet on its way to crush **Indonesia**, forcing it to return. Indeed, he attached so much importance to maritime affairs that, in his time, Napoleon III sent a letter of gratitude for the successful operations of French ships in the Golden Horn shipyard.

This serves as a testament to the power and success of the Ottoman state, even in a period when they were labeled as the "sick man." It demonstrated that the state was still worthy of being called *Devlet-i Ebed-Müddet* ('The Eternal State').

During Sultan Abdulazîz's reign, **Shaykh Shâmil**, who had caused havoc to the Russians for thirty years and finally surrendered, received permission from the Tsar to perform the pilgrimage to Mecca and visited Istanbul en route. The Sultan had made many preparations in the palace and a great sense of joy filled the people of Istanbul. Everyone was gathered at the court. When the Russian steamer anchored in front of Dolmabahce, the sultanic boats of Abdulazîz brought Imâm Shâmil and his family to the palace. Abdulazîz Khan welcomed him at the gate of the palace and said with great reverence:

**"If my father had risen from his grave, I could not have been happier!"** He offered numerous other compliments as well.

Sultan Abdulazîz had set aside a residence in Istanbul for Imâm Shâmil and intended to host him and his entourage with great honor and hospitality in the caliphal city. However, Imâm Shâmil expressed his desire to spend his remaining days in Medina. With the necessary permission obtained from Russia, the Lion of Dagestan was sent to the Hejaz.



As stated, Sultan Abdulazîz Khan's decision-making and strategic advances to bring the state to its former glory and power unsettled certain self-serving and subversive groups. Some statesmen of this nature did not stand idle and actively conspired against the Sultan. Four individuals, **Huseyin Avni Pasha**, **Mithat Pasha**, **Mütercim Rüşdü Pasha**, and **Hayrullah Efendi**,



whose crimes were proven on various occasions, were dismissed from their positions but later reinstated.

In 1871, Huseyin Avni Pasha, who was among the members of this group, was dismissed, stripped of his ranks, and sent to Isparta. He was subsequently discharged from military service by **Mahmûd Nedim Pasha**. In light of these events, Huseyin Avni Pasha's ambition grew, and he declared his intentions, stating, «My hatred is my religion!» He devised a plan not only to dethrone the Sultan but also to assassinate him.

Mithat Pasha, a supporter of Huseyin Avni Pasha, lacked political and religious knowledge. His poor decision-making and involvement in corruption led to his dismissal from the position of Grand Vizier. He was known for his extravagant and fanciful nature. In fact, he went as far as to express his desire to overthrow the Ottoman dynasty while sitting at a drinking table, claiming that he would become the sultan. He casually remarked:

*“–What’s wrong with that?! Let there always be Osmanoğulları (sons of Osman) and some Mithatoğulları (sons of Mithat)!..”*

The third person of the group, Mutercim Rushdu Pasha, was appointed as Grand Vizier twice and held the position of sergeant three times. However, he was dismissed for misusing his authority. With his privileges revoked, he, too, developed a grudge against the Sultan.

Hayrullah Efendi, the fourth person in the group, held the position of shaykh al-Islam for only a month, thanks to his connection with Rushdu Pasha rather than his own qualifications. Being dismissed from this position deeply affected him, fueling his resentment toward the Sultan.

In due course, the group of four instigated a demonstration by inciting students, aiming to regain their lost privileges. To avoid any bloodshed, the Sultan allowed them to reclaim their previous positions, granting them their initial victory. Their ultimate objective, however, was to overthrow the Sultan, and they succeeded in carrying out a revolution.

On the morning of the revolution, **Cevher Agha**, the overseer of *Dâru's-saâde*, did not dare to inform the Sultan of the situation. He relayed the news to **Pertevniyal Vâlide Sultan**, who then informed Sultan Abdulazîz. During this time, the ceremonial cannonballs were being thrown for the new Sultan. Abdulazîz Khan remarked to his mother:

“–Are they going to turn me into Selîm III? I know the people who did this!..” Afterward, he disclosed the following:

**“–I have seen this tragedy in my dreams on numerous occasions. Such is divine providence!..”**

Sultan Abdulazîz Khan was taken to Topkapi Palace by boat under heavy rain. His property was plundered by the revolutionaries, down to the earrings worn by the women. He was placed in Selîm III’s room, and in despair, he said:

“They want to kill me here as they did to my uncle!”

For three days, he was deprived of food and drink and not allowed to change his wet clothes. Eventually, he was transferred to a designated room. However, Sultan Abdulazîz Khan wrote a letter to **Murâd V**, requesting to be moved to the **Fer‘iyye Palace** in Beşiktaş. His request was granted, and he was taken there.

Despite being in a new location, the conspirators, particularly Huseyin Avni Pasha, were determined to overthrow and kill the Sultan. They strategically assigned three wrestlers as gardeners at the Fer‘iyye Palace. On the morning of June 4, 1876, the assailants entered Abdulazîz Khan’s room. The Sultan resisted their attack for some time but was ultimately unable to overcome them. To conceal their terrible crime, they cut his wrists, creating the appearance of suicide. Afterward, the assailants discreetly resumed their duties as if nothing had occurred.

After a while, Vâlide Sultan, the mother of Abdulazîz Khan, arrived and saw her son lying on the ground, covered in blood. Overwhelmed with grief, she began to cry. Around the same time, Huseyin Avni Pasha, one of the conspirators responsible for organizing the murder, arrived at the palace to witness the outcome of their heinous act. Upon realizing that Abdulazîz Khan was still alive, Huseyin Avni Pasha ordered him to be taken to the kitchen of the palace headquarters. This delay prevented the timely intervention of a doctor as the Sultan was in his final moments. Ultimately, the oppressed Sultan met his martyrdom in the presence of these criminals, with Huseyin Avni, Mithat, and Rushdu Pashas standing by.

**May Allah’s mercy be upon him!..**



Twelve days had passed since the brutal death of Sultan Abdulazîz Khan. His brother-in-law, **Çerkez Hasan**, an officer, could not tolerate the tragedy suffered by Sultan Abdulazîz and raided the delegation of deputies who were in a meeting at the Mithat Pasha Mansion. In his initial strike, he slew Avni Pasha and avenged Sultan Abdulazîz Khan. He then killed Rushdu Pasha and an aide-de-camp. He was hanged in Beyazit the next day.

The revolutionary partisans, in an attempt to manipulate the truth, prepared a report threatening to disclose that Sultan Abdulazîz, an exceptionally intelligent and devout sultan, had not been murdered but had committed suicide.

However, in the subsequent years, Mithat Pasha, who was prosecuted in a court established by **Sultan Abdulhamîd Khan II** in Yildiz because of his involvement in the incident, made a revealing statement that seemed to confess the motive behind the murder. He said:

**“Praise be to Allah, I am convicted not of an ordinary crime, such as extortion and fraud, but for my patriotic devotion to the homeland, even if it means committing murder!..”**



Some accuse Sultan Abdulazîz of extravagance, claiming that the state’s debt had increased due to military preparations. However, this is far from the truth, as most of the military expenses were covered by the Sultan’s subjects, especially the court members. He closely followed global developments, importing long-range Martini-Henry rifles from America and promoting their production in Türkiye. These weapons played a significant role in the famous **“Defense of Plevna”** later on.

The Sultan possessed exceptional sensitivity, orderliness, and knowledge, demonstrating sound judgment in his actions. His hand-drawn ship sketches, published in an art magazine, showcased his command and precision. Despite his gentle soul, the Sultan, who had a deep understanding of music and possessed a poet’s and artist’s temperament, was drawn to warfare. His heart was filled with the desire for military conquests, including reclaiming Crimea. He made thorough preparations, but fell victim to the secret plots of his enemies, resulting in the alliance of four resentful men against him. When appoint-





ing Huseyin Avni Pasha, the leader of the revolutionaries, the Sultan had expressed his unease, saying:

**“I do not like this man’s eyes at all!”** thus showing that he sensed the impending catastrophe, but failed to take adequate precautions.

In this context, it is crucial to remember the noble hadith, “Sincere people are (always) facing a great danger!” (Bayḥaqî, Shu‘ab al-Îmân, V, 345).

The tragic murder of Sultan Abdulazîz indeed marked a critical turning point in Ottoman history, as indicated by the danger mentioned in the aforementioned hadith. Despite the political acumen of Sultan Abdulhamîd, subsequent disasters could not be completely prevented. The mighty state eventually faced downfall, and the victory of unbelief – even if temporarily – could not be hindered.

**O Lord! Bless us to take lessons from these and similar calamities, and protect us from a sorrowful fate in the annals of history! May the schemes and deceptions of those who promote mischief be reversed upon them!..**

**Âmîn!..**





*A Great Statesman and Ruler*

## **SULTAN ABDULHAMÎD KHAN II**

*(1842-1918)*

He was the thirty-fourth Ottoman sultan, and the ninety-ninth Muslim caliph.

Sultan Abdulhamîd Khan II was a remarkable statesman and ruler who left an indelible mark not only in his own country but throughout the entire Muslim world.

From a young age, Sultan Abdulhamîd distinguished himself through his exceptional intelligence and political acumen. He received both religious and secular education, excelling in his studies. He drew inspiration from prominent spiritual guides, such as **Mehmed Zâfir Efendi** of the Shâdhiliyyah and the **Abû al-Hudâ** of the Qâdiriyyah, enriching his outward tenacity with spiritual perfection

Since he was distinguished by his intelligence and political abilities at an early age, his uncle, Sultan Abdulazîz Khan, took Abdulhamîd II with him on his travels to Egypt and Europe.



Accompanying his uncle, Sultan Abdulazîz Khan, on travels to Egypt and Europe, Sultan Abdulhamîd II gained exposure to diverse cultures and experiences. Known for his graciousness and charismatic personality, he possessed extraordinary intelligence and an impeccable memory. Numerous written sources attest to his ability to remember individuals and their voices, even after brief encounters. **Prince Bismark**, credited with unifying Germany, had praised him as follows:

**“If there were a hundred grams worth of intelligence in the world, ninety grams of it would belong to Abdulhamîd Khan, five to myself, and the remaining five to other political leaders of the world...”**

Despite inheriting a challenging political landscape, Sultan Abdulhamîd II ruled the state for thirty-three years with unwavering faith, intelligence, patience, and dexterity. His leadership was characterized by resilience, and he skillfully navigated through various challenges without succumbing to fatigue or significant losses.



During Sultan Abdulhamîd Khan’s reign, the geopolitical landscape posed significant challenges for the Ottoman state. Britain had already established its dominance over distant seas and conquered India, while Russia had successfully invaded Turkestan and engaged in border disputes, particularly in the region of Afghanistan, with Britain. Russia’s ambitions and its desire to gain warm-water access through the control of the straits posed a threat not only to the Ottomans but also to Britain’s interests.

Within the Ottoman states, **Mithat Pasha and his followers**, who had orchestrated the overthrow and subsequent murder of Sultan Abdulazîz, sought to improve their tarnished reputation. They believed that starting a war, leveraging the strong military and navy left by Sultan Abdulazîz, would help restore their image. They hoped that if the war were against Russia, Britain would come to the aid of the Ottoman state. The ongoing conflict between the Ottomans and Russians at the borders of Serbia, a principality under Ottoman suzerainty, provided a pretext for initiating a war. Despite negotiations, they refused to seek compromise and instead pursued a confrontational approach.

Yet Russia could not afford a war with the Ottomans, who possessed the strongest army and navy in the world at that time. The Russians feared that



Britain would side with the Ottomans in such a war, as in the Crimean War of 1853, and, for this reason, made concessions upon concessions to eliminate the conflict. The Russian tsar also felt pressured by public opinion to stand against the Turks. To appear to have settled the matter by making a concession, he reduced his request to the point of giving the small town of Nikshik, which was our land, to Serbia, which was also a principality subordinate to the Ottomans. However, Mithat Pasha and his companions did not even agree to this.

Meanwhile, Sultan Abdulhamîd had just assumed the throne. The reins of the state were not yet fully in his hands. An insurgent establishment had dominated the government. The Sultan summoned the British ambassador **Layart** to prove to them that Britain would not take our side in such a disaster – as they thought – and made a negotiation with the government officials. Layart, on behalf of his government, stated in this meeting that if a Turkish-Russian war broke out due to Britain’s policy against Russia, they would be satisfied with our success but firmly stated that they would not take part in the struggle with us. Despite this, Mithat Pasha and his entourage, hoping to achieve an easy victory, did not listen to Sultan Abdulhamîd Khan and declared war on Russia.

Armies that carry out revolutions cannot fight properly, as their internal order is disrupted. This was evident in the “War of 93,” named after the year 1293 according to the old calendar. The Russian forces achieved an easy victory, advancing from across the Danube to Yeşilköy in Istanbul. Yeşilköy, known as San Stefano at the time, became synonymous with the terms of peace dictated by the Russian commander Grand Duke Nikola, known as the “Treaty of San Stefano.”

One contributing factor to this disaster was the appointment of a traitor named **Mehmed Ali Pasha** to the Ottoman command. The notorious **Mustafa Reşit Pasha**, who induced the proclamation of the Tanzîmat, brought a Polish Jew who had served in the embassy during his time with the British embassy back to Istanbul. Mehmed Ali Pasha, the true cause of the Turkish-Russian War of 1877-78 (War of 93), is the son of this Jew.

In the face of this terrible defeat, Sultan Abdulhamîd initially took control of the state by eliminating the revolutionary establishment that caused it. He then pursued diplomatic strategies to align with Britain, known for its anti-Russian stance. As part of this approach, he granted the island of Cyprus to

Britain as a base, “on the condition that the law remains intact.” The Treaty of San Stefano was replaced with the Berlin Treaty, which helped alleviate some of the losses incurred in the “**War of 93.**” Thanks to the Sultan’s political acumen, the catastrophe caused by the revolutionary establishment was mitigated to the greatest extent possible.

Having learned valuable lessons from these events, Sultan Abdulhamîd, shifted toward a peaceful policy and on internal development. He strategically examined the Çatalca, Istanbul, and Dardanelles straits in the west, as well as the Azîziye castles in the east. These measures demonstrated his foresight, which became particularly evident during the **Balkan Wars** and **World War I.**

Unlike his predecessor Sultan Abdulazîz, who pursued an expensive military policy leading to foreign debt, Abdulhamîd’s fundamental principle was to leverage the industrial advancements of Western states and manipulate their powers against each other.

As a result of Abdulhamîd’s peaceful policy, significant progress was made in reducing foreign debts, decreasing from 300 million gold coins to 30 million by avoiding excessive military investments. Abdulhamîd displayed remarkable strategic acumen in utilizing the Germans to counter British political ambitions. A notable example of this was granting the Germans a concession for the **Medina railway** and securing the liberation of **Aqaba**, a strategically important location, with their assistance, marking a significant chapter in history.

In 1878, drawing from the lessons learned from the disaster of the War of 93 and his observations of potential threats to the state from various political currents, Abdulhamîd Khan made the decision to indefinitely close the *Meclis-i Mebûsân* (Ottoman Parliament). This move aimed to prevent further harm, given the imbalanced structure of the parliament.

Following the aftermath of the War of 93, many Muslims from Rumelia became refugees, having lost their lands. Exploiting their plight, **Ali Suâvî** gathered unemployed and vulnerable individuals among the refugees and led them to Çırağan Palace. His aim was to overthrow Sultan Abdulhamîd and reinstate **Murâd V**, who was being held captive in the palace.

Sultan Murâd V was raised in a peculiar manner under the influence of Freemason Mithat Pasha and his followers from an early age. Both Murâd V



and Mithat Pasha were members of the Freemasons, holding the thirty-three-degree rank. It is evident that Murâd V joined this organization without fully understanding its true nature. However, those with malicious intentions believed that if he became sultan, it would facilitate the realization of their nefarious goals.

Ali Suâvî was motivated by his resentment after being dismissed from the directorship of Galatasaray High School by Sultan Abdulhamîd Khan due to his corrupt political ideas. Indeed, unbeknownst to him, Ali Suâvî was used as an instrument of British politics, who gradually became inclined toward anti-Ottoman sentiment as his Jewish political ambitions swayed over him.

The death of Ali Suâvî at the hands of the Beşiktaş guard **Yedi-sekiz Hasan Pasha** marked the end of this revolutionary endeavor and brought an end to their subversive activities.

Due to the numerous threats and dangers faced during his reign, Sultan Abdulhamîd Khan recognized the need to address the challenges posed by various groups, including the Greeks, Armenians, and Jews, who were involved in conflicts and turmoil. The presence of such internal strife, along with the ineptitude and betrayal of certain intellectuals, added to the complexity of the situation. For this reason, Abdulhamîd Khan was forced to follow a strict internal policy, which his opponents called «*istibdâd*» (“despotism”).

Despite this complex internal structure, Abdulhamîd Khan established a fine «intelligence organization», which could be taken as an example even in modern states today, to ensure peace and welfare for the people and country. It is remarkable that in this organization, even **Edward Joris**, an Armenian national who carried out an attempted assassination against him using a bomb, was availed as an engineer and member of the army owing to his intelligence. When the British ambassador to Madrid passed away, various documents found in steel vaults emerged stating that he was in communication with Sultan Abdulhamîd, which alarmed the British regarding the strength and extent of this intelligence. The burning down of the Çırağan Palace by his fierce opponents after he was deposed was also related to his astounding intelligence organization. Because the basements of this palace were full of journals given to Sultan Abdulhamîd, there is no doubt that the palace was burned to destroy them. The burned journals were believed to contain sensitive information that had the potential to create conflicts among the influential figures of

the Committee of Union and Progress (*İttihat ve Terakkî*) against each other. The destruction of these journals strongly suggests that there were efforts to spy on Sultan Abdulhamîd Khan, as their contents could have been used to incite divisions and discord among factions. Even a cursory analysis reveals the likelihood of surveillance and intelligence-gathering activities targeting Sultan Abdulhamîd Khan.

This situation of receiving reports from secret informants provided ammunition for unjust and indecent accusations against Sultan Abdulhamîd. Many allegations were made about the Sultan exiling individuals based on absurd reports that were made public. However, let us consider one example to understand the truth and appreciate the wisdom and sensitivity of Sultan Abdulhamîd Khan:

According to accounts, one day a high-level official passed by the Çırağan Palace and said:

*“–Oh, Sultan Murâd Efendi!.. If you were our leader, would it be like this?!”* a report was written stating that he had said something to this effect, and therefore an imperial decree was issued to exile that official to Fezzan. The Grand Vizier **Saîd Pasha**, who objected to this, said:

*“–Sir! What is this, I cannot understand?!. You forgave him even though the officer was proven guilty of committing theft and bribery about six months earlier. Now, based on a very minute and ordinary report, you are sending him into exile?!”* the great Sultan replied to the Grand Vizier:

*“–No, Pasha! I am not exiling him due to this report! The main reason is the crime of theft and bribery you mentioned. I also deliberately had this report prepared for me. However, if I had punished him six months ago without resorting to such an arrangement, I would have punished not only him but also his children, wife, and extended family. They, too, would be ashamed in front of their spouses and friends. They will now call this man a hero who presumably opposed Your Majesty...I preferred it to be like this!..”*

This incident alone sheds significant light on the evaluation of criticisms leveled against Sultan Abdulhamîd Khan’s reign, whether justified or unjustified.

Another incident further reveals the compassionate nature of Sultan Abdulhamîd:



Even though five years had passed since the martyrdom of Sultan Abdulaziz, the people had not forgotten this terrible and disgraceful crime. The Sultan desired to see the perpetrators apprehended and punished.

With this desire in mind, a special court was established in Yildiz. **Mithat Pasha, Hüseyin Avni Pasha**, and others were found guilty of murdering **Abdulaziz Khan** and were sentenced to death. Furthermore, a respected committee of forty individuals, including the hero of **Pleven, Ghazi Osman Pasha**, and **Ahmad Cevdet Pasha**, thoroughly reviewed the decision and unanimously affirmed its correctness.

However, Sultan Abdulhamîd Khan decided to commute the death sentence to exile. Moreover, during their exile, he provided Mithat Pasha, who had confessed to his crime, with an allowance of 800 gold coins.

**Considering the Sultan’s extraordinary behavior in this matter, it is difficult for anyone who is aware of the intricate details of these events to tolerate those who speak against this merciful Sultan?!**



One of the factors that contributed to the worldwide accusation of Sultan Abdulhamîd Khan was the Armenian question that arose during his reign. Armenians were in a distinguished position among the non-Muslim peoples living under the Ottomans in terms of adopting our customs and traditions. For centuries, they were identified as *tebaa-i sâdika* (“loyal subjects”). However, they were eventually deceived by Russian propaganda, as the Russians aimed to exploit them for their political purposes. This led to a shift in their loyalty. The Armenian movements, initially fueled by Russian incitement, soon attracted the attention of various Christian Western states, who also became involved in the conflict.

In the early 1800s, volunteers from across the Ottoman state rallied to defend Egypt, an Ottoman province, against **Napoleon’s** attack. Among them was Kavalalı Mehmed Ali Pasha, who, despite being an uneducated peasant, rose to the position of provincial governor (*hidiviyyet*), a position that would be passed down through generations. Western powers perceived in him aspirations for independence and saw an opportunity to divide and weaken Ottoman territories. They encouraged and supported him, even providing military





reinforcement, to incite rebellion against the central Ottoman government to which he had been subordinate for many years.

As a result of these provocations, Kavalalı attacked the Ottomans. The Ottoman state, weakened by the reforms and dismantling of the traditional Janissary-led army, was unable to suppress Kavalalı's rebellion in 1826. Consequently, Kavalalı Mehmed Ali Pasha reached Kutahya in 1832. The Ottoman state was then forced to seek aid from Russia and the Russians were able to have a say in the administration of the Straits in return for their assistance.

The supporters of Kavalalı Mehmed Ali Pasha, who were discontented with the situation, later joined forces with the Ottomans and participated in the «**Crimean War**» (1853) against Russia, approximately twenty years after the initial rebellion. This development convinced Russia that acquiring control over the Straits would not be accepted by Western powers due to the balance of power considerations. As a result, Russia sought alternative routes to reach warm waters. Meanwhile, just as Christian elements in the Balkans instigated revolts against the Ottomans, Christian Armenians in the eastern regions also adopted a similar approach. They aimed to establish an independent Armenian state, starting from the port of Iskenderun and extending to the Mediterranean, and subsequently merge it with their own country. The underlying reason for the Armenian uprising was the idea fostered by Russian influence.

The brilliant Sultan Abdulhamîd Khan was quick to recognize the Russian involvement in arming the Armenians and the potential consequences of this action. He took immediate measures to disperse the Armenians from the regions where they had gathered. However, this necessary action, fueled by Jewish support, became the target of an international propaganda conspiracy against the Sultan. Furthermore, a **ticking bomb** had been placed in a **carrriage** manufactured in Vienna that was intended to join the sultan's convoy. The bomb exploded in front of the Yıldız Mosque, causing casualties among both soldiers and civilians. Despite the chaos and panic, Sultan Abdulhamîd Khan remained calm and reassured those around him, confidently returning to his palace, saying.

“**Do not be afraid, do not be afraid!..**” he called out, sat in the carriage, whipped the horses amid the applause of the foreign ambassadors, and returned to his palace.



Look at the indifference of the alleged intellectuals of his time, with some even applauding this assassination attempt, which was carried out by Belgian-Armenian Edward Joris. Tevfik Fikret, a popular poet of the time, described the assassin as a “**glorious hunter**” in his poem *Bir Lahza-i Taahhur* (“A Momentary Delay”), expressing his grief over the failed assassination. Despite this, there is no historical record of any significant response from Sultan Abdulhamîd toward him.

During Sultan Abdulhamîd’s reign, a major concern arose regarding the **Jewish question**. **Theodor Herzl** convened the first Zionist congress in Basel, Switzerland. With his earlier book *The Jewish State*, he attempted to reunite the Jews of the world in Palestine. For this purpose, he secured the support of the Jewish Rothschild family, who were the wealthiest people in the world at those days. He came to Türkiye twice on his behalf and presented Sultan Abdulhamîd with an offer of paying the foreign debts of the Ottoman state in return for the Jews to settle and reside in Palestine.

However, because the Sultan refused this offer, a large-scale defamation campaign was launched against him by Jews from around the world.

This campaign unjustly popularized the name ‘The Red Sultan’ and associated it with Sultan Abdulhamîd Khan, creating a false stereotype. It is unfortunate that this slander, invented by Jews and propagated among Armenians, has found popularity since that day, gained traction not only among foreigners but also among many generations of Turks. However, Abdulhamîd Khan was a virtuous leader who never harmed anyone during his thirty-three-year reign. He even showed mercy by sparing the lives of those who attempted to assassinate him, including the Armenian Edward Joris and a eunuch.



Realizing that their seemingly innocent desire to emigrate and settle in Palestine was completely rejected by Sultan Abdulhamîd, the Jews came to the realization that they would not be able to achieve their goals as long as he remained in power. As a result, they established the **Committee of Union and Progress**, which initially emerged in Istanbul and later in the Jewish quarters of Thessaloniki, and spread their propaganda among the unfortunate people of the country. The impact of this unjust and baseless defamation was so significant that many well-intentioned individuals faced reputational damage, while others were marginalized during those times of oblivion.



Sultan Abdulhamîd Khan, perceiving the dangers involved, prohibited Jews from purchasing land in Palestine in order to prevent them from achieving their ambitions through covert collaborations. To counter their efforts, he personally bought land from those who wished to sell and transformed it into an *emlâk-i şâhâne* ('imperial real estate'), leading to the establishment of the *Filistin Çiftlikât-ı Şâhânesi*. Additionally, Sultan Abdulhamîd made efforts to increase the Muslim population in the region.

During that time, the Balkans had become a hotbed of mischief due to the activities of partisan groups instigated by Russian provocations. Some officers from the units fighting against these groups were deceived by the Committee of Union and Progress and the Jews supporting them. These officers rebelled and forced Sultan Abdulhamîd Khan to declare the **Second Meşrûtiyet** (Constitutional Monarchy).

Although Abdulhamîd Khan had intended to prepare and implement a new Ottoman constitution, he was faced with a complicated situation where preparations for revolution were underway. Consequently, he was compelled to enforce the old *kânûn-i esâsî* ('fundamental law').

The *Meclis-i Mebûsân* convened on December 17, 1908, with even the most defiant enemies of the Ottoman state being elected as members of parliament. However, it was concerning that the influence of the minorities in the parliament seemed to surpass that of the Muslim parliamentarians.

The Committee of Union and Progress quickly became hated by the general public shortly after coming into power. Criticisms against them were brutally suppressed, and their opponents, whether journalists or intellectuals, were assassinated. As public resentment reached its peak, the Committee brought loyalist hunter battalions from Rumelia and stationed them in Taşkışla to maintain their control. However, the officers leading these battalions eventually became entangled in political conflicts with the Beyoğlu party members and severed their ties with their soldiers. The liberated soldiers in the hunter battalions had the opportunity to interact with the public, through which they learned about the persecution and betrayal committed by the Committee of Union and Progress. Consequently, they revolted against the very leadership they were meant to protect. Istanbul experienced a few days of terror, during which some members of the Committee of Union and Progress were massacred in the streets. This event is known as the **Incident of March 31<sup>st</sup>**.



In fear of losing their power due to this uprising, the Committee of Union and Progress swiftly deployed a force of fifteen thousand individuals called the *Hareket Ordusu* (“Army of Action”) from Rumelia to Istanbul.



Sultan Abdulhamîd, regrettably, remained passive in the face of this marauding force due to his excessive compassion. Although he had thirty thousand well-educated soldiers around his palace, he was unwilling to shed blood for the sake of his throne and reign. Consequently, he was deposed by the Union and Progress government, which relied on the *Hareket Ordusu*.

The legal ruling issued against him was procedurally flawed and entirely unjust. The only fault they could find was his collection and burning of ‘the reputable religious texts’.

The truth behind this accusation is as follows:

At the time, independent printing and publishing of the Noble Quran was prohibited. The state was responsible for printing and distributing the sacred text free of charge. If, despite this prohibition, the Quran was found and confiscated, it would be burned and its ashes respectfully buried in the soil to ensure its sanctity.

However, the legal ruling for the dethronement did not originate from its rightful office. **Haji Nûrî Efendi**, the custodian of issuing legal rulings, was summoned to the parliament and coerced into delivering this ruling. After declaring that there were no sufficient religious legal grounds for the Sultan’s dethronement, he expressed his opposition, stating:

*“Dethronement is inauspicious! Sultan Abdulazîz was dethroned, and as a result, Rumelia was lost, and millions of immigrants came to Istanbul. Madrasahs and mosques were filled with them. I was a student at a madrasah at that time. My shoulders were bruised from carrying orphaned children on my back. If you desire the deposition of the Sultan, bring this matter forward to him and have him depose himself!..”*

Witnessing this controversy, **Talat Pasha** realized that matters were spiraling out of control and exerted pressure on the members of Parliament, especially the ulema, to deliver the desired legal ruling. As a result of this coercion, the notorious legal ruling for the dethronement of Sultan Abdulhamîd Khan was reached.



It is unfortunate that **Emanuel Karassou**, a Jewish deputy from Thessaloniki, insistently included himself in the committee of four who were elected by the Parliament to convey this matter to Sultan Abdulhamîd. When the Sultan saw the presence of this Jew in the delegation, he turned to the others and questioned:

“–You are Muslims! It is your right to desire whether or not to see me as the Caliph. But what is this Jew doing among you?!.”

They bowed their heads in reaction to this remark. Then the Sultan, thinking that all these things were bound by fate, said:

ذَلِكَ تَقْدِيرُ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ

“**This is the providence of Allah, the Almighty and the All-Knowing...**” (Şûrah Yâsîn, 38).



Immediately after his dethronement, the Sultan was deliberately sent to Thessaloniki, a Jewish neighborhood, and imprisoned there in the mansion of the **Alâtini Brothers**, a wealthy Jewish family. During his time there, he and his family endured cruelty and oppression that would be considered unacceptable even for an ordinary person. They were subjected to starvation, and all of the Sultan’s “personal wealth” and real estate properties were confiscated and nationalized(!). Upon the arrival of the *Hareket Ordusu* in Istanbul, the officers who had looted the Yildiz Palace were also rewarded with great fortunes under the guise of a “gift to the army” upon the Sultan’s exile.

Approximately ten years later, an investigation carried out on the instruction of the late **Sultan Vahidüddîn** revealed a deplorable list of looters and thieves, ranging from Mahmûd Şevket Pasha, the commander of the Movement Army, to lower-ranked officers. However, during that time of crisis, it was unfortunately not possible to hold those responsible for this betrayal accountable.

Even the poet **Tevfik Fikret**, who was a staunch opponent of Abdulhamîd, expressed criticism in his poems regarding the looting, cruelty, injustice, and other extreme acts carried out by the Committee of Union and Progress to which he belonged. One of his poems vividly portrays the dreadful looting of public property by the Committee of Union and Progress.



The Committee of Union and Progress, which seized power after the disposal of Sultan Abdulhamîd Khan, began to govern the country in a destructive manner. The mild-mannered **Sultan Reşad** was rendered helpless and controlled like a puppet in their hands.

Subsequent catastrophes unfolded rapidly. In 1911, the Italians launched an attack on Tripolitania (Libya), a former Ottoman territory. **Ibrahim Hakki Pasha**, the treacherous Grand Vizier of the Committee, facilitated the occupation of this region. He transferred soldiers from Tripolitania to Yemen and deceitfully summoned the military governor and commander to Istanbul under false pretenses, thus aiding the Italians. Given his prior posting in the Ottoman embassy in Rome, he should have been well aware of the Italians' intentions. However, all this aside, when he received the ultimatum from Italy regarding Tripolitania, he was playing "bridge" with Italian-born **Robilant**, who was working as a consultant in the Ottoman army. The ultimatum presented was as follows:

*"–Put it there, so my game will be over!.."* and showed his ignorance and deception only to realize his mistake hours later.

The recklessness and inexperience of the Union and Progress government did not end there. While the local conflict in Tripolitania continued, the **Balkan War** erupted. The army was ill-prepared and lacked crucial intelligence. As the enemy rapidly advanced toward Thessaloniki, the Union and Progress government sought to transfer Sultan Abdulhamîd from there to Istanbul. When the Sultan inquired about the reasons for this sudden move, they cited intelligence of a military threat and the enemy's proximity to Thessaloniki. Having been isolated from the outside world for years, the Sultan had no knowledge of the unfolding events. Upon learning of the situation, he was filled with horror and exclaimed:

**"You must have settled the Church issue!.."**

He then expressed his deep indignation to **Râsim Bey**, who had informed him of the situation:

*"–Râsim Bey! Râsim Bey!.. Thessaloniki means the key to Istanbul! Where are our army and soldiers?.. How can we abandon these lands which were watered with the blood of our forefathers? If we leave these places, will we not be disgraced in the eyes of history and our ancestors?.. Did my brother*

*agree to the evacuation of this land? How could it be? No, I am not content!.. Do not pay heed to me being seventy years of age! Give me a rifle, and I will defend Thessaloniki with my beloved soldiers until my last breath... ”*

Nevertheless, he accepted the request for transfer to Istanbul with a heavy heart, out of respect for Sultan Reşâd’s will and his duty as a member of the Ottoman dynasty.

And it was true. The main reason for the formation of an alliance between the Balkan tribes was the resolution of the Church issue.

To truly comprehend and evaluate the ignorance and deception of the Committee of Union and Progress administration, it is crucial to provide a brief explanation of the Church issue:

Following the disaster of the War of 93, Bulgaria was granted autonomy as a principality, albeit still under Ottoman rule. It was obvious that Bulgaria, like Greece, would strive for independence at the earliest opportunity. In order to prevent this possibility, **Sultan Abdulhamîd** implemented a brilliant policy by taking the following measures:

*The Bulgarians, like the Greeks, belonged to the orthodox sect. However, for centuries, they had no trained clergy and did not have their own churches. Sultan Abdulhamîd thought of separating them from the Greeks religiously. For this reason, he established the Bulgarian church presidency, opposite the Greek Orthodox patriarchate in Balat in Istanbul, with the name of “exarch,” equivalent to the Greek patriarchate which is protected under the same law. He secretly had the building of this patriarchate institution manufactured in Berlin and its pieces of steel brought to Istanbul. He had the craftsmen work until the morning and install it overnight. When the Greek priests opened their eyes in the morning, they were horrified to see a rival patriarch building in front of them, even though its plaque was hanging. (The Bulgarian exarch, which is still in place, is the first prefabricated building in Türkiye).*

In this way, Sultan Abdulhamîd’s political maneuvering led to the establishment of the Bulgarian church. As it became apparent that this was necessary, tensions arose in the quarters where Bulgarians and Greeks resided. Sultan Abdulhamîd Khan deliberately kept the Bulgarians and Greeks engaged in a struggle to transfer the administration of churches from Greek priests to the



Bulgarian exarch, prolonging the issue and fostering tension between these two ethnic groups.

When the inexperienced Unionists assumed power, they enacted a legislation called the **“law of churches.”** The majority population in areas where Greeks and Bulgarians coexisted was used as a basis for dividing the churches between them. A poll was conducted, and whichever side had the majority, the church was handed over to that side with the assistance of government forces. Within two years, a new church was built for the other side using state funds, thereby resolving the conflict between the two sides.

However, after the church dispute was resolved, the Bulgarians and Greeks aligned themselves with the perennial enemy of the Ottomans, the Serbs, and initiated the Balkan War within a few years. This is what Sultan Abdulhamîd Khan meant when he made the following statement:

**“You must have settled the Church issue!..”**

The ignorance and deceit of the Committee of Union and Progress governments are far too much to enumerate:

The Unionists, failing to grasp Sultan Abdulhamîd Khan’s strategy of aligning with the Germans against British policies, showed their folly in entering the First World War on the side of the Germans, ultimately falling victim to a Jewish fait accompli.

While the wounds of the Balkan War disaster had not yet been healed, the Ottoman state’s involvement in the war, primarily to alleviate the burden on the Germans, proved to be a significant factor in its collapse.

Amidst the chaos and as the war drew to a close, Enver and Talat Pashas, the leaders of the Committee of Union and Progress, who had come to realize their mistake in overthrowing Abdulhamîd, visited the deposed Sultan residing in the Beylerbeyi Palace to seek his opinion.

In response, the great Sultan brought forth an atlas and showed them the British colonies, taking note of their populations. He then inquired about the German colonies, only to discover that they had none. With a sense of sorrow, the Sultan uttered the following words:

**“–Could you not have made that calculation earlier?! Would there ever have been a war on the side of the Germans against England? I uti-**





**lized the Germans to balance British ambitions, and I did not anticipate anything beyond that. Now you seek my opinion!.. This was necessary earlier; it is too late now!..”**

As they departed from the palace, their eyes filled with tears, they uttered:

“We were not able to truly appreciate such a sultan! What a grave mistake we have made!..”

Indeed, many of those who consistently erred during that period later realized their faults in various ways and experienced deep regret.



During the Battle of Dardanelles, due to concerns about the enemy navy crossing the Marmara Sea, a precautionary decision was made to transfer the Sultan and the government to Eskişehir. However, when Abdulhamîd Khan learned of this, he bravely and courageously rejected the idea, saying:

“–I am the grandson of Fâtih Sultan Mehmed Khan!.. I can never be inferior to the Byzantine emperor Constantine! When my grandfather Fâtih took Istanbul, Constantine died fighting at the head of his army. My brother, let them go wherever they wish! Yet it should be known that he and the government cannot return if they leave Istanbul. As for me, I will not step foot outside of the Beylerbeyi Palace!”

With his determination, the Sultan and the government remained in Istanbul, preventing the collapse of the state on that day.

After a life filled with intense challenges, fatigue, and difficulties, Abdulhamîd Khan returned to his Creator on February 10, 1918, at the age of seventy-seven. May his final abode be in heaven!..

**May Allah’s mercy be upon him!..**



When Abdulhamîd Khan passed away in 1918, the mistreated and oppressed people of the state mourned his loss. As the people of Istanbul gathered in an unprecedented crowd to bury him in his tomb on the way to Dîvan, a sense of sadness and uncertainty prevailed. Some mourners even lamented, asking:

**“–To whom are you going to leave us, Great Khan?”**



Even those who had vehemently opposed him in the past were awakened by the subsequent calamities and expressed their regrets. Among them was **Sulaymân Nazif**, who, faced with the tumultuous events that unfolded after the Great Khan, visited Abdulhamîd's tomb, reflecting on the inescapable consequences of his absence.



Abdulhamîd Khan was at the forefront of those who faced oppression in Palestine, as he was dethroned for his resistance against Theodor Herzl and his stance on the Palestinian question.

**His death left the entire Muslim world feeling orphaned**, as he had been a pillar of support for the caliphate. Following his reign, the ability to exhibit the same level of steadfastness became challenging due to military setbacks. Nonetheless, Abdulhamîd displayed his commitment to Islam and the Muslim population in various ways.

For instance, in response to the anti-western movement sparked by the assassination of the German ambassador Kettler in China in 1900, Sultan Abdulhamîd dispatched an "advisory committee" to China at the request of Wilhelm, using the pretext of the incident known as the "Boxer Rebellion." As a result, Sultan Abdulhamîd was able to establish the renowned "**Hamidiye University**" in **Beijing**, an educational institution that focused on promoting religious education and had a lasting impact for a considerable period of time.

Another notable endeavor was the tragic event known as the "**Ertuğrul Disaster**." Abdulhamîd sent a delegation of scholars on the ship Ertuğrul to Japan, intending to spread Islam and strengthen the caliphate's presence worldwide. Unfortunately, the ship sank on its return journey, leading to a devastating loss for the state.

To comprehend the magnificence of Sultan Abdulhamîd's Islamic policy, one need only reflect on the fact that the railway line he established from Istanbul to Medina was solely realized through the contributions of Muslims worldwide, without any financial support from the state budget. This serves as a testament to his dedication and the support he garnered among Muslims globally.

Sultan Abdulhamîd Khan demonstrated great foresight. In response to the persecution and atrocities faced by Black people in America, he seized the op-



portunity to send preachers there to introduce them to Islam, which played a role in the formation of today's «Black Muslims».

Sultan Abdulhamîd Khan utilized photography to stay informed about global developments in great detail, and as a result, he left behind over three thousand albums. For instance, during the Russo-Japanese War in 1904, when most people did not anticipate the Japanese victory, he confidently informed his Grand Vizier that the Russian ships passing through the strait to the Far East would not return. He closely followed the progress of the war through the renowned **Pertev Pasha** and skillfully capitalized on the Russian defeat by supporting the Japanese cause for the benefit of his state.

In conclusion, it is impossible to fully capture the blessed character of Sultan Abdulhamîd, the intricacies of his politics, and the challenges he faced in his time within the confines of articles. His relentless efforts to eradicate the nation's afflictions and ensure its prosperity, despite the triumph of corruption, can only be comprehended when viewed from the perspective of divine providence.

Abdulhamîd Khan's piety, beneficence, mercy, intelligence, and ability were truly extraordinary. An anecdote that beautifully illustrates his sincerity is as follows:

Abdulhamîd Khan wished to be awakened at any hour of the night if an urgent matter arose, refusing to postpone it until the next day. In this regard, **Es'ad Bey**, the chief imperial secretary, writes in his memoir:

*“One day, in the middle of the night, I knocked on the Sultan's door to request his signature on an important document. To my surprise, the door remained closed. After waiting for some time, I knocked again, but still no response. I became concerned and thought: «Has the Command Sultan passed away?» Moments later, I knocked once more, and this time, the door opened. Sultan Abdulhamîd appeared, holding a towel in his hand as he dried his face. He greeted me with a smile and said:*

*«-Son! I understood you had come for an important matter at this late hour. I woke up the first time you knocked on the door, but I was late because I was performing my ritual ablution. Please accept my apologies! I have never signed any document for my beloved nation without first performing ablution... Hand it to me so that I may sign it!».»*





*And with these words, he proceeded to sign the document after uttering the basmalah.”*

In fact, his companion narrated the following regarding this attitude of Abdulhamîd Khan:

“He always kept a clean brick at his bedside. When he got out of bed, he would perform *tayammum* (dry ritual ablution) using the brick, so as not to step on the ground without ablution until he reached the fountain. When I asked why, he replied:

**«–If we, as the Caliph of the Muslims, do not adhere to the standards of the Sunnah, then the Ummah of Muḥammad ﷺ will suffer!...».**”

An imperial secretary recalls the following incident in his memoir:

*“One evening, I was on watch in one of the palace’s rooms located near the Sultan’s quarters. I had prepared a list of incoming letters, telegrams, reports, and memorandums. Just as he was about to leave, a telegram arrived. This was a telegram sent to the Sultan by one of the clerks at the Istanbul Lâleli Post Office...*

*In his telegram, the distressed official explained that his wife was going to give birth that night and that the doctors had warned him of the risks involved. However, he had no means to seek proper medical help and thus sought refuge in the Sultan’s mercy.*

*I did not consider it particularly noteworthy and decided not to include it in the list I would give to the Sultan. However, in his presence, after the Sultan reviewed everything one by one as he usually did, he added by saying:*

*«–Is there anything else?»*

*Even though I said «–Nothing of note, sir!» he asked once more insisting:*

*«–Tell me what you consider to be nothing of note!»*

*So I mentioned what was in the telegram. I informed him that I did not put it on the list, thinking that it was not worth presenting. He instructed me with a touch of sadness:*

*«–Bring it at once!»*



*Confused, I fetched the telegram, and the Sultan carefully read its contents. Then, contrary to my expectations, he promptly summoned the palace doctor and turned to me, saying:*

*«–Go to Lâleli together and take the necessary measures to assist the woman in labor!»*

Upon receiving the Sultan's orders, we, accompanied by the palace doctor, immediately proceeded to the house of the officer. By the time we fulfilled our duty and returned from the hospital, morning was approaching. As we entered the palace, the Sultan, who must have heard us from the sound of the door, opened the curtain and gestured for us to approach. The lights in his room were still on.

It was evident that he had been engaged in worship and prayer throughout the night. We entered his presence without delay, and he inquired about the outcome. I relayed the events as they unfolded, saying:

*«–Your Majesty, the birth was challenging. However, with the efforts of the specialist doctors, the patient was saved, praise be to Allah.. A son was born, and they named him Abdulhamîd. They prayed and wept until the morning, fervently invoking blessings upon Your Excellency...»*

*The Sultan, the compassionate father of the nation, who had listened attentively while standing, expressed his relief by saying, “All praises be to Allah.” He then retreated behind the screen and performed two cycles of ritual worship in gratitude.”*

O Lord! Bless the Ummah of Muḥammad ﷺ and grant them many exemplary leaders, courageous souls, and selfless servants, like Sultan Abdulhamîd Khan, who will make sacrifices in the way of Thee and be victorious and triumphant against the people of hypocrisy and unbelief! Grant us the strength and fortitude to bear the weight of our noble responsibilities!

**Âmîn!..**





## THE VICTORY AT DARDANELLES (ÇANAKKALE) AND ITS UNNAMED HEROES

As the First World War began, stemming from industrial rivalry between the Germans and the British, the Ottoman state was under the rule of the Committee of Union and Progress. This group came to power by deposing Sultan Abdulhamid Khan, one of the most significant figures in our nation's history, in the aftermath of a Jewish-driven intrigue. However, their carelessness and mutual negligence led the state from one disaster to another. Given its vast geography, it was difficult for the Ottomans to stay out of the war zone, and they were brought to a dangerous point militarily and politically.

Yet, the wounds caused by the tragedies of Tripolitania in 1912 and the Balkan Wars of 1912 had not yet healed. The Committee of Union and Progress, attempting to eliminate its adversaries with overwhelming terror in domestic politics, sought to exploit the economic problems caused by the wars to enrich themselves. On the other hand, there was no unity among the parties. While **Talat** and **Enver Pashas** sided with the Germans, **Cemâl Pasha** preferred the Entente, which included the French. However, this group was led by

Jews associated with the English. As a result of the war, they were determined to seize Palestine and turn it over to the Jews. The Russians, who were in the same group, had historical ambitions over Ottoman lands. Therefore, Cemâl Pasha's attempts yielded no results.

Shortly after the war began, the famine in Russia provided an opportunity for the communists, drawing from their experience in the 1904 revolution, to undermine the Tsarist administration. To prevent a communist revolution, allies needed to supply food and aid to Russia. However, crossing the Galician front through Romania presented military challenges. Meanwhile, a regrettable incident, contrived by German intelligence, played into the enemy's hands. Two German battleships, **Goeben and Breslau** (later **Yavuz and Midilli**), entered the Dardanelles Strait under the pretense of fleeing from the enemy. The Union and Progress government attempted to downplay this, claiming the ships were purchased, but it was protested by their allies. The careless leaders failed to change the commanders and personnel of these ships flying the Turkish flag, merely dressing them in Ottoman attire. A few days later, the battleships allegedly sailed to the Black Sea for an excursion, and under the direction of Enver Pasha, they attacked a Russian transport ship and bombarded Sevastopol. This action led the Ottoman state into the fire of the World War, as **Wilhelm Anton Souchon**, the German admiral of Jewish origin, brought them to a fait accompli.

For this reason, the Allies attacked the **Dardanelles** to cross the straits and deliver aid to Russia and prevent a possible communist revolution.



*The Battle of Dardanelles, one of the most magnificent wars in the history of the world, saw the Ottomans victorious despite the high-end modern battleships and more than three hundred thousand soldiers from the three great powers of England, France, and Italy.*

***But at what cost!.. It resulted in the martyrdom of 400,000 young men, including 250,000 in the war zone and approximately 150,000 in hospitals...***

*Despite the poor administration of the Unionists and the numerous military deficiencies, the Turkish soldiers added one of the last golden pages to the history of the Ottoman state in Dardanelles by making up for their lack of weapons with their faith.*





There are countless examples of how the victory at Dardanelles was won not by earthly weapons but by the force of faith. Among them, we bring to your attention a selection from a letter written by the late reserve officer **Muallim Hasan Ethem**, who voluntarily joined this front, to his mother just before he was martyred, reflecting the spiritual atmosphere that surrounded all the soldiers there:

*My dear mother!*

*A glorious Turkish mother who found giving birth to four soldiers a source of pride!*

*I received a letter of counsel while sitting in the shade of a pear tree by the side of a stream that runs through the middle of a beautiful, green savanna, like the Divrin Plain. It reinforced my soul as it became enchanted with the greenery of nature. As I read, I learned great lessons in the meantime. I read it once more. I am glad I have partaken in such a beautiful and sacred duty. I opened my eyes and looked into the distance. The bowing of the vibrant green crops, unable to withstand the wind, seemed to me to greet the letter from my mother. They were all leaning in my direction, congratulating me and affirming that there was a letter from my mother.*

*I turned my eyes a little to the right; the magnificent pine trees at the foot of a beautiful hillside heralded me with their unique acoustics. I turned my glance to the left; the creek was laughing, playing, and bubbling because of the letter I received from my mother... I raised my head and looked at the leaves of the tree, the shade under which I was resting. They all wanted to express that they participated in my joy with their oscillation. I looked at another branch, and a beautiful nightingale was praising me with its sweet sound and trying to signal by opening its thin beak that it was partaking in my feelings.*

*It was as if the nightingale reflected my feelings with this delightful chant. Oh well, may my mother be content with her fate! If it were a man, it would smell these flowers, drink this milk, see the prostration of these crops, observe the gentle flow of the stream, and hear the profound melodies it produced.*

*Right now, on the dark green side of this beautiful meadow, my soldiers have lined up innocently washing their clothes. A brave soldier with a voice like Dâwûd ﷺ recites the call to prayer...*





*Oh my Lord! On this plain, the divine voice seemed to come from another realm. How beautiful it was! Even the nightingales fell silent, the crops were still, and the stream did not make a sound. Everyone and everything, all existence, was listening to that heavenly voice. The call to prayer was over. I performed my ritual ablution from the stream. We prayed with the congregation. I knelt on those beautiful green meadows.*

*I have forgotten all the commotion and splendor of the world. I raised my hands, stared up, opened my mouth, and said:*

*“O Lord of the heavens and the earth! O Creator of this singing bird, of that wandering and bleating sheep, of those green crops and grass that prostrate, of those majestic mountains! You have given all this to us. Leave it with us again! May such beautiful places and blessings belong to those of us who praise Thee and affirm Thy glory!*

*I stood up after having supplicated: O my Exalted Allah! All the wishes of these heroic soldiers are to introduce Thy name to the British and the French. Grant this noble wish to your soldiers who tremble in your presence and supplicate to You in such a beautiful and quiet place, for you have already destroyed your enemies, wreak havoc on them with the sharp bayonets of the soldiers!”*

*It was no longer conceivable to be as happy and joyful as I was.*

*Mother, your other son, Hâlid, is also in pleasant places like me.*

*But weddings do not happen in these lands! May the enemy soldiers be destroyed by Allah’s permission so that we can return to you victoriously and have my wedding, should we not?*

*My mother, do not forget us in your supplications! May Allah be pleased with you!..*

*Your son, Hasan Ethem  
4 April 1331 - 17 April 1915*

The victory at Dardanelles is an achievement and gift that such great heroes presented to us in exchange for their lives. And in every successful attack of this outstanding defensive war, there are many known and unknown examples like this. Here are some exemplary ones:



### **The Last Words of a Martyr**

On June 2, 1915, Captain Mehmed Tevfik was wounded by a British bullet in the Battle of Dardanelles and wrote the following letter before being martyred:

From the Camp near Ovacık on Wednesday, May 20, 1331.

*The reason for my life, my blessed companion,*

*My dear father and mother,*

*In the first terrific battle, I entered Arıburnu, a British bullet passed through my right side and trousers. Thankfully, I survived. However, from hereon in, I have no hope that I will be saved from the battles I will enter, so I am writing the following lines for memory's sake.*

*Praise be to Allah, who has brought me to this rank. Again, he made me a soldier by divine destiny. Being my parents, you raised me as needed to serve the country and the people. You have become the cause of my life and blessings. I praise Allah and thank you beyond measure.*

*It is time to warrant the remuneration that the nation has given me until now. I am trying to fulfill my sacred duty to my homeland. If I attain the rank of a martyr, I will be satisfied, for I will be the most beloved servant of Allah. Since I am a soldier, this has always been familiar to me.*

*My dear father and mother! I leave my beloved wife Münevver and son Nezihcik first to the protection of Allah and then to you. Please, try to do whatever is possible for them. As you know, we have no wealth. I cannot ask for more than what is possible. If I do, it will be in vain. Please, hand the enclosed letter I wrote to my companion (my wife) to her personally! Of course, she will cry and grieve; comfort her. Such is the fate decreed by Allah. Give importance to the notebook in which I put the letter to my companion regarding my requests and debts! The debts which Münevver has in her memory or written in her notebook are also correct. My letter to Münevver is more detailed. Inquire with her.*

*My dear father and mother! Perhaps I have wronged you unknowingly. Forgive me! Give me your blessings! Send grace upon my soul! Please, assist my wife in putting our affairs in order!*

*My dear sister Lütfiye!*



*You know, I have always loved you very much. I would have liked to do whatever I could for you. Maybe I wronged you too. Forgive me; such was divine destiny. Give me your blessings, and send grace upon my soul! Help your sister-in-law Münevver and my son Nezih!*

*O my family and friends, farewell to you all! Give me your blessings! I give you all my blessings! Farewell, farewell! I entrust you all to Allah. May you be under His care, my dear father and mother...*

*Your son,  
Mehmed Tevfik*

The following is another illustration of the brave martyrs:

### **Amputate My Arm, Commander!**

A retired army officer, who commanded at the battle of Dardanelles and was wounded, describes in his memoir:

*We are in one of the days as the **Dardanelles Battle** continues. The war, which continued that day until the evening, was about to conclude with our victory over a relatively far superior force. From the lookout, I was following the final phase of the battle with excitement. The Turkish soldiers' cry of "Allah Allah..." and their prayers seemed to make the horizon tremble, and even the sound of cannonballs, representing all the majesty of a formidable civilization, seemed to be drowned out by these great cries.*

*At one moment, I felt like I could hear a footstep next to me. When I turned back, I met Sergeant Ali. There was tremendous anguish on his pale face. Before I could ask what was wrong, he showed me his arm, and it was enough to tell me all I needed to know. I shuddered with horror. His left arm was almost completely severed by a hit about four fingers above his wrist, and only a thin piece of skin kept his hand from falling to the ground. Sergeant Ali was clenching his teeth, trying to overcome his agony. He handed me the pocketknife in his right hand and said:*

***"-Amputate it, commander!"***

*This three-word sentence expressed such a great desire and compulsion that I instinctively took the pocketknife and the hand swinging at the tip of the*



*skin of the arm. While performing this dreadful task, I was trying to boost his morale by saying,*

*“Do not worry, Sergeant Ali, may Allah make your body healthy!”*

*Not before long, Sergeant Ali sacrificed not only his hand but also his body for the sake of the Muslims. As he shut his eyes, looking on life, he said:*

*“—May Allah protect our country! May Allah not separate us from religious faith!.. May my soul be sacrificed to the homeland!..” and breathed his last breath, and a small pool of blood covered his surroundings.*



The Battle of Dardanelles was won with a profound power of faith. In this regard, the heroic and brave men who personally engaged in the war described the course to victory as follows:

**“Our hearts were in a state of supplication to Allah. We took refuge in His help and guidance. Our commanders were constantly making us recite «Salât al-Nâriyyah» (“Prayer of Relief”). Thus, we were granted divine assistance...”**

### **Divine Favor**

**Mirlivâ Cevat Pasha**, the commander of the Dardanelles’ fortified position, fell into a light sleep due to extreme fatigue while he was in a state of weakness and during the bombardments of the enemy fleets that had sprung up on the Bosphorus. In his dream, he heard a voice that said:

—O Cevat! You respect and honor the word of Allah. For this, I herald you a victory with the help of Allah! Look over that sea!”

When Cevat Pasha looked over the sea, he saw the Arabic letters “*kâf*” and “*waw*” among a crowd of light. Then he woke up.

The next day, Cevat Pasha was reciting Şûrah al-Fâtihah at the head of a tomb when he heard the voice in his dream again say:

“—O Cevat! Take the twenty-six mines from the repositories and place them in the sea!”



He was excited about having encountered an otherworldly mystery. While thinking about how to solve this, he came across a saintly-faced person looking at him from afar. He approached the Pasha and asked him if he had any problems. The Pasha also told what had happened. That friend of Allah explained the dream that the Pasha related with profound intuition:

“–My son! The light you see on the sea is an omen of our victory. It shows that the infidels cannot own these lands. The letters “*kâf*” and “*waw*” are twenty-six according to their *abjad* (Arabic numerological system) calculation. Then laying the twenty-six mines in your repository will be one of the greatest moves toward victory.”

After these words, that saintly-faced person disappeared.

Cevat Pasha, who had now fully understood the matter, immediately gave orders for placing the mines. The mines laid by the **Nusret Mine Ship** fulfilled their duties perfectly under the command of **Captain Hakkı Bey**. Each of the mines released into the sea in the middle of the night was placed in the water with a *takbîr*. That morning, Captain Hakkı Bey died of a heart attack after completing his duty.

The following day, when the enemy battleships entered the Bosphorus, the mines planted at night began to perform their duties. As a result, some important battleships of the enemy navy were buried in the waters of the Bosphorus with these mines. Thus, the enemy’s attack was foiled.

The help of the Divine had become manifest. The conquest of sincerity and earnest refuge in Allah was clearly observed because the faithful army of Ottomans was fighting for their religion and homeland. For this, they were recipients of divine aid. Allah says:

“...**If you help the religion of Allah** (by living it sincerely, and by transmitting it to others), **He will help you...**” (Sûrah al-Muhammad, 7).

The memory shared by Koca Sayyid, who was blessed with this help, is one of those unforgettable moments.

### **Koca Sayyid**

The **Rumelian Mecidiye Bastion** faced near destruction due to a terrible enemy attack. Most of the ammunition was blown up, and sixteen members of



the artillery regiment were martyred. Among the survivors of the sizable bastion were a captain, two soldiers, and a broken crane.

The captain had moved away to inform the surrounding troops of the situation when one of the men, the Great Sayyid, sighed deeply, looking at the enemy ships advancing over the sea. His eyes welled up, and his heart beat helplessly with grief. Raising his hands to Allah, he said:

“O Lord! O Mighty Allah! Give me such strength now that no servant of yours will be stronger than me!” and took refuge in his Lord and asked Him for help.

Koca Sayyid had entered a different realm in the presence of his Lord. Tears streamed from his eyes down to his cheeks. In a state of recollection, he said:

«لَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ» (‘There is no strength and power but that of Allah’).

Then he suddenly exclaimed, «O Allah!» and grabbed and lifted the 215-okka (about 276-kilo) cannonball amid the astonishment and wonder of his fellows. He went up and down the iron steps three times. The crackling of the chest and shoulder bones could be heard. He was sweating profusely. Koca Sayyid, with his chapped lips, continued supplicating and said:

*“O Allah! Do not withhold Your strength from me!”*

Finally, the fate of the war changed with the famous third cannonball. The British battleship “**Ocean**” was hit, and the sea was covered in a hellish flame.

When Cevat Pasha learned about the incident and thanked Allah, he congratulated Koca Sayyid and asked him to lift another cannonball of the same weight again. Koca Sayyid replied:

*“Pasha! While lifting this cannonball, my heart was full of trust in Allah. I felt something different in myself. If I reached a position to lift this weight, it was the manifestation of His help and grace in return for my supplication to Allah, which was reserved for that moment. Now I cannot lift it, Commander; pardon me!..”*

Upon hearing these words from Sayyid, Cevat Pasha said:

“–My son! You have done a wonderful job. Ask me for a reward?”



The self-sacrificing brave soul, who had erased from his heart everything except his servitude to Allah, displayed his second heroism in his spirit with these words:

*“My Commander! I have no requests; however, since I am a wrestler, one loaf a day is not enough. If you order them to give me two loaves of bread, I will be stronger in the face of the enemy!..”*

Cevat Pasha, who smiled at this request, rewarded him with the rank of corporal.

The demeanor of the Great Sayyid exquisitely expresses the sincerity and purity of his heart.



When spirituality prevails over matter, it influences it. Historian **Ian Hamilton**, the British commander in the Battle of Gallipoli, confessed this fact as follows:

*“We lost not to the physical strength but to the spiritual strength of the Turks because they didn’t even have any gunpowder left. But we fought powers descending from heavens!..”*

Again, the following dream that Hamilton describes as a nightmare is also exemplary:

*“An ugly dream came to me last night. My tent was at Imbros right enough, and I was lying in my little camp bed, and yet I was being drowned, held violently under the Hellespont. The grip of a hand was still on my throat; the waters were closing over my head as I broke away and found myself wide awake. I was trembling and carried back with me into the realms of consciousness an idea that some uncanny visitor had entered my tent. Already the vision was fading. I could visualize the form of the presence, but the face remained hidden in shadow. Never had I suffered from so fearful a dream. For hours afterwards, I was haunted by the thought that the Dardanelles were fatal; that something sinister was afoot; that we, all of us, were pre-doomed.”*

In response to the decision of the Allies and the British War Minister, especially the hesitance of the British government, to attack the Dardanelles, **Winston Churchill** said the following:



“–Don’t worry! I will sit on the throne of the Turks wearing this naval uniform!” and provided assurance upon assurance with similar statements. While being severely questioned on why he suffered a defeat at the battle, Churchill exclaimed to the court:

“–Don’t you understand? In the Battle of Dardanelles, we fought with God, not the Turks! Of course, we were to be defeated...”

The awe-inspiring events that took place during the Battle of Dardanelles, which saw the enemy commanders make these confessions, clearly display the help and favor of Allah.

### **Eid Prayer amid a Cloud**

It was the eve of a Ramadan celebration as the Battle of Dardanelles continued. The front commander **Vahip Pasha** summoned the young Imam of the Ninth Division and sadly, reluctantly said:

“–Hâfiz! Tomorrow is the Ramadan feast. The soldiers wish to perform the Eid prayers collectively. I could not dissuade them, regardless of what I said. But such a thing would be a dangerous risk for a mass killing, an opportunity the enemy would not find under normal circumstances. Relate this to the privates in an agreeable manner!..”

The Imam had just left the Pasha’s side when he was confronted by a saintly-faced person who said:

“–My son! Do not say anything to the soldiers! May the day be blessed; Whatever Allah says, so shall it be...”

The following morning, everyone witnessed a divine manifestation leaving them astonished. Heavenly clouds descended and covered the faithful soldiers, whose hearts were filled with the love of servitude to Allah. Having been watching them with binoculars, the enemy forces could no longer see anything but white clouds. That morning, the loud *takbîrs* chanted during the Eid prayers, with an entirely different kind of spiritual excitement. While the saintly-faced old man was reciting some passages from Şûrah al-Fatḥ, the sounds of the words overflowing from the soldiers’ hearts were heard even from the ranks of the enemy as an emphatic cry of faith.



At this time, a great commotion broke out among the British forces. Some Muslim soldiers, who had been deceived and brought from various British colonies, understood from the sounds of *takbîr* and *tawhîd* that they were fighting a Muslim cohort like themselves and rebelled. The cruel British, puzzled as to what to do, shot some of them and hastily withdrew others to the rear.

### **The Cloud that Swallowed the Enemy**

It was a day when the enemy launched a supreme offensive at the Dardanelles. In the operation that Ian Hamilton commanded, the British achieved no results. In particular, the Twenty-Ninth Division had suffered heavy casualties.

That day, however, a section of the **Royal Norfolk Regiment** was able to move inland as they encountered little resistance. The regiment crossed the dry bed of the Azmak Creek and marched slowly from the area near the Kayacık Cave toward the Damakçı Ridge. There was a small hill in front of them. A strange, pale cloud hovered above it. The regiment advanced toward the hill and disappeared into the cloud.

This occurrence was also included in British sources with the signatures of the witnesses and aroused horror among the enemy troops. The cloud over the hill waited until the last soldier of the 267 British soldiers had been taken and then took off as if it had taken its load. Again, it merged with the seven or eight clouds that appeared earlier and flew north toward Thrace.

Until today, the fate of those British soldiers is still unknown. Neither prisoner nor death records are available from either side.

The incident, confirmed to be authentic, was one of the divine favors that could not be solved by material means during the Battle of Dardanelles and remained inexplicable in light of physical principles.

### **A Jug of Water**

The following incident witnessed by the late **Lâdikli Ahmad Agha**, one of the ghazis of Dardanelles, illustrates the divine aid that was received in those difficult days:

Under a hellish fire, the soldiers experienced severe thirst to the point that the blood in their veins could dry up. At this moment, a saintly-faced person



appeared in the trenches holding a jug of water. He distributed ice-cold water to all the soldiers, yet the water did not run out. Lâdikli Ahmad Agha also took water from it. That person said to Ahmad Agha:

“–My son! If you get injured, rub it with the water you took into your canteen!:

Ahmad Agha, injured a few times, rubbed his wounds from this water and was healed shortly after.

This person, who said that his name was **Kaşıkçı Dede**, was a friend of Allah who passed away years ago in Kilitbahir.

This incident demonstrates that during the Battle of Dardanelles, saints had assisted immensely with the permission of Allah.

### **An Unimaginable Resignation to Allah’s decree**

The men of faith in the Battle of Dardanelles had taken as their example the morality of the Companions ﷺ who had been inwardly cultivated by the Prophet ﷺ with their hearts in spiritual devotion. One of them, Private Hussein, was seriously injured and was receiving treatment. But his condition was getting worse at every passing moment. He was aware of this. He had picked up the bread his friends had given him, and as he was about to take a bite, he paused suddenly. And, as if an iteration of resignation exemplified by the early Companions ﷺ, the believing soldier, preferring his brother to himself, said with ecstatic religious faith:

**“–My dear friends! It is not right for me to eat this bread because my death is nearing ever closer. Take this and give it to the brave men who will live!..”** and handed the bread to Mustafa, his comrade-in-arms.

No matter how much they insisted, they could not accept it. Finally, after a while, this exceptional person of faith was honored with martyrdom in the joy and pleasure of spiritual delights granted to him.

In the Battle of Dardanelles, there was a state of altruism that could be found only at the highest point of assistance associated with the prophets and saints. Thus, the divine mercy, as it were, was like spring rain.



### Officer Muzaffer

Officer Muzaffer, a student of higher education, joined the army as a volunteer soldier during the ongoing Battle of Dardanelles. After three months of training, he was transferred to the Dardanelles, but by that time, the war had already ended, and most of the troops had been dispatched to the eastern fronts. Due to this, the upkeep of the transport vehicles, worn out in the war, had to be met. They assigned Officer Muzaffer from Istanbul to this task.

Officer Muzaffer immediately went to Istanbul with the letter in his hand. He found the materials he had been looking for from a Jewish merchant and went to the district governor of the military service. However, the district governor claimed that the soldier did not have military boots and a coat and thus refused to give the requested amount.

Muzaffer, who had left the governor's office in a sad and timid state, did not know what to do. How could he return to his unit empty-handed? Thinking of the hardships endured at the front, he finally made up his mind and told the Jewish merchant to prepare his orders and to come to pick them up after the morning prayers, assuring that he would pay for it then. That night, he worked until the morning and fabricated a hundred liras of paper money. It looked very authentic, making it difficult to be distinguished otherwise at first glance. The following phrase was written on the paper bills of those days:

*«The amount will be paid in gold in Dersâdet»*

Officer Muzaffer wrote on the hundred liras he prepared himself:

*«The amount will be paid in gold in Dardanelles»*

Early in the morning, he took his goods from the Jewish merchant, gave him this money, and went to the Dardanelles on a ship.

Three days later, when the Jewish merchant went to the Ottoman bank to exchange the money in his possession, the matter became apparent. The money was fake. The amount of gold inscribed on the bill was the blood of martyrs shed in Dardanelles, which was more valuable than gold. For some reason, the Jew was silent and did not react. However, the incident spread throughout Istanbul, and **Şehzâde Abdulhalîm Efendi** had also become aware of it. The prince immediately showed interest. He took the counterfeit money from the

Jew by giving him the gold specified on the bill and presented it to the Police Museum in an elegant enclosure.

Officer Muzaffer, the hero of this story, was unaware of what had unfolded and went to the eastern front with his unit. There he defended the homeland with great courage and self-sacrifice. He was seriously injured during a bloody battle. He was martyred, leaving a lofty memory to the next generation:

Muzaffer Bey, who fought in the line of fire and became a martyr at the beginning of his duty, took an envelope out of his pocket in his last breath at the minute when his voice was no more and his eyes could not say anything. Then he took a piece of wood from the ground and dipped it in the blood flowing from his wound, and began to write:

**“–Which direction is the qiblah?..”**

Muzaffer Bey had wanted to surrender his soul to Allah facing the Kaaba, and those around him fulfilled his wish turning him toward the qiblah. At the moment of death, on the one hand, the officer, whose face was filled with the joy of reunion, and on the other hand, concerned about defending the sacred cause, gave the following message to the heroic soldiers in his note:

**“–Let the troops continue the *jihād* for the sake of Allah; and let them take my revenge!”**

He was about to write a third message, although time did not permit it, and he surrendered his blessed soul to his Lord.

### **Confession of a French General**

The noble sufferings of our faithful soldiers were manifested not only against their fellow believers but also against the enemy soldiers who had come to kill them. In 1930, French General **Henri Gouraud** attended the inauguration of a monument built for them and wished to visit the graves of the martyred Turkish soldiers. He admitted the following in a speech he made to the community around him, most of whom were French:

*“–Gentlemen! The Muslim Turkish soldier possesses exceptional qualities that are uncommon among their fellow soldiers. In this regard, I would like to convey a vivid memory that is still fresh in my mind.*



*One morning, with the first light of the day, we started a bayonet war with the Turks. They were fighting very, very skillfully. It was impossible to deal with them. After a battle late into the evening, we agreed mutually to collect our wounded. As both sides began to take their wounded, I went to the battlefield. A scene I saw in that chaotic turmoil constituted a painting that not even artists would produce with their brushes. I put everything aside and watched with great amazement and admiration.*

*A Turkish soldier was pressing the soil he palmed from the ground to his own wounds, and for the wounded, he was carrying in his arms, he was trying to tear his shirt and bandage his wound.*

*Gentlemen! Do you know who was the wounded in the arms of this self-sacrificing, heroic, and noble soldier who, despite pressing soil against his own wound, had torn pieces of his shirt for the wounded in his arms?..”*

The General, who began to sob at this point in his words, sighed deeply, trying to wipe away his tears with his handkerchief, and in his muffled voice:

*“–Gentlemen! The wounded in the arms of that Turkish hero was a French soldier, a French soldier!...”*

Then he collapsed to the ground; he covered his face and cried continuously...

This state of affairs is sufficient to show the depth of the believer’s soul. Compassion and mercy to the created for the sake of the Creator...

Another similar incident, full of wisdom and lessons that emerged years later, illustrates one of the blessed outcomes of the Dardanelles saga:

### **Years Later**

The year was 1957... An Anzac named Josef Miller, who participated in the Battle of Dardanelles, was being treated for cancer by a Turkish doctor in a hospital in America. Upon learning this, the elderly Anzac told the Turkish doctor:

*“– Look at the peculiarity of history that the Turks are the ones who cured me when I was about to die in Dardanelles. Now, years later, I am being treated by a Turk.”*



Then he explained how they were deceived and brought to the Battle of Dardanelles. His eyes filled with tears, and he recounted an incident that he could never forget:

“—Despite the superiority of our numbers and all the technological means we had at our disposal, we were constantly being pushed back and attacked again in the face of the courage and efforts of the Turks. In one of these attacks, I was wounded by a violent gun stroke to the head and fainted. When I awakened, I realized that I was among the Turks. At first, I was quite scared. Because the British presented the Turks as being savage and brutal. As I became conscious, I saw my wounds had healed and were cured. None of them had anger toward me, judging by their faces. They also gave me food from their bags. I knew very well that they had little to no food. I was shockingly surprised. I was like a guest here. Now I heard myself say, «Shame on me! Shame on the deceitful British!» I was finally released and returned home...”

The elderly Anzac began to cry. He asked the name of the Turkish doctor. When he received the answer “Omar,” he got up from his bed with an intention that he had decided for years but could not find an occasion to do so. For a while, he looked pensively at Dr. Omar Bey’s face. Then, taking a deep breath, he was in a state of pleasure and joy that he had not experienced until that moment:

*“—My son! What a beautiful name you have! From now on, my name should be Omar; **Let it be Omar of Anzac!..**”*

Then he again addressed Omar Bey, who listened to him in great astonishment:

**“—I want to be a Muslim!..”**

With the help of Dr. Omar Bey, he professed the Islamic declaration of faith. Then he asked for a rosary bead and prayer rug and said:

*“—My son! I saw these in your grandparents. Even in the direst moments of the war, even when they faced death, they did not stop recollecting Allah. As they drew their rosaries, I could sense their transformed states and the beauty on their faces. In these last days of my life, I want to live in that state too...”*

Dr. Omar Bey immediately complied with his demands. Omar of Anzac forced his powerless fingers and began to count the rosary beads with the name «Allah, Allah». The divine light and peace that descended on his heart

and face were felt even from the outside. It was as if he had recovered from his illness and had no earthly suffering.

He spent his last days in spiritual pleasure and joy, striving to learn his religion from Dr. Omar Bey as much as possible. About a month or two later, he recollected the Name of Allah with the rosary bead in his hand and surrendered his soul to his Lord. He had been blessed to have attained true vitality by those he had gone to kill...



The important thing is to have a heart that is alive, sincere, and worthy so that all humanity can benefit and find guidance!

Our army of believers who fought in the Dardanelles wrote not only an epic of heroism and courage but also one of virtue with the blessing of spiritual excellence they possessed.

Every house in **Anatolia** today certainly has a **Dardanelles martyr** in its memory. Every family is a Dardanelles orphan. This is a medal of honor passed down from generation to generation. Dardanelles has once again embroidered the concept of martyrdom in history. The graves of these martyrs are in the people's hearts. The late **Mehmed Âkif** puts it very well:

*O martyr, son of a martyr! Do not ask me for a grave;  
The Prophet ﷺ has opened his hands to you!..*

**O Lord! Make us among the blessed ones who are close to the Prophet ﷺ in both worlds and are granted his intercession!**

**Âmîn!..**







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## CHAPTER TWO

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# In the Ottoman State

- Friends of Allah
- Scholars
- Statesmen
- Various Arts and their Masters
- Acts of Charity and Goodness
- Moral Structure







## THE ROLE OF *TAŞAWWUF* (SUFISM)

### *In the Establishment of the Ottoman State*

All the local and foreign authors who wrote about the history of the Ottomans tend to focus on the apparent reasons and events. However, it is essential to recognize that these causes and events are influenced by a **spiritual climate** and an inner world whose substance and essence are seen much more clearly in the first years of the Ottoman state's foundation. These formative years represent our national heritage, primarily based on traditions and folk narrations.

Âşıkpaşazâde, one of the first historians of the Ottomans, wrote about it approximately one hundred and fifty years after its establishment. Despite this time gap, his work holds significant historical value in transmitting the earliest military and political events. It corresponds to the historical image of the Ottoman state in the national conscience, as reflected in the people's view of the state. When evaluating the history of the Ottomans, it is vital to delve into this spiritual and foundational aspect that shapes our own identity.



a. After the disintegration of the Seljukid state caused by the Mongol invasions, Anatolian Turkish-Islamic unity was shattered. The masses were forced to migrate westward, defeated and miserable in the face of the Mongol invasions and occupations starting from Central Asia. However, this tragedy led to the dense settlement of Anatolia by Turkish and Muslim populace. Despite the grace that emerged from this hardship, the lack of political unity and authority resulted in a divided landscape of Anatolia, leading to internal strife.

In such a depressed period, the need for spiritual guidance was crucial in easing suffering and forming political authority. It was in response to this essential need that the chain of Sufi guidance and teachings, which began with the likes of Yunus, Mevlana, and Hacı Bektaşî in Anatolia, reached its peak with Shaykh Edabali. The Ottomans, recognizing this importance, shone as a result of the spiritual guidance provided by these friends of Allah. Among the principalities, their moral status and geographical position were most favorable. While other principalities exhausted their power in fierce struggles with each other, the Ottoman principality avoided engaging in brotherly strife and instead focused on confronting the unbelievers with the Islamic spirit of *jihâd* and sacred campaigns, driven by spiritual fervor. As a result, it rapidly grew and flourished with the blessings of Islam. The outstanding personalities of other principalities, feeling a conscientious discomfort in this struggle, eventually allied with the Ottomans.

Today, Muslims in the Islamic world, experiencing turmoil among the masses, should carefully reflect on the blessings of this approach and seek spiritual guidance and unity to overcome their challenges.

As an outcome of authentic and high-level spiritual teachings, the Ottomans did not emerge with a meaningless passion for conquest or pursue self-seeking motives from the outset. The Seljukids acknowledged their success and held them in high esteem. As a sign of appreciation, they sent noble gifts such as a “kettledrum, tabor, and banner,” which were considered symbols of independence. However, the Ottomans remained loyal to the Seljukids until the latter withdrew from the stage of history and did not assert their autonomy despite being granted such privileges by the Seljukid sultan. This signified that the Ottomans were not a new political entity but rather manifested as a continuation of the Seljukids, with the only difference being the name of the khanate. In this way, the Ottomans are considered the heirs of the Seljukids. Orhan Ghazi clearly expressed this in his advice to his son, Murad Khan I.

*“Just as we are the heir of the Seljukids, we will be the heir of the Romans!”*

The reach of the Ottoman state expanded even further and earned the title **“The Sublime Muḥammadan State.”** This continuity of consciousness was based on the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, and the entire history of Islam was considered to have been inherited.

Additionally, the Ottoman state was also referred to as **«The Eternal State»**, implying that it existed for the sake of Islam, and during the most critical times, it was graced with divine favor. Therefore, it was believed that it would endure forever, serving the cause of Islam.

When the signs of collapse appeared, the Ottomans frequently included the phrase **«This state is not the Sublime State but the Sublime Muḥammadan State»** to concentrate on dispelling despair. With this, they aimed to remind once again of the consciousness of historical continuity and the spiritual foundations of this state.

Sultan Vahîduddîn, the last sultan of the Ottomans, attempted to alleviate the general despair and hopelessness by using the term **«The Sublime Muḥammadan State»** in a memorandum he issued in Mecca during his years of exile.

**b.** Many nations in history have achieved great conquests, but most have been unable to endure the test of time. One of the various reasons for this is that the commanders who carried out these conquests pursued power strictly in a self-seeking way. However, such conquerors are no different from natural disasters, like floodwaters wreaking havoc on the environment. Examples of such conquerors include Alexander the Great’s campaign from Macedonia to India, the invasions and occupations of the Huns’ ruler Attila from the deserts of Central Asia to Rome, and the military victories of Genghis, Hulagu, and Timur. Their conquests left behind cruelty, tears, and blood that watered the lands.

The Ottomans, on the other hand, understood these facts very well and found a spiritual basis for their victory with the patronage of the spiritual guides who guided and disciplined them. They based their success not on their ambition for self-domination but on the Will of Allah, always securing their conquests with this standard. Under the training received from their spiritual guides, they first conquered their souls and showed the resilience to achieve victories for the sake of Allah, not under the sway of their egos. They re-





frained from taking personal credit for these successes and made great efforts to ensure that their carnal desires did not cast a shadow on their actions. For instance, Yavuz Sultan Selîm, who achieved epic victories, waited until the night to enter Istanbul on his return from his campaign in Egypt to avoid being praised by the people, which might have made him feel proud. The Ottoman sultans had their paid soldiers shout, on Fridays when they go to the mosque for Jumah prayer:

**“My Sultan, do not be haughty, for Allah is greater than you!..”** The sultans even went as far as formalizing this spiritual guidance and warning given to them. Just like ‘Umar رضي الله عنه who paid a man a certain fee so that he would remind him with the words.

**“O ‘Umar! Remember, there is death!”**

The meaning of all this is that the sultans and commanders who carried out the Ottoman conquests meticulously emphasized the concept of the **“greater *jihâd*,”** which in Islam is simply referred to as **“*jihâd*,”** with the most critical aspect being the struggle against one’s own self. The spiritual guides who warned and advised the sultans in this direction were highly esteemed and valued by them. The sultans considered the cultivation of the heart essential, and it can be said that among the Ottoman sultans, not a single one can be shown to have not pursued the path of mystical wayfaring (*sayr wa sulûk*).

Even Mahmûd II, who was influenced by oblivious and deceitful statesmen and caused bitterness among his people to the point of being called an “infidel sultan,” expressed his anguish while breathing his last as follows:

*“–Take me to a mosque! I want to breathe my last breath in the sanctuary of Allah...”*

c. A more crucial issue than the rightness or wrongness of a state’s ideology, on which it relies to ensure its continuity in history, is “justice.” A state can also endure by adopting a false cause as its basis, but the rule of the oppressor has never lasted for long.

Based on the above fact, Ottoman statesmen, with the help and guidance of spiritual leaders, represented Islam not only with its temporal rulings but also with its spiritual character and soul. Throughout history, they showed great sensitivity in upholding justice. This responsiveness acted as an incentive for many non-Muslim communities to willingly enter the Ottoman admin-



istration. Many countries sent invitations to the Ottoman commanders during the conquest of Rumelia because people, under the leadership of their priests, were lamenting the Byzantine persecution and sought Ottoman rule.

The Ottomans did not racially discriminate against the servants of Allah, nor did they seek to assimilate those under their rule into their nationality, as the Umayyads had done. This approach allowed seventy-two nations to live in peace and tranquility under one command until the provocations of the West and the emergence of nationalist movements. The Ottomans embraced everyone's language, religion, customs, and traditions with tolerance, achieving a level of multiculturalism unparalleled in history. They handled disagreements between non-Muslims with tolerance and provided adjudication according to their beliefs and laws. For this purpose, special courts were present in the patriarchy and functioned until the collapse of the state. The exceptional justice displayed by the Ottomans, guided by the spirit of Islam, has no precedent in history, except for the Era of Bliss (*Asr-ı Saâdet*). Similarly, no country today has a comparable application of such justice.

The Ottomans were meticulous in protecting the equality of Muslims and non-Muslims in front of the courts of justice, setting an example unparalleled in history. For instance, Fâtiḥ Sultan Mehmed Khan was presented on equal terms with a Greek architect, which serves as a brilliant illustration of unprecedented justice in the history of the world.

Shaykh Edabali, the centerpiece in the series of spiritual guides we try to mention on every occasion, played a vital role in the Ottoman state by enabling its administrators to cleanse their souls first before carrying out their actions in the name of Allah and with a sense of divine responsibility. He exemplified the importance of spiritual guidance and served as a guiding figure for Osman Ghazi during the formative years of the state, directing his spirit and will most perfectly. Shaykh Edabali's influence and guidance were instrumental in shaping the spiritual character of the Ottoman state and its leaders, emphasizing the importance of piety and divine responsibility in governance. His role in history stands as an exemplary model of the essential connection between spirituality and leadership in the Ottoman state.





*The Spiritual Architect of the Ottoman State*

**SHAYKH EDABALI**

(1206-1326)

Shaykh Edabali, the spiritual founder of the Ottoman state, held the esteemed positions of being both the father-in-law and teacher of Osman Ghazi. His life spanned an impressive 120 years. Edabali began his education in his birthplace, Karaman, and completed it in Damascus, where he studied under renowned scholars of his time, mastering both inward and outward disciplines.

As one of the prominent figures of his era, Edabali played a significant role in rescuing Muslim Anatolia from the turmoil and depression caused by the Mongol invasion. In the aftermath of the division of principalities, he made great efforts to re-establish unity in Anatolia and promote the triumph of Islam against unbelief. To achieve this goal, he critically evaluated the situation of all the Anatolian principalities. However, the state of these principalities did not provide much hope, as they engaged in constant and fierce struggles to replace the Seljukids.



Eventually, Shaykh Edabali turned his attention to the Ottoman principality, which, at that time, had a modest force of only four hundred horsemen and was considered a border principality with an uncertain future. Yet, through his discerning vision, he discovered the lofty pearl he had been seeking within this seemingly insignificant principality. The sense of elevating the World of Allah in its people, along with their enthusiasm and love of serving Islam, were among the achievements that Shaykh Edabali saw in the Ottoman principality.

With a dedicated purpose, Shaykh Edabali settled in the Ottoman territory, bringing along all his relatives, and wholeheartedly devoted himself to the material and spiritual growth and development of the principality. He laid the foundation for a Sufi lodge in Bilecik and actively engaged the people and administrators of the principality, especially Osman Ghazi. The historian Âşikpaşazâde documents that Shaykh Edabali's lodge was always open to visitors, where he attended to the needs of dervishes and the destitute, even keeping a flock of sheep for their support.

From a young age, Osman Ghazi respected and admired people of knowledge and spiritual wisdom, frequently seeking inspiration from his teacher, Shaykh Edabali. It is well-known that the shaykh interpreted a dream that Osman Ghazi had due to his reverence for the Noble Quran, and as a result, Shaykh Edabali gave him his daughter's hand in marriage.

Shaykh Edabali was also the first Ottoman qadi and mufti. He lived a long life, spreading peace and blessings to his people, and died in 1326.

**May Allah's mercy be upon him!..**

Shaykh Edabali educated many disciples. Dursun Fakih, one of his leading students, became the second mufti and chief qadi of the Ottoman state after his passing.

**What did Shaykh Edabali impart to Osman Ghazi?**

Shaykh Edabali imparted to Osman Ghazi the wisdom of true victory, which lies in **“transcending oneself and not falling for its deceptions.”** The spiritual lineage of Osman Ghazi continued to guide the subsequent spiritual men who emerged after him. These friends of Allah became a source of consolation and affection for the hearts of the state and its people, who often faced fatigue and overwhelming afflictions, misfortunes, and calamities. Heroes





who played pivotal roles in the destiny of states were always in need of this spiritual presence and guidance.

The friends of Allah enriched the hearts of these noble men, making them deeply aware of Islam, the Quran, and the Sunnah, with extraordinary reverence and affection. They unveiled the main reasons and secrets underlying their victories and accomplishments. The influence of these spiritual guides contributed to the formation of the bravest generation in the world, whose love and devotion reached perfection through sacrifices like the martyrdom of Murad I.

This generation, having established its headquarters in the deserts of Yemen for the defense of Medina, fearlessly carried the Word of Allah to all corners of the world, upholding its honor and principles. They stood as an embodiment of faith, courage, and devotion, carrying forward the legacy of Shaykh Edabali's teachings and playing a crucial role in the advancement and prosperity of the Ottoman state.

The brave and honorable souls who followed the path of the Prophet ﷺ became devoted soldiers until their last breath. Amid the fiery chaos while scaling the walls of Istanbul, this generation was filled with love and enthusiasm.

**The spiritual legacy of the Edabali lineage in the 623-year-old Ottoman state persists, as these perfected souls do not decay under the ground. Shaykh Edabali's most remarkable achievement was not in the books he wrote, unlike many other scholars, but in the successive generations of believers and mujahids who were mobilized on the path of Islam.**

**The spirit acquired from the Prophet ﷺ and embodied by the generation of the Companions رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ was carried forward to future generations of Ottomans throughout history, nurtured by the love and spirit of Shaykh Edabali and his fellow saints.**

The Ottomans did not view themselves as a new state, recognizing that they were a continuation of the one established by the Prophet ﷺ in Medina. However, like every human being, they were subject to mortality due to the divine providence of this world. Over time, they grew, developed, matured, and eventually ceased to exist due to both known and unknown causes.



Despite the Ottoman state's end, the world, especially the Middle East, has struggled to find the peace and tranquility that the Ottomans once provided. The imperialist mentality that abolished the Ottoman state divided its legacy into nearly forty pieces, leading to the emergence of the statelets we see today, which often lack the material and spiritual power to continue the legacy of the Ottoman state.

Turkey indeed holds the potential to bring unity to the fragmented Muslim world. Despite facing challenges and disruptive actions from various entities, such as world Zionism, the resurgence of Islam within the nation continues to grow relentlessly. Regardless of human schemes, the most promising and successful endeavors are guided by Allah's Will, and no force can escape its ultimate fate.

While materialistic atheists may display a negative attitude toward spirituality, a remnant of that magnificent spirituality remains in the Muslim world, particularly in Anatolia. The possibility of a spiritual revival in the near future, akin to new shoots sprouting from dried trees, should not be underestimated. This cause, a manifestation of the Prophet's ﷺ spiritual essence, will persist until the Day of Resurrection. The history of nations follows patterns of decline and ascent, resembling the ups and downs of a road.

Following the collapse of communism, materialism has tried to portray Islam as the "new enemy," leading to the establishment of a "green belt" in the world, similar to the old "iron curtain." However, believers know that there can be no obstacle for Allah to manifest His divine light. The collapse of communism without the need for cannons and rifles stands as a hopeful example for the future. As long as the claim of Islam to embrace the world remains true, the course of history will continue to unfold in the guidance of Allah's divine plan.

Allah says:

**"[O Prophet!], do not be grieved by those who are quick to disbelieve. They will not harm Allah in the least; it is Allah's Will that they will have no share in the Hereafter – a terrible torment awaits them"** (Sûrah Âli 'Imrân, 176).

**May Allah bestow upon us a blessed share of the deeds that will bring about the revival and rise of Islam!**

**Âmîn!..**





*The Revered Spiritual Leader Who Guided the  
Victorious Ottoman Sultans*

## **AZÎZ MAHMÛD HUDÂÎ** (1541-1628)

He was born in Koçhisar and spent his childhood in Sivrihisar. Later on, he moved to Istanbul, where he became one of the greatest saints of the Ottoman era. His actual name is Mahmûd, but he was later given the name “**Hudâyî**” and the title “**Azîz**.” He proudly claimed descent from Junayd al-Baghdâdî and identified himself as a “**sayyid**,” hailing from the noble Prophetic bloodline. In one of his hymns, he expressed his connection to the Prophet ﷺ as follows:

*The sultan, my forefather, and master  
It is you, O Messenger of Allah ﷺ*

Azîz Mahmûd Hudâyî, a sultan of the heart, lived for nearly a century, witnessing the reign of eight sultans during his lifetime. His influence and inspiration on the Ummah were widespread, evident in his works, spiritual lessons, teachings, sermons, and counsel.

He possessed profound knowledge in various disciplines, achieved spiritual perfection, and excelled in literature, making him a revered figure among the spiritual leaders. Similar to Shaykh Edabali in the formative years of the Ottoman state, Hudâyî provided invaluable spiritual guidance, service, and activity with unwavering love, passion, and enthusiasm. His devotion and sincerity in seeking Allah's grace earned him the status of a friend of God, loved by both the sultans and the common people.

Living in a period of the Ottoman state marked by gradual change from rise to stagnation, Hudâyî exerted great effort to guide the sultans to be just, diligent, and spiritually strong. Simultaneously, he acted as a healer for the hearts of state dignitaries and people overwhelmed by political problems. His spiritual advice and teachings brought relief and happiness to many, making his lodge a sanctuary of peace.

Amid a period of suffering and disasters, where political turmoil and social disruption were rampant, Hudâyî's Sufi teachings provided a soothing breeze and a safe haven. His lodge became a refuge for those dismissed from the state administration or fleeing anarchy in society. Notably, prominent individuals like Halil Pasha, Dilâver Pasha, and Ali Pasha sought shelter in his lodge during times of trouble. As a result, Hudâyî's lodge garnered immense respect and reverence, unmatched by any other in the Ottoman lands.

The exceptional merit and rank achieved by Azîz Mahmûd Hudâyî serve as an instructive example for those following the path of spirituality. His method of seeking divine closeness and guidance can inspire and guide others on their own spiritual journey.

Here, it is essential to carefully and critically examine how Azîz Mahmûd Hudâyî achieved such an exceptional rank and merit. His journey serves as an exemplary model for those treading the path of spirituality.



During his years as a student, Hudâyî not only pursued rigorous scholarly education but also devoted himself to cultivating his inner world and heart through Sufism. Driven by dedication and diligence, he became the successor of his teacher, Nâzırzâde, who took special care of him in the madrasah. In his later years, he worked as a qadi alongside Nâzırzâde and was eventually as-



signed to Bursa. There, he served as the vice-qadi at the Câmi-i Atîk court and also held the position of a professor at the Ferhâdiye madrasah.

It was during this time that Hudâyî truly embraced the Sufî path and attained profound knowledge of Allah. Despite his scholarly achievements and prestigious positions, Hudâyî remained just one of many qadis under Qadi Mahmûd Efendi, who was in charge of the judgeship in Bursa. One day, a woman with tears streaming down her eyes sought justice at the court, complaining about her husband. As she poured her heart out to Qadi Mahmûd, she said:

*“–Qadi Efendi! Every year, my husband expresses his desire to go on pilgrimage, but our financial situation prevents him from doing so. He insisted that he would go on pilgrimage this year as well. In fact, he said: «If I cannot go on pilgrimage this year, I will divorce you!». He then disappeared near Eid al-Adhâ. Five or six days later, he appeared and said he had returned from the sacred pilgrimage. Would something like this ever happen? Qadi Efendi! Now I wish to divorce this liar!..”*

Qadi Mahmûd Efendi summoned the husband of the woman to investigate the complaint and asked him if what his wife had said was true. The man replied:

*“–Qadi Efendi! What my wife says is true, as is what I say. You should know that I have indeed gone on the sacred pilgrimage. I even met with some pilgrims from Bursa in Mecca and Medina, and they entrusted me with gifts to bring back for them...”*

Qadi Mahmûd Efendi was surprised and said:

“–How can this be, sir?!” he asked.

And he began to explain:

*“–Sir, when I could not go on pilgrimage this year, as I intended every year, I went to **Eskici Mehmed Dede** with great sadness. He took my hand and asked me to close my eyes. When I opened my eyes, I was in the Kaaba!..”*

Qadi Efendi, who experienced such an event for the first time, could not accept the man’s statements, stating that it would be impossible. The man, still deeply moved by the spiritual atmosphere of the sacred lands, exclaimed with a naive but meaningful reply:

**“Qadi Efendi! If the Devil, the enemy of Allah, can suddenly roam the world, why can’t a friend of Allah visit the Kaaba?”**

Qadi Mahmûd Efendi found this answer meaningful and decided to postpone the judgment. Upon the return of the pilgrims from Bursa, an investigation was conducted, confirming that the man’s account was accurate. The case was thus closed with great astonishment and surprise.

However, a lingering doubt and confusion persisted in Qadi Efendi’s heart and mind. In a state of enraptured inspiration, he sought guidance from Eskici Mehmed Dede without hesitation. Qadi Efendi expressed his desire to become his disciple and delve into the depths of truth and mystery. Nevertheless, Eskici Dede humbly responded, “Qadi Efendi! Your spiritual teacher is not me; he is **Muḥammad Uftâde**, the Sufi master of the age.”

This time, Qadi Mahmûd headed to Uftâde’s lodge with the same intention and motive. However, as he approached the lodge, his horse’s feet became stuck in the rocks. Deciding to walk, he continued on foot, determined to pledge his allegiance to the sage and become his disciple.

Seeing the renowned qadi of Bursa, Mahmûd Efendi, adorned in glamorous kaftans, the sage was aware of the situation. Yet, in order to thoroughly assess Qadi Efendi’s intention and sincerity, he refrained from accepting his discipleship right away and said:

*“—Leave, Qadi Efendi! Your life is lavish, filled with fame, surrounded by wealth and rank. This door is one of poverty and modesty. Did your horse not get stuck in the rocks because it did not wish to come here?”* With that, the sage walked to the front of the lodge.

Wandering in the valleys of astonishment, torn between the shaykh’s spiritual attraction and the manifest wonders he witnessed, Qadi Mahmûd Efendi came to a profound realization. His decision was final; he needed to surrender to this cause without delay to overcome the hindrances of his soul and attain awareness of Allah. Humbly, he ran after the shaykh and implored:

*“—Sir! I am helpless and confused, feeling as if I am falling into a bottomless abyss. Whatever happens, I beseech you to extend your grace and assistance. Please honor this weak servant by accepting me as your disciple!”*

Upon this, Uftâde laid out three primary conditions for Qadi Mahmûd to become his disciple: **he must forsake his roles as a professor and qadi,**

**distribute all his property and possessions to the poor, and engage in strict self-mortification.** These conditions were essential for him to undergo spiritual training and get acquainted with his soul. With deep surrender and sincerity, Qadi Mahmûd Efendi accepted these terms, and Uftâde welcomed him as one of his disciples.

As part of his training, Uftâde instructed Qadi Mahmûd to sell liver in the streets of Bursa while still wearing his fancy kaftan. This practice aimed to cleanse his heart from the pride, arrogance, and admiration that his previous position as qadi might have engendered. Additionally, he assigned him the task of cleaning the lodge's lavatory.

Qadi Mahmûd Efendi, fully submitting himself to Shaykh Uftâde with unwavering sincerity, wholeheartedly followed his master's orders. He withdrew from all worldly matters that catered to his material desires and humbly embraced the guidance of his mentor. In a short span, he earned great respect and honor due to his devoted efforts. Some people who witnessed him selling liver in his kaftan commented:

*“–Our qadi has gone mad, it seems!”*

However, he paid no attention to such remarks and diligently fulfilled the duties assigned by his master, even disregarding statements like:

*“–The poor fellow relinquished his position as qadi, yet was unable to give up his kaftan!..”*

As he steadfastly progressed on his spiritual journey, his growth and enlightenment reached profound levels, earning him an elevated position in the eyes and heart of his shaykh.

The complete annihilation of his ego became evident to everyone around him. One day, while Qadi Mahmûd was dutifully cleaning the lodge's lavatory, he heard a cry from outside:

**“–O people! The new qadi is coming to our city!”**

In a moment of weakness, his ego-self seized the opportunity to plant doubt in his heart. He was suddenly overwhelmed by a powerful delusion, thinking to himself:



*“–So, a new qadi is taking my place! O miserable Mahmûd, you left such an honorable profession only to be confined to cleaning lavatories! What have you gained all these years?”*

However, Qadi Mahmûd Efendi quickly regained composure, remembering the promise he made to his shaykh to fulfill all the prescribed orders. He promptly responded to the dangerous rebellion of his carnal soul (*nafs*) by turning to his Lord in repentance, thereby thwarting the deceitful allure of his ego:

*“–O Mahmûd! Did you not promise your master to overcome your carnal soul? Where is your commitment now? What has become of you in this state?..”*

However, Qadi Mahmûd was so deeply upset by the situation that merely disapproving of the temptation from his carnal soul did not quell the regret and sadness in his heart. Overwhelmed with emotion, he impulsively threw the broom aside and resolved to clean the stones in the lavatory with his beard as an act of self-punishment. At that moment, his shaykh appeared at the door, wearing a gentle smile on his face. He spoke to Qadi Mahmûd in a soft and soothing voice, saying:

*“–My son, Mahmûd! You know that the beard is a blessed Sunnah.”* With those words, he prevented him from proceeding with such a severe act.

Then, the shaykh continued:

*“–My son, Mahmûd! The objective of the duties I assigned you while guiding you on the mystical path was to lead you to this stage. Praise be to Allah that He has granted you success! From now on, your duty will be to prepare my ablution water and pour it.”*

Qadi Mahmûd conscientiously performed this duty with great care. Every morning, he promptly prepared the ablution water and poured it for his esteemed teacher.

One winter day, Qadi Mahmûd woke up a little later than usual. Consequently, he did not have enough time to heat the water for his teacher’s ablution. Deeply saddened, tears welled up in his eyes. He had no choice but to press the water jug to his chest and unintentionally utter the word **“Allah.”** At that moment, his shaykh appeared at the door and requested the ablution water





to be poured. Though filled with reluctance, Qadi Mahmûd obediently started pouring the water into his teacher's hands, his anxiety evident.

As soon as the water touched his shaykh's blessed hands, he lifted his head slightly and smiled, observing the anxious state of his disciple. He calmly remarked:

*"–The water is a little too hot, my son!"*

Qadi Mahmûd Efendi was taken aback and replied in a low voice:

*"–How could it be, sir? I did not heat the water!"*

To which Shaykh Uftâde responded:

*"–My son! You may not realize it, but this water was warmed not by a wood fire but by the fire of your heart!"*

Hudâyî diligently reduced even his consumption of lawful things to a minimum as he focused on cultivating and disciplining his inner self. Through this process, he strengthened his soul, placing complete reliance on Allah. As a result of his dedicated efforts, he experienced the blessings of this beautiful state, enabling him to communicate more with the deceased than with the living. On one occasion, while on his way to the lodge, he encountered and greeted a muezzin who had already passed away. He later shared this extraordinary encounter with his teacher, Shaykh Uftâde.

Upon hearing about this, Shaykh Uftâde acknowledged the depth of Hudâyî's self-disciplinary training, which had led to the strengthening and perfection of his soul. He revealed that he himself had also experienced such states during his own training days.



One day, Shaykh Uftâde took his disciples to the countryside for spiritual training. Upon his command, all the dervishes set out to find the most beautiful flowers in the prairie and offer them to their teacher. Among them, Qadi Mahmûd Efendi could only find a pale flower with a broken stem. Despite the disappointment he might have felt, he humbly presented this modest offering to Shaykh Uftâde.

In the presence of the other disciples' curious gazes, Shaykh Uftâde asked:



*“–My son Mahmûd! Why did you bring a pale flower with a broken stem when everyone else brought back large bunches of blossoms?”*

Qadi Mahmûd, with utmost humility, lowered his head and replied:

*“–Sir! Whatever I present would not be sufficient! However, every flower I reached out to pluck was in a state of exalting its Lord, saying, «Allah Alah». My heart was unwilling to interrupt their remembrance. Hence, I was compelled to bring the flower that could not keep up with their exaltation!..”*

Extremely pleased with Hudâyî’s wise reply, Shaykh Uftâde spoke with affection and said:

**“–Mahmûd, my son! From now on, let your name be Hudâyî! O Hudayi! You are the only one who has truly benefited from this trip to the countryside.”**

From that moment on, Qadi Mahmûd became known as Hudâyî. He had now fallen deeply in love with the mysteries and wonders of Allah in the universe. It was as if the cosmos had become a living book, revealing its secrets to him.

Henceforth, Qadi Mahmûd Efendi, now called Hudâyî, was remembered and revered as **Azîz Mahmûd Hudâyî**, with the title “Azîz” denoting his elevated and exceptional spiritual rank.



Due to his rapid spiritual growth, Hudâyî became the chief disciple of Shaykh Uftâde in a remarkably short span of only three years. This led to some older dervishes feeling displeased. Recognizing the need to address this issue and rectify their hearts, the shaykh devised a beautiful method:

One winter evening, after their spiritual lesson, Shaykh Uftâde asked his disciples to prepare the table. He then looked at the food and fruits they brought and inquired:

*“–My dear children, I wonder if it is possible to find fresh grapes that have just been plucked from the vine?”*

The dervishes were taken aback by this question and looked at each other in surprise. Some thought: “There can be no fresh grapes in the winter season!”



However, Mahmûd Hudâyî, devoted to his master with great resignation and having passed through numerous spiritual stages, perceived that there must be an underlying wisdom behind this request. He promptly responded:

*“–My dear shaykh, if you allow me, I will fulfill your wish!”*

With the shaykh’s permission, Hudâyî immediately went to the vineyard. Despite the vines being covered in snow, he chose one and cleared the snow, only to find clusters of fresh and ripe grapes. Seeing this as a divine blessing, he filled his basket and headed back to the lodge, fully immersed in the remembrance of Allah.

However, while lost in his contemplation, he inadvertently fell into a well that was hidden under the snow. Unable to notice the well’s presence, he found himself trapped at the bottom. In a state of desperation, he heard a voice coming from above:

*“–My son! Extend your hand!”*

He saw a person with a luminous face who reached out and pulled him out of the well. Overwhelmed with gratitude, Hudâyî was about to ask the person who had just saved him about his identity, but the mysterious figure vanished in an instant.

Hudâyî finally returned to the lodge with the basket of fresh grapes and narrated the incident to his master. Shaykh Uftâde, after declaring that it was indeed **Khidr** عليه السلام, the blessed guide and teacher, who had saved him from the well, turned to the other dervishes and said:

*“–Our son, Hudâyî, has attained perfection. He deserved to become my successor long ago.”*

Following this affirmation, Shaykh Uftâde appointed Hudâyî as his successor and sent him to serve in Sivrihisar. He fulfilled this role for a while before eventually returning to Bursa, guided by a spiritual sign. Hudâyî continued to passionately serve his master during his final days. One day, Shaykh Uftâde, pleased with his dedicated service, supplicated to Allah for him, saying:

*“–My son! May the sultans walk behind you!”*

After Shaykh Uftâde’s passing, Hudâyî settled in Istanbul, following the indication of Shaykh al-Islam **Hoca Sâdeddin Efendi**.

The lodge that Hudâyî established in Uskudar quickly evolved into a renowned school of spirituality and wisdom, attracting people from all walks of life. His teachings and presence captivated the interest and favor of even the sultans of the time. As a result, they humbly sought to be part of the dervish community in his lodge. Notably, sultans such as **Murad Khan III**, **Ahmad Khan I**, **Young Osman II**, and **Murad Khan IV** were all guided by Hudâyî.

Hudâyî's influence and guidance extended even to the highest echelons of power. He was personally present at the coronation ceremony of Murad Khan IV and had the honor of girding the sword of 'Umar ﷺ on the new sultan at the sacred shrine of **Abû Ayyûb al-Anşârî** ﷺ.



In the years when Azîz Mahmûd Hudâyî came to Istanbul, Murad Khan III was reigning as the Ottoman Sultan. At the beginning of his rule, the sultan exhibited extreme confidence and comfort, perhaps due to the grandeur and vast geographical borders of the Sublime State, coupled with his youthful vigor. However, this overconfidence led to certain shortcomings in his reign. Hudâyî, discerning the need for guidance, took it upon himself to fulfill this responsibility, a task that no one else dared to attempt.

Qadi Mahmûd, driven by his unwavering commitment to teaching and guiding others, initiated correspondence with Murad Khan III in an effort to guide him toward religion and the path of truth. Hudâyî possessed a remarkable authority, disposition, influence, and effectiveness, skillfully employing both gentle and stern tones as needed. His courage enabled him to address the sultan effectively, a feat that others lacking sufficient spiritual authority might have shied away from.

Some excerpts from the letters written by Hudâyî at various times to Murad Khan III are as follows:

*“My Sultan! Embark on the ship of Shariah and unfurl the sails of piety, sailing in the sea of truth with the wind of love for Allah, embracing moderation and righteousness! Fulfill the external and internal conditions, encompassing the principles of Shariah law, the tenets of the tarîqah, and the eternal truth. This is what justice is all about!”*

*“My Blessed Sultan! The strength, power, and magnificence witnessed during your reign have never been witnessed before... However, understand*



*that Allah and His Messenger desire nothing more than the eradication of oppression and the establishment of justice. It involves abandoning reprehensible innovations and adhering to the Prophetic path.”*

*“My Sultan! The servants of Allah anticipate your compassion and mercy. If you fail to treat the people accordingly, you would be committing betrayal! Consequently, they would turn away from you with hearts shattered in hatred, ceasing to invoke divine blessings upon you...”*

*“My Sultan! You have passed the Sakarya water and brought a supply of wood for the poor. The people have been very pleased with this. Because the need is great. Your late grandfather, Sultan Sulaymân Khan, brought the water of Kağıthane and feasted the people with fresh drinking water: You made the poor happy by bringing wood.”*

*“My Sultan! It is my solemn duty to caution and guide those who are proud and heedless, offering them sincere advice and moral counsel. I implore you to embrace the path of righteousness and piety. It is my earnest prayer that Allah includes you among the righteous reformers. I seek refuge in Allah from being counted among the corrupt and those who have strayed from His divine guidance.”*

Hudâyî’s influence and prestige among all state officials, particularly the sultan, grew significantly due to his valuable advice and guidance. He even participated in the military campaign of **Tabriz** alongside Ferhad Pasha, serving as the spiritual commander of the army.



One well-known incident that marked the beginning of Hudâyî’s relationship with Sultan Ahmad I was the interpretation he provided of the Sultan’s dream. This interpretation greatly increased Ahmad Khan I’s interest and reverence for Hudâyî to the extent that he wrote a poem inspired by some of Hudâyî’s hymns.

Hudâyî possessed remarkable knowledge of dream interpretation, akin to that of Prophet Yûsuf عليه السلام, which was a testament to his virtue and wisdom, evident in the guidance he offered to the sultans and the accuracy of his explanations.

On one occasion, Sultan Ahmad Khan sent a precious gift to his beloved master, Hudâyî. However, Hudâyî humbly declined to accept it. Consequently,



the Sultan decided to offer the gift to Abdulmecîd Sivâsî, another respected shaykh of the time. During a visit to Abdulmecîd Sivâsî, the Sultan inquired about the gift and its reception:

“–O my Shaykh! I had already sent this gift to Hudâyî, which he did not accept. But you did!”

Sivâsî, who understood the subtle point in the Sultan’s statement, gave a meaningful reply:

*“–My Sultan! Hudâyî is like a phoenix and does not pay regard to things of no value!”*

Pleased with this wise response, the Sultan visited Hudâyî a few days later and informed him:

“–Sir! Abdulmecîd accepted the gift that you had declined.”

With a smile on his face, Hudâyî responded:

*“–My Sultan! Abdulmecîd is like an ocean. A small drop of dirt falling into a massive ocean will not damage its purity!”*

This story beautifully illustrates the profound love and affection shared between two great friends of Allah, Sultan Ahmad I and Hudâyî, and highlights Hudâyî’s exceptional spiritual perfection. Hudâyî was truly detached from worldly relations, dedicating himself to teaching and guiding people in spiritual matters, which led to the establishment of a close bond with the Sultan. However, he was mindful of the potential danger of material offerings, as they could increase his attachment to the world and jeopardize his spiritual journey, diverting him from his primary duty of teaching and guiding.

Despite this challenge, Hudâyî demonstrated wisdom and humility by adhering to the tradition of not rejecting the Sultan’s benevolence as a mark of honor and respect. Yet, he remained vigilant in using these gifts for the greater good. On some occasions, he selflessly shared what he received with his disciples, contributing to the construction of his lodge and the pious foundation he established. At other times, he would gracefully return the gifts presented to him, emphasizing his dedication to spiritual sincerity and his unwavering focus on Allah’s path.



Hudâyî maintained his close contact with **Young Osman II** following Sultan Ahmad Khan I's reign and took great efforts to guide the new and enthusiastic young sultan. Young Osman II was an idealistic ruler who believed that the Sublime State was facing a period of stagnation and sought to implement new strategies to address this trend. Additionally, he expressed his intention to undertake the sacred pilgrimage to Mecca, a significant religious obligation for Muslims.

Historically, no Ottoman sultans had personally performed the pilgrimage due to the shaykh al-Islam's refusal to disrupt the political order, as the journey took about a year during those times. Instead, they sent deputies to fulfill this religious duty on their behalf.

Hudâyî, as a wise spiritual leader, did not consider it appropriate for the young Sultan Osman to break this long-standing tradition and personally undertake the pilgrimage. Despite Hudâyî's attempts to dissuade him, the determined and inexperienced Sultan was adamant about fulfilling this desire. However, this decision led to serious disturbances among the Janissaries, the elite infantry units of the Ottoman state.

Certain elements within the Janissaries, influenced by malicious intentions, falsely perceived the Sultan's pilgrimage intention as a pretext to gather an army from the Hejaz to eliminate them. In response to this perceived threat, the situation escalated, and some individuals committed a heinous murder, leading to the tragic death of the young Sultan.

This unfortunate incident painfully validated Hudâyî's foresight and wise counsel.

Given the prevailing anarchy and great danger surrounding them, other state dignitaries sought refuge in Hudâyî's lodge, finding protection there. The lodge held absolute inviolability, as neither the state nor outlaws could interfere with its sanctity. It served as a safe haven during turbulent times, and many sought solace and security within its walls.



**Murad Khan IV** was only fourteen years old when he ascended the throne after the tragic death of Young Osman II. At that young age, the real power rested in the hands of his mother and some state officials. Feeling overwhelmed by the circumstances, Murad Khan IV sought solace and spiritual guidance





by secretly visiting Hudâyî's lodge in disguise. These visits were meant to strengthen his heart spiritually and prepare him for the challenges ahead.

During these visits, Murad Khan IV humbly followed the customs of the lodge, portraying himself as a sincere dervish. On one occasion, he even took his male servant with him. As they approached the lodge and knocked on the door, a dervish from inside inquired about their identity:

“–Who is it?” The servant, out of habit, replied:

“–*The ruler of seven regions, Sultan Murad Khan IV, has arrived.*”

However, the dervish inside responded:

“–*This door is not the door of royalty but of poverty!*” and decided not to open the door.

Smiling at his servant's unintentional mistake, Sultan Murad Khan IV corrected him with a gentle tone:

“–*My friend, this door is the door of servitude and modesty.*” He then knocked on the door knocker again. When asked the same question, he responded with grace:

“–*Say to my Shaykh that his servant, Murad, has arrived!*”

Upon hearing this, the door opened, and they were warmly welcomed inside.

Despite his old age, Hudâyî showed exceptional interest in Murad Khan IV, guiding and mentoring him to become virtuous and achieve spiritual perfection. Under Hudâyî's guidance and with each passing day, Murad Khan IV experienced significant personal growth and elevation, both internally and externally. This spiritual development enabled him to take on great responsibilities and successfully address challenges facing the state.

In critical moments, Murad Khan IV skillfully managed to restore order among the army and the general public, ultimately saving the state from potential collapse and unforeseen dangers.

Hudâyî's ability to beautifully guide and counsel the Ottoman sultans, including Murad Khan IV, is considered one of his greatest and wondrous deeds. His wise counsel and spiritual guidance not only nourished the hearts of the sultans but also had a positive impact on the general public, leaving a lasting legacy of virtue and wisdom.

One of Hudâyî's remarkable deeds involved a day when stormy weather prevented any ferrymen from sailing across the strait between Uskudar and Sarayburnu. Undeterred, Hudâyî and a few of his disciples boarded a boat and set sail. By the permission of Allah, the tumultuous sea became calm, and the waves did not harm their vessel. This miraculous event led to the route being named *Hüdâyî Yolu* ("Hudâyî's Route"), which skilled boaters still follow during severe storms as a testament to Hudâyî's wondrous ability.

In the days of the Ottoman state, captains navigating the Bosphorus would direct their passengers' attention toward the lodges of revered saints. When passing Uskudar, they would face the lodge of **Azîz Mahmûd Hudâyî**, and when passing Beşiktaş, they would look toward the lodge of **Yahyâ Efendi**. Similarly, when passing through Beykoz, they would turn to the side of **Prophet Yûsha'** ﷺ. They would recite Şûrah al-Fâtihah, the opening chapter of the Quran, as a prayer and blessing for these esteemed saints buried in Istanbul.



A person once approached Hudâyî, having heard of his knowledge in alchemy, and sought advice. Hudâyî remained silent for a moment, then plucked three leaves from a nearby vine and blew on them. With the permission of Allah, the leaves transformed into golden leaves. The amazed person attempted the same feat but failed. Hudâyî observed him and conveyed an important lesson:

"—My son! You should know that learning the science of alchemy is akin to the transformation and purification of one's own soul..."



Indeed, Hudâyî's scholarly credentials attracted many disciples, including prominent figures like Shaykh al-Islam **Hoca Sâdeddin Efendi** and his son **Es'ad Efendi**, who joined his spiritual circle. Hudâyî was a prolific author, having published nearly thirty works in various fields such as Sufism (*taşawwuf*), exegesis (*tafsîr*), and jurisprudence (*fiqh*). Though he left his duties as a qadi and professor, it was not because he disregarded discursive knowledge or spiritual knowledge. He believed that both were essential and abandoning one would be a waste. His decision to embark on the Sufi path was more about aligning his mission with the Divine will, as expressed in his verse:

*I abandoned the peril of being a professor for the sake of the Divine  
Bless me with your attainment and save me from the torment of egotism.*



Hudâyî continued to serve as a preacher, following the orders of his shaykh. He also persisted in teaching *tafsîr* and *hadîth*, much like the great Sufîs before him. His focus was on abandoning the desires of his carnal soul rather than scholarship itself.

Many students attended Hudâyî's *tafsîr* and *hadîth* lessons and received permission to teach (*ijâzah*) from him. Among his successors were **Saçlı İbrahim Efendi** and **Filibeli İsmail Efendi**.

In the words of **İsmail Hakkı Bursevî**, a renowned scholar, “**Those saints who are among the people of the pen are like the ‘messengers’ among the prophets. Hudâyî had attained this rank with his writings and served as a mirror of his shaykh Uftâde.**”



Azîz Mahmûd Hudâyî's spiritual cultivation and teaching activities had a profound impact on people, and he expressed his deep devotion to Allah through his poems. Many of his poems have been beautifully melodized and sung with great delight even today. In one of his poems, Hudâyî eloquently expresses the idea of detaching oneself from worldly desires and attachments and focusing solely on the love and connection with Allah. The poem goes as follows:

*What shall I do with the world?  
I need Allah, my Lord.  
I don't need anything else.  
I need Allah, my Lord.*

*Those of this world, stay in this world,  
Those of the hereafter, seek the hereafter,  
Each has their own love,  
I need Allah, my Lord.*

*The afflicted seek remedies,  
The servants seek their Sultan,  
The lover seeks their beloved,  
I need Allah, my Lord.*

*The nightingale is sad in front of the rose,  
The moth burns in flames,  
Every servant has their own problem,  
I need Allah, my Lord.*



*Do not pursue vain desires,  
Seek and find the truth, oh beloved,  
These are the words of Hudâyî,  
I need Allah, my Lord.*

This beautiful poem reflects the essence of Hudâyî's spiritual journey and his unwavering devotion to Allah, emphasizing the importance of seeking and finding the truth in the love of the Divine.

In his poems, Hudâyî spiritually nurtures the hearts by following the path of Yûnus Emre. He warns the people of the deception and impermanence of this world:

*Who expects fidelity from you,  
Aren't you the deceptive world?  
Are you not the world that took  
Muḥammad al-Muṣṭafâ away?*

*Go away, oh disloyal one, go away,  
You are an old and decrepit hag.  
Are you not the world  
that is left behind by tens of thousands of men?*

*Destroying the essence of the people,  
Filling their eyes with dust,  
Smiling at the face of the heedless,  
Aren't you the false world?*

*Some you make weep,  
Some you make mourn,  
At the end, when there is nothing left,  
Aren't you the world that leaves one naked?*

*Your work is always falsehood  
How many times have you been emptied  
And filled up again,  
Aren't you the deceptive world?*

In this manner, by reminding people of the realities of the world, Hudâyî emphasizes the exalted position that humans hold – the profound secret of being Allah's vicegerent.

One fateful day, as Hudâyî and his devoted disciples were crossing the tempestuous waters of the Bosphorus in a humble boat, an intense and raging storm suddenly enveloped them. In that perilous moment, he sought refuge in Allah, fervently uttering the following heartfelt poem:

*O Allah, the Guide and Provider,  
Make our path easy to tread.  
Through the difficult valleys we traverse,  
Hold our hands and propel us ahead.*

*With Your divine blessings and mercy,  
Illuminate our perception and sight.  
Transform our being with truth and purity,  
And guide us to a righteous life.*

Hudâyî's remarkable impact extended far and wide, leaving an enduring legacy that influenced not only his own era but also generations to come. In the year 1628, he departed from this world, transcending to his Lord in a state of spiritual beauty. His departure left behind an immeasurable number of devoted followers, associates, as well as an abundance of literary works and pious foundations that continue to inspire and guide people in their spiritual journeys. His teachings and contributions have remained alive through the devoted individuals who carry forward his profound wisdom, ensuring that his memory and influence endure through the ages.

#### **May Allah's mercy be upon him!..**

Hudâyî's influence transcended these challenges as he bridged the gap between the spiritual and scholarly realms, fostering harmony and cooperation between the two. His teachings and guidance rejuvenated Sufi life, bringing about a newfound vitality and spiritual fervor among the practitioners. As a result, the Sufi tradition experienced a resurgence, and its positive impact was felt not only within the Ottoman state but also on a broader societal level, leaving a lasting imprint on the spiritual fabric of the era.

His spiritual influence continued after his death:

In 1638, during Murad IV's campaign to Baghdad, the Safavid ruler recognized the Sultan's abilities and foresaw the potential defeat of his city if Murad reached Baghdad. To prevent this, the Safavid ruler devised a plot to assassinate Murad IV. He dispatched three highly skilled spies, trained for the mission, to infiltrate the Ottoman army.





Under the cover of darkness, the spies managed to evade approximately eight guards and stealthily entered the Sultan's private chambers. Armed with daggers, they approached Murad's bedside with the intent to carry out their deadly mission. At that moment, as fate would have it, the Sultan was fast asleep and began to experience a vivid dream.

In his dream, the late Azîz Mahmûd Hudâyî, whom he deeply revered as his beloved master, appeared as a guest. They were seated together, engaged in their ethereal encounter. However, the dream took an unexpected turn when Hudâyî abruptly stood up with astonishing speed, raising his voice in urgency, and called out to the sleeping Sultan:

“—My son, Murad! Get up!”

As Murad IV prepared to rise out of respect for his beloved teacher's dream-command, he found himself moving even faster, spurred on by the urgency of the moment. The dream had left a profound impact on him, and as he awakened, he noticed three intruders holding daggers in their hands, poised to take his life. Reacting swiftly, the Sultan acted on his instincts and covered the assailants with his quilt, buying himself precious seconds to defend himself. In an act of sheer strength and determination, he seized his heavy mace, weighing nearly three hundred pounds, and struck the intruders with all his might, incapacitating them and thwarting the imminent assassination attempt. Thanks to Hudâyî's spiritual warning in the dream, Murad IV was saved from what could have been a fatal outcome.

Even after his passing, Hudâyî's influence and presence continued to manifest in significant ways, transcending time and space. This powerful spiritual connection has been experienced by others as well, leading to many lived instances of his guidance and protection.

Intriguingly, there are numerous other examples where Hudâyî's disposition, despite his physical absence, has remained impactful and relevant in contemporary times. Let us delve into one more example to gain further insight and appreciation for the spiritual wisdom that continues to transcend generations.



The year was 1975. The time for the noon prayer was approaching, and a saintly-faced, wheat-skinned, and chunky young man came to the tomb



of Hudâyî. At that moment, he met the Imam of the Azîz Mahmûd Hudâyî Mosque and said:

“–Sir! I have come to see Azîz Mahmûd Hudâyî! How can I contact him? Is he here now?” he asked.

Imam **Muharrem Efendi**, who was surprised by such a question, said:

“–My son! Yes, Azîz Mahmûd Hudâyî is here!”

Hearing that Hudâyî was there, the young man said with joy:

“Please, allow me to meet him!” he said.

However, Muharrem Efendi, who could not give meaning to this, again said while next to the tomb:

“–My son! Azîz Mahmûd Hudâyî is here!”

The young man repeated his request:

“–In that case, introduce him to me! I wish to meet him!”

Muharrem Efendi, who could not figure out the young man’s state, tried to solve the matter by saying:

“–My dear son! Are you acquainted with Azîz Mahmûd Hudâyî?”

As the young man’s heart remained as pure as his face, he could not comprehend why the conversation seemed to stretch on, and why the Imam was hesitant to fulfill his request to meet Mahmûd Hudâyî. Yet, undeterred by the confusion, the young man revealed a surprising truth:

“–I know Azîz Mahmûd Hudâyî very well. He invited me here. We had agreed upon this visitation. He knows I am coming.”

The revelation stunned Muharrem Efendi, realizing that there was indeed a subtlety and secret underlying the matter. His curiosity piqued, the Imam inquired further:

“–My dear son! How did you reach such an agreement with Azîz Mahmûd Hudâyî?”

The young man’s narrative unfolded, revealing a tale of extraordinary events and providential encounters. He began to recount his experiences:



“–Sir, I was part of the commando group that parachuted down during the 1974 operation in Cyprus. Amidst the chaos of conflict, our army fought from the sea, while the Greeks held their position in the Beşparmak mountains. However, due to extreme winds, my parachute veered off course, and I found myself landing in enemy territory. Caught in the midst of a hostile and intense crossfire, I was in a state of shock and uncertainty. Not knowing what to do, I came across a tall, majestic, and saintly-faced elderly man. He looked at me with a beaming face and said:

«My son! This is the enemy line. What are you doing here? Why did you enter here alone?»

And then I said:

«–Sir! I did not choose to come here; the wind dropped me into this dangerous territory».

The saintly-faced man nodded slightly and said:

«– I was sent here before you. I know these places very well. Which unit are you with, my son? Come, let me take you to them!»

Together we set out under a terrific ring of fire. That blessed person displayed an extraordinary calmness and serenity, as if walking on a peaceful path. His demeanor left a profound impression on me. He inquired about my background, seeking to know my name and place of origin. After providing him with the requested information, I was unable contain my curiosity any longer and respectfully asked him about his identity:

«–Sir! Who are you?»

To the young man’s astonishment, the saintly figure revealed his true identity:

«–My son! They call me Azîz Mahmûd Hudâyî».

I asked again:

«–Sir! You have done me a great favor. If I return to my country alive, I would like to visit you as a debt of loyalty. Will you give your address?»

In response, Azîz Mahmûd Hudâyî provided a simple yet enigmatic direction:

«–My son! Go to Uskudar, ask anyone, and they will take you to me!»





In the meantime, we arrived to my unit. With gratitude and reverence, I kissed the hand of Azîz Mahmûd Hudâyî. I bid farewell to this beautiful person and proceeded to meet with my commander.

The commander, upon seeing the young man return unscathed from the dangerous ring of fire, expressed astonishment and questioned how he had managed to reach the unit safely. In response, the young man attributed his miraculous escape to the guidance of the elderly man with the beautiful face, whom he encountered during the conflict.

After the war concluded, the young man returned to his hometown, forever carrying the memory of the favor Azîz Mahmûd Hudâyî had done for him. Filled with a deep sense of gratitude and loyalty, he embarked on a journey to Uskudar with the intention of making a final visit to the blessed person who had protected him in the battlefield.

Upon arriving in Uskudar, he inquired about Azîz Mahmûd Hudâyî, and the people he asked described him as a blessed person and directed him to the shrine. The young man, now calmer but determined, reiterated his request to Muharrem Efendi:

“–Sir! This is how we met Azîz Mahmûd Hudâyî. Now bless me and take me to meet him!”

Upon fully understanding the situation and witnessing the young man’s unwavering faith and longing, Muharrem Efendi was deeply moved by the profound and otherworldly scene he had just witnessed. At a loss for words, he struggled to convey the truth to the young man, who looked into his eyes with a pleading gaze. With sincerity and compassion, Muharrem Efendi finally spoke:

“–My dear son! Azîz Mahmûd Hudâyî is no longer alive; he was a great friend of Allah who lived between 1543 and 1628. He must have invited you to recite Şûrah al-Fâtihah for him here! Here is his shrine!”

Upon hearing this revelation, the faithful young man was filled with profound joy and realization. He now understood that the blessed person he had encountered during the battle was none other than Azîz Mahmûd Hudâyî, the saint whose tomb he had sought. Embracing the miracle of his survival, he was overcome with emotion and began to weep uncontrollably. Covering his hands on his face, tears of gratitude flowed from his eyes. Witnessing this





deeply moving scene, even the imam of the Hudâyî Mosque could not hold back his tears.

This incident exemplifies the profound spiritual disposition and divine assistance that Allah bestows upon His saints. Throughout history, we find numerous accounts of such spiritual guidance and protection, and this is just one remarkable example that has come down to us from the time of the Prophet ﷺ.

**As believers, it is crucial to remember that all authority and power belong solely to Allah. He is the ultimate source of guidance and help, and it is through His mercy and divine will that His servants receive assistance and support. This assistance continues to manifest in various ways, both through the angels and the saintly servants of Allah, who act as channels of His grace and blessings.**



The following prayer made by Azîz Mahmûd Hudâyî at the request of Sultan Ahmad Khan is a profound and heartfelt invocation, reflecting the spiritual depth and compassion of this esteemed saint:

**“O Lord! Those who walk on our path until the Day of Resurrection, those who hold love for us in their hearts, and those who visit our grave once in their lives, reciting Şûrah al-Fâtîhah for the benefit of our souls – they are among us. Safeguard them from drowning in the treacherous sea, shield them from poverty in their final days, and let them depart from this world with unshaken faith. Grant them the knowledge to proclaim to others that they shall pass away, but not through the perilous waters of the sea. May this be Thy gracious decree, O Lord.”**

All the learned scholars and saints have attested to the acceptance of this prayer. Those who followed this spiritual path were safeguarded from drowning in the sea, and numerous individuals passed away on the very day they had foreseen.

**O Lord! May we too be blessed with the guidance and protection of Azîz Mahmûd Hudâyî, whose pious foundation, written works, and spiritual wisdom have enriched the hearts of believers for centuries. May his patronage be a source of inspiration and spiritual elevation for us on our journey toward You.**

Âmîn!





*An Endless Ocean in the Outward and Inward Knowledge*

## MAWLÂNÂ KHÂLID AL-BAGHDÂDÎ

(1779-1827)

Mawlânâ Khâlid al-Baghdâdî was the thirtieth in the spiritual chain of the great saints dubbed as *Silsilah al-‘Âliyah*.

Known as **Mawlânâ Khâlid al-Baghdâdî**, he also went by the sobriquet “**Ḍiyâ’ al-Dîn**.” Some referred to him as ‘**Uthmânî**. The lineage of this great friend of Allah, the reviver of his age, goes back to ‘Uthmân bin ‘Affân ؓ on his father’s side and ‘Alî ؓ on his mother’s side. He was born in the city of Zûr, located north of Baghdad.

Mawlânâ Khâlid al-Baghdadî, a devoted and pious soul, had a deep understanding of the mysteries contained within the Noble Quran. He was affectionately known as *Shams al-Shumûs* (“The Sun of Suns”) for the radiant light of wisdom that emanated from him. His perception reached the depths of reality and unveiled the secrets of the unseen.



Even in his early days as a disciple, Mawlânâ Khâlid's exceptional knowledge and presence attracted attention. A notable visitor, 'Abd al-Rahmân Pasha, the governor of Sulaymâniyah, recognized his remarkable wisdom and offered him a position as a professor in one of the madrasahs. However, Mawlânâ Khâlid humbly declined, acknowledging that he lacked the required licensure.

During his pilgrimage to Mecca in 1805, Mawlânâ Khâlid received his **Qâdirî licensure** from **Muṣṭafâ Kurdî** in Damascus, yet he remained modest, knowing there was much to achieve on the path to spiritual perfection. In Medina, he sought out a perfected shaykh to further cultivate his spirituality.

In Medina, he encountered a saintly-faced person from Yemen, whose spiritual aura captivated him. Seeking advice with humility, Mawlânâ Khâlid asked for guidance, as an ignorant person would seek knowledge from a scholar. The saintly person advised him with profound wisdom:

*“–O Khâlid! When you arrive in Mecca, should you witness anything that appears improper at the Kaaba, refrain from hastily forming unjust suspicions or misinterpreting others. Guard your heart and eyes against finding faults and flaws in others. Instead, focus on your inner world and spiritual growth!”*

This profound incident served as a mysterious sign to the enlightened shaykh, guiding Mawlânâ Khâlid toward unlocking his fullest spiritual potential.

Upon arriving in Mecca, Mawlânâ Khâlid experienced intense spiritual elation amid the blessings of the sacred place, momentarily forgetting the advice he had received in Medina. However, on a sacred Friday, he encountered a dervish with a disheveled appearance yet illuminated countenance. Surprisingly, the dervish turned his back to the Kaaba and fixed his gaze on Mawlânâ Khâlid. The young seeker could not help but think that the man's conduct lacked appropriate respect for the sacred site.

Addressing him directly, the dervish said:

**“–O Khâlid! Do you not know that reverence for the believer is greater than respect for the Kaaba? The heart is the celestial realm, and a sound heart is a house of Allah. How quickly did you forget the advice of that righteous person in Medina!..”**

These words deeply impacted Mawlânâ Khâlid, filling his heart with humility and reverence. He realized that the man before him was no ordinary per-

son but an esteemed saint. Overwhelmed with awe, he approached the saint, his hands trembling with respect, and humbly pleaded:

“O righteous one! I beseech your gracious assistance and humbly request to become your devoted disciple. Please accept me under your guidance and nurture my spiritual journey.”



That mysterious dervish gazed into the horizons and made a significant proclamation:

“Your path to spiritual perfection does not lie in this region!”

With a sweeping gesture toward India, he continued:

**“–From there, the sign will come to you, and your path to spiritual perfection will be there!..”**

The dervish’s words left a profound impact on Khâlid. After completing his pilgrimage, he returned to his hometown, Sulaymâniyah, but his thoughts were consumed by the notion of India. In a state of spiritual turmoil, he encountered a disciple of ‘**Abdullâh Dihlawî**, who shared stories of his revered master in India. Convinced that this encounter was the sign he had been awaiting, Khâlid promptly prepared for the journey, leaving behind his madrasah and students.

Despite concerns raised by his students, who feared for his safety in a politically turbulent and dangerous land, Khâlid remained steadfast in his decision. Drawing inspiration from the determination of Prophet Moses  in seeking out Khidr  by divine command to gain wisdom, Khâlid proclaimed, “If you are looking for life, you must go into darkness!”

Setting forth on his journey with Dihlawî’s disciple, they made a stop in Tehran. During this time, Khâlid engaged in a debate with Ismâ‘il Kâshî, a renowned Shî‘ite scholar.

Having previously studied Shia commentaries and noting their distortions of Quranic passages, Khâlid was particularly troubled by their incorrect views regarding the Khulafâ’ al-Râshidûn (The Rightly Guided Caliphs). He asked Kâshî, “Do the prophets sin?”

Kâshî responded, “No, they are innocent.”



Khâlid further questioned, “Allah says, ‘Allah pardon thee! Why gavest thou them leave, till it was clear to thee which of them spoke the truth, and thou knewest the liars?’ (Şûrah al-Tawbah, 43). Forgiveness applies to sin. Here Allah says He forgives. Is the Prophet ﷺ then committing a sin?”

Kâshî asserted, “No, this passage was revealed to reprimand Abû Bakr ؓ.”

In response, Khâlid al-Baghdâdî eloquently stated:

“– Since this passage is about Abû Bakr ؓ, then Allah declares that He has forgiven Abû Bakr ؓ. Why do you not forgive?”

Kâshî was left speechless and embarrassed in front of his disciples, unable to counter Khâlid’s compelling argument (Ibrâhîm Fasîh, *al-Majd al-Tâlid*, 128). This encounter showcased Mawlânâ Khâlid al-Baghdâdî’s deep understanding of the Quran and his dedication to seeking truth and clarity in matters of spirituality and theology.



Mawlânâ Khâlid’s journey left a lasting impression wherever he went, and he was warmly received and admired by scholars, governors, commanders, and the people of each city he visited. During one of his stops, in a town within the city of Lahore, Khâlid had an enlightening encounter with Mawlânâ Thanâullâh, which they both described as follows:

“I stayed in this town for one night, and during that time, I had an intense dream of ‘Abdullâh Dihlawî pulling me toward him. Astonished by the dream’s significance, I immediately went to see Mawlânâ Thanâullâh. Before I could utter a word, he said:

*«–We should be grateful for the presence and services of ‘Abdullâh Dihlawî, our brother and sayyid! O Khâlid! Being in his presence and service is the key to attaining the blessings promised to you. Hold onto this opportunity firmly! Never forget the principles of sincerity and submission!»*



Finally, after months of travel, Mawlânâ Khâlid reached **Delhi** (Ji-hanâbâd). It is said that this journey lasted for a year.



Eager to meet ‘Abdullâh Dihlawî, Khâlid and his companions went straight to the shaykh’s lodge. They introduced themselves to the dervish who opened the door:

**“–Al-Ḥajj Mawlânâ Khâlid Ḍiyâ’ al-Dîn, one of the scholars of Sulaymâniyah, Damascus, and Baghdad, has come to visit the shaykh with his companions.”**

‘Abdullâh Dihlawî, who was already aware of Khâlid’s arrival, said:

**“– Khâlid should stay! Let the others return to their homeland after staying as our guests for some time!..”**

The request was fulfilled, and the others departed, leaving Khâlid behind to be accepted as a disciple in the shaykh’s presence. Then came another instruction:

**“–Let Khâlid begin cleaning the lavatories in the lodge!”**

Despite his fame and knowledge renowned across the Muslim world, Mawlânâ Khâlid humbly accepted this order and did not object. He took his bucket and broom and immediately began to work.

Each day, Khâlid would obtain water for cleaning from a well close to the lodge. He would fill the bucket, tie it to the end of a thick stick, and carry it on his shoulder, going back and forth multiple times during the day. Diligently, he would clean the premises and prepare ablution water, demonstrating great determination in disciplining his carnal soul. If any discontent or reluctance arose in his soul due to his duties, he would immediately repent and seek forgiveness. Months passed by in this manner.

One day, while tired from cleaning the stones in the lavatory, his carnal soul sought to delude his heart:

*“–O the unrivaled scholar of Baghdad and Damascus! O Mawlânâ Khâlid of that splendid region! You came all this way based on the words of a person who may have been a madman or a saint. Did you find what you were looking for? Look, there is no shaykh or spiritual training! What have they done for you all these months other than having you clean up the lavatory day and night? Was this the divinely-inspired knowledge (‘ilm al-ladunnî) you were looking for?..”*



However, Khâlid al-Baghdâdî, startled by this temptation, immediately shattered the veil of heedlessness that his carnal soul wanted to draw before him with the power of sincerity and resignation, saying:

**“–O my carnal soul! If you do not know the honor in this duty given by my blessed teacher and refuse to do it even for a single breath, I will make you sweep the floors not with a broom but with my beard!..”**

‘Abdullâh Dihlawî observed Khâlid’s state with a smile from afar, witnessing the transformation and triumph over his carnal soul. Angels were now carrying the bucket and broom for Khâlid, and a radiant light shone from his shoulders where he had incurred an injury from fetching water. Pleased with this sight, Dihlawî called his exceptional disciple to his side and spoke with admiration:

*“–My son Khalid! You had already reached an extraordinary level in your knowledge, but you needed to adorn it with inward cultivation. For this, it was necessary to discipline and purify the self. Otherwise, your soul would have dragged you into a swamp of pride and arrogance, and it could have destroyed you. Praise Allah that you have now conquered your soul and climbed to the heights of perfection. Now the angels are doing your work.”*

After saying this, he added:

*“–Son! Our esteemed sayyids, to whom we belong, are individuals who have attained knowledge of sharî‘ah, tarîqah, haqîqah, and ma‘rifah. Now, as a reformer, you have become a link in their chain. **Now the guidance of all the regions is waiting for you! May Allah increase your forbearance!**”*

Being pleased with his great disciple’s progress, ‘Abdullâh Dihlawî provided him with special training and spiritual guidance. In just six months, Mawlânâ Khâlid reached the station of being in the divine presence (*ḥuḍûr*) and contemplative witnessing (*mushâhadah*). His teacher granted him authorization (*ijâzah*) in the **Naqshbandiyyah**, **Qâdiriyyah**, **Suhrawardiyyah**, **Kubrawiyyah**, and **Chishtiyyah** paths. He became intimately acquainted with the mysteries in his master’s heart.

When the time for separation arrived, ‘Abdullâh Dihlawî’s eyes were filled with tears of spiritual affection. The difference between Khâlid’s arrival and departure was profound. Dihlawî, who did not meet him upon his arrival, was now sending Khâlid off himself. Despite Mawlânâ Khâlid’s modesty and



humility, his shaykh, ‘Abdullâh Dihlawî, personally held the reins of his horse and helped his esteemed disciple mount it. He bid farewell until they were a distance of four miles apart. Then, he said to those around him:

**“–Khâlid took everything with him.”**

Mawlânâ Khâlid, now with such a farewell, embarked on his journey to Baghdad and began his duty of teaching and guiding the people at the age of thirty-five.



Mawlânâ Khâlid al-Baghdâdî’s Sufi lodge was indeed overflowing with people seeking his spiritual guidance. However, as is often the case with those who are virtuous and influential, some individuals became envious of his reputation. Among them was **Hâlet Efendi**, a palace minister, who could not bear the immense popularity that Mawlânâ Khâlid enjoyed. Seizing an opportunity, Hâlet Efendi slandered him before the Sultan, portraying him as a danger to the state and the sultanate due to his large following.

Sultan Mahmûd Khan, a wise ruler who did not hastily accept such claims, responded with discernment:

**“–No harm will be inflicted on the state from this blessed person of faith, but rather a great benefit will result.”**

When Mawlânâ Khâlid learned about this incident, he felt deeply saddened. He knew that such slander could not only harm his own person but also tarnish the spiritual path he served and the countless believers who benefitted from it. Nevertheless, he held firm in his faith, and with a heart full of compassion, he invoked blessings on the Sultan and said:

“–Hâlet Efendi’s affairs have been entrusted to Jalâl al-Dîn Rûmî. He will punish him after summoning him to his presence.”

As fate would have it, Hâlet Efendi was later exiled to Konya for causing the Morean Revolt and was executed shortly thereafter.

Despite the negative propaganda, the aura of love surrounding Mawlânâ Khâlid al-Baghdâdî continued to expand by the grace of Allah. Even scholars and sages longed to be his disciples and attain spiritual perfection under his guidance. In a short time, he trained numerous disciples, and quite a few of them became his successors (*khalifah*). Among those who succeeded him were



the great Ḥanafī jurist **Ibn ‘Ābidīn** and **Ālūsī**, the renowned author of the Quranic commentary *Rûḥ al-Ma‘ânī*.

Indeed, Imam Shâmil, the brave Caucasian warrior, was also a follower of the same spiritual lineage as Mawlânâ Khâlid al-Baghdâdî. His dedication and valor in fighting against the Russian forces for twenty-four years exemplified the ideals of glory and honor.

Imam Shâmil’s spiritual training not only instilled him with courage and resilience but also guided him in nurturing numerous mujahid commanders. This highlights an essential aspect of Sufism – it is not merely about retreat and isolation from society, as some misconceptions suggest. Instead, it represents a dynamic path that integrates both outward and inward forms of jihad.



Mawlânâ Khâlid al-Baghdâdî’s impact on his disciples and the spread of spiritual knowledge was profound and far-reaching. He strategically sent each of his trained disciples to different lands, ensuring that the blessings of outward and inward knowledge, eternal truth, and experiential wisdom reached far and wide. He revived spiritually dead hearts, infusing them with the vitality of a spring-like climate. Many seekers rushed from distant places to become his disciples, and with his teachings’ blessings, the clouds of darkness in their hearts dissipated.

His knowledge and wisdom were like raindrops, seemingly unnoticeable but profoundly nourishing. He posed questions that challenged even the most knowledgeable, only to answer them himself later, humbly avoiding any trace of pride or arrogance.

Mawlânâ Khâlid was a master of rational and transmitted knowledge, excelling in various fields with profound understanding. As a scholar who applied his knowledge, he worshiped without resorting to dispensations, exhibited abstinence, and utilized his time efficiently. He embodied an exemplary character worthy of admiration in every aspect of life.

His prestige and influence were such that he became the second most renowned “friend of Allah” referred to as “**Mawlânâ**” after Rûmî. The **Naqsh-bandiyyah** Sufi path became known as the **Khâlidīyyah**, the most widespread Sufi path in the Ottoman territories, owing to his influence.



In his time, Mawlânâ Khâlid defended the true character of religious and Sufi life against the threat of false beliefs. His efforts ushered in an age of spiritual bliss and radiated divine sunshine, illuminating the religious and spiritual disciplines. Baghdad became a convergence of two waters (*majma‘ al-baḥrayn*), physical and spiritual, and harmony between outward and inward disciplines was restored, revealing the shimmer of the Shariah and the radiance of the Sufi path and true reality like a full moon.



Since rulings on creed and moral action can no longer be legislated, the Noble Quran was divinely protected from corruption and distortion, ensuring its eternal perfection and relevance for all of humanity until the Day of Judgment. As the duty of spreading the religion and guiding the people fell to the ulema after the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, the chain of spiritual succession continued through the ‘friends of Allah’, who were considered the heirs of the Prophet ﷺ. The concept of Sufi thought and spiritual living was not a later addition to the religion but rooted in the Prophetic tradition itself.

Throughout history, prophets preached to people with varying levels of understanding and spiritual inclination, and some individuals among the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ possessed a unique ethereal connection to him. The spiritual chain of Sufi paths is often traced back to such distinguished figures as **Abu Bakr** ؓ or **‘Alī** ؓ. Additionally, the Ahl al-Ṣuffah (“People of the Bench”), known for their devoted and austere lives, also served as a model for the Ummah, having been nurtured and perfected by the Prophet ﷺ. On the way back from the Expedition of **Tabuk**, the greatest and most arduous battle of the time, the Prophet ﷺ declared:

*“Now, we are returning from the lesser jihād to the greater jihād!”* the wisdom of which also expresses both the difficulty and importance of dealing with the soul and its exigencies. In Sufism, the seeker on the path is meant to acquire a certain posture toward the temporal world, conquer the carnal soul, and protect the heart from all that is not Allah.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ had four essential tasks:

a. To recite and convey the verses (*âyât*) of Allah, teaching the Quran and its wisdom, including interpreting and explaining the revelations from Allah.



He also had the authority to make *ijtihād* (exert mental efforts to arrive at legal decisions) when necessary.

b. To execute and enforce the commands and prohibitions of Allah, establishing a system of law and governance based on divine guidance.

c. To refine people's hearts and purify their inner beings, guiding them toward spiritual growth and righteousness.

d. To receive directives and revelations exclusively from Allah, a task unique to the Prophet ﷺ.

The responsibilities of executing the divine law, providing legal rulings, and governing society can be fulfilled by the successors of the Prophet ﷺ. However, the exclusive duty of receiving direct revelations is specific to the Prophet ﷺ himself. Muslim scholars recognize three essential criteria for the complete successorship (*khilāfah al-kāmilah*): executing the divine law, refining people's hearts, and conveying the teachings of the Quran.

The first four caliphs, known as the *Khulafā' al-Rāshidūn* (The Rightly Guided Caliphs), are considered to have fulfilled all three aspects of complete successorship. For those who cannot individually fulfill all three duties, the classification of *khilāfah al-sūriyyah* (formal successorship) is applied. This arrangement involves dividing responsibilities, with outward scholars (ulema) handling legal rulings, the head of the state managing the implementation of the law, and shaykhs guiding the purification of human souls.

This approach is deemed legitimate and beneficial for society's welfare (*maṣlaḥah*) as it allows for efficient and effective governance while still upholding the spiritual guidance necessary for individual development and spiritual growth.

The Ottoman state adopted a tripartite system to uphold the responsibilities of the Prophet ﷺ in governing and guiding the society. The administration of the Shariah was entrusted to the Shaykh al-Islam, who handled legal directives that pertain to everyone. The execution of the law was under the jurisdiction of the sultan, ensuring that the outward actions of Muslims were in accordance with the Shariah. The duty of spiritual cultivation was assigned to the perfected shaykhs, who focused on the inner world of individuals, guiding their hearts and souls.

The term “Shariah” refers to the legal directives that regulate the external aspects of Muslims’ lives. While the Shariah deals with the outward conduct, the **Sufi path** addresses the inward aspects of individuals, nurturing their emotions and feelings with the principles of Islam. This means that the Shariah serves as a vehicle to regulate the outward and the Sufi path the inward. Therefore, the phrase, “**There can be no Sufism without the Shariah,**” has been oft-repeated by the great Sufis. They liken the Sharia to a fixed leg of a compass, and the Sufi path (*tarîqah*) to the unfixed needle.

The Sufi path is often referred to as “the way of love and affection” because it relies on *muḥabbah* (loving attachment), which is considered the creative force of the universe. However, love, being a powerful emotion, carries the risk of overshadowing one’s will and leading to potential errors. To prevent this, it is crucial to traverse the Sufi path under the guidance of those who have balanced both the external (*sharî’ah*) and internal disciplines.

However, the peril in the realm of love and affection remains ever-present if those responsible for teaching and guiding the people lack a certain level of competence in the outward disciplines. To counteract this risk, the **Naqshbandî** Sufi path preferred selecting its spiritual guides from individuals who had attained mastery in *sharî’ah* knowledge. This approach enabled them to safeguard themselves from the aforementioned dangers.

In contrast, some other Sufi paths, like the **Bektâshîs** and **Mawlawîs**, may have faced challenges in maintaining this balance, occasionally falling into error due to an overpowering mystical attraction (*jadhbah*) and a state of exuberance that may cause individuals to gradually deviate from the principles of the Shariah over time. The Ottomans recognized the wisdom in following the Naqshbandî path, especially among the ulema and state dignitaries. They saw in this path a means to integrate the outward disciplines of the Shariah with the inward cultivation of the heart, thereby ensuring a comprehensive approach to spirituality and religious practice.

During the nineteenth century, as European influence spread and religiosity weakened, the Khâlidiyyah Sufi path played a crucial role in countering the rising challenges and preserving the spiritual essence of Ottoman society. Mawlânâ Khâlid, as a leading Sufi master, contributed significantly to the spiritual expansion and cultivation of Muslims. By raising numerous successors and spreading his path throughout the Ottoman territories, he played a pivotal





role in maintaining the spiritual well-being of the people and protecting the religion from harmful innovations.

In this way, the teachings and guidance provided by Sufi masters like Mawlânâ Khâlid not only contributed to the spiritual growth of individuals but also played a significant role in preserving the spiritual identity and resilience of Ottoman society amidst challenging times. The integration of the Sufi path with the Shariah proved to be an effective means of nurturing both the inner and outer dimensions of faith, thereby safeguarding the spiritual integrity of the community.



Mawlânâ Khâlid al-Baghdâdî, a master in both the fields of *sharî'ah* knowledge and *taṣawwuf*, possessed an exceptional talent for poetry as well. The couplets he uttered were a profound expression of mystery and wisdom, reflecting the depth of his spirituality. In a collection of his Persian poems, this vast sea of inspiration leaves the minds of readers astonished.

With a heart ignited by love and affection for the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, he eloquently expresses:

*“O refuge of the sinners! I have come to your door seeking protection from my countless mistakes. Oh, if only I could always kiss that threshold on which you have stepped with your blessed foot!”*

*“O Beloved of Allah! It may be possible to encompass entire realms within a speck, but expressing your greatness in mere language is beyond reach.”*



In a letter written to Khâlid al-Baghdâdî, ‘**Abdullâh Dihlawî** describes his spiritual valuation and level as follows:

*“I begin this letter with the name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.*

*May Allah’s peace, mercy, and blessings be upon you, O beloved servant of Allah, the blessed Mawlânâ Khâlid!*

*It is beyond the capabilities of writing and words to fully express gratitude and praise for the blessings bestowed upon this humble and flawed soul by the Almighty Lord, who manifests Himself upon me.*



*My dear son, please be kind and generous to the followers of this mighty and blessed path! Allah has made you an inspiration and a spiritual pillar for that land. Do not be affected by ill-intentioned people, as their slanders hold no weight in our eyes. In all matters, from beginning to end, praise be to Allah, and peace be upon the Prophet ﷺ!*

*My dear son, help those who seek to benefit and guide them to the remembrance of Allah and other obligations commanded by Him. Inform them that true happiness lies in fulfilling these duties. Avoid associating with those who oppose the ways of the spiritual masters, for there is a famous saying: «If you befriend someone who harms your master, you are worse than a dog».*

*Therefore, especially stay away from those who object to **Imâm Rabbânî**, for the believers and righteous hold him in high esteem. Those who harbor malice toward him are mere hypocrites and wretched individuals.*

*On the other hand, the scholars, great leaders, and authorities of the country where you reside are well aware of your blessed presence, considering you a source of blessings and benefiting from your wisdom. Do not let them overlook showing you respect and honor. They can protect you from those who oppose you and cannot deceive you. This advice is offered as a form of sincere counsel, as the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: «Religion is good advice!».*

*Allah has made you the successor of Bahâ' al-Dîn Naqshband, Mujaddid Alf Thâni, and Mirza Şâhib. No one can take your place, and your hand is like my own hand. Seeing you is like seeing me.*

*My dear son, there is no need to undertake the journey from that faraway land to come here. It is enough for you to turn your heart in this direction and remember us. May Allah grant us success in pleasing Him and following His beloved Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ!*

Âmîn!”



In the days when Mawlânâ Khâlid al-Baghdâdî began his spiritual journey, the governor of Baghdad, Sa'îd Pasha, paid a visit to the area. As he entered, he noticed that many scholars were sitting in a manner of utmost humility, with their heads bowed before him as if they were servants. However, upon witnessing the majestic presence of Mawlânâ Khâlid, Sa'îd Pasha was



overwhelmed and knelt down in reverence, trembling in awe. In a low voice, he requested Mawlânâ Khâlid to pray for him.

Mawlânâ Khâlid, with his deep spiritual insight, offered the following advice to Sa‘îd Pasha:

*“On the Day of Judgment, every individual will be questioned about their own deeds and actions. However, as a governor, you will be held accountable not only for yourself but also for all those under your command. Therefore, fear the Almighty greatly, for that day will be one of immense dread and horror. It is said that mothers will forget their suckling offspring out of fear, and pregnant women will give birth prematurely due to the overwhelming terror. People will appear intoxicated, but in reality, they will not be under the influence; rather, they will experience the severity of Allah’s punishment.”*

Upon hearing these words, Sa‘îd Pasha’s trembling intensified, and he began to cry loudly. Mawlânâ Khâlid, full of compassion, placed his blessed hand on the Pasha’s neck, and they went together to their lodge adjacent to the mosque.

Throughout his life, Mawlânâ Khâlid trained countless disciples. Among them, four thousand were granted the *khilâfah* (license) and reached the pinnacle of Islamic knowledge and spiritual refinement through his guidance. The devotion and submission of his disciples to Mawlânâ Khâlid were truly praiseworthy.

Even the highly esteemed Mufti of Baghdad, **Shaykh Şadr al-Dîn**, who held significant positions as the shaykh of the scholars, the governor of Baghdad, and the teacher of the vizier Davut Pasha, humbly expressed his utmost respect for Mawlânâ Khâlid. He would often say:

“If my teacher, Mawlânâ Khâlid, were to command me to carry a pot of milk on my head and sell it by going around the bazaar and market, I would unquestionably follow his orders without hesitation!”

In the gatherings of scholars, **Shaykh ‘Alî Suwaydî** would eloquently express his deep admiration for Mawlânâ Khâlid al-Baghdâdî by saying:

**“Mawlânâ Khâlid is an endless sea of knowledge in both the outward and inward disciplines, while we are nothing more than mere drops in comparison.”**





The spiritual presence and gaze of Mawlânâ Khâlid al-Baghdâdî were profound and captivating. One day, as he was walking on the road, he cast a penetrating and powerful glance at a Christian passerby, infused with the grace and inspiration that Allah had bestowed upon him. In that moment, something extraordinary occurred. The Christian man felt an overwhelming and uncontrollable spiritual attraction toward Mawlânâ Khâlid. Deeply moved by this divine guidance, he followed Khâlid, weeping in awe and reverence. The grace and inspiration he experienced during that encounter were so profound that he made a life-changing decision. Inspired by the spiritual connection he felt, the Christian man decided to seek a private meeting with Mawlânâ Khâlid. During their encounter, the profound impact of Khâlid's presence and teachings led the Christian man to embrace Islam. The bliss and radiance emanating from his heart were evident on his face, as the transformation within him was palpable.



Misled by the ignorance of some people, a scholar named Yaḥyâ, along with some of his disciples, decided to test and disgrace Mawlânâ Khâlid al-Baghdâdî. Khâlid graciously welcomed Yaḥyâ at the front of his house, shook his hand, and invited him to sit beside him. Before Yaḥyâ could say anything, Khâlid began discussing some of the subtle and challenging religious issues that Yaḥyâ had kept hidden in his heart, saying:

“—There are very complex issues in matters of religion. One is this, and that is the answer; the other is this, and that is the answer!”

Yaḥyâ was amazed and realized that the person he had come to test was a friend of Allah. He deeply regretted his intentions and instead became one of the distinguished disciples of Mawlânâ Khâlid.



Amidst a dreadful plague that had struck Damascus, Mawlânâ Khâlid al-Baghdâdî chose not to leave the city, staying resolute in his commitment to serve and guide the people. He also took the opportunity to read Prophetic traditions about the martyrdom of those who die from the plague, imparting spiritual wisdom to those around him.

During this distressing time, a concerned individual approached Khâlid and implored:



“–Sir! Supplicate for me so that the plague does not infect me!” Responding to the heartfelt request, Khâlid prayed for him, and miraculously, the person became immune from the epidemic.

When others suggested that Khâlid should also pray for his own protection, he humbly replied, “I would be ashamed not to desire to be reunited with my Lord!”

Tragically, Mawlânâ Khâlid lost his beloved sons, **Bahâ’ al-Dîn**, and later, **‘Abd al-Rahmân**, to the plague. During the burial ceremony of his children, he sensed that his own time on earth was drawing near. Consequently, he directed his disciples to prepare his grave and informed them of his preferred burial location. Despite their hearts being heavy with the anxiety of separation, Mawlânâ Khâlid urged them to proceed without delay. He specifically called upon **Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qâdir**, instructing him to dig his grave on that day and cautioning about a stone they would encounter while digging, emphasizing the need to be prepared. His order was then immediately carried out.

One day, Mawlânâ Khâlid confided in Shaykh Ismâ‘îl al-Ghazzî, revealing:

“–I have donated all my books.”

On that day, he received visitors who came to offer condolences for the passing of his second son, ‘Abd al-Rahmân. After they departed, he requested Shaykh Ismâ‘îl Efendi to stay with him and said:

*“–Had I not been afraid of people saying, «Mawlânâ Khâlid is demonstrating a wondrous deed!» I would have said goodbye to all my companions today. I believe I am going on a great journey this Friday night.”*


As the guests brought food, he declined, saying:

“–I will not eat this or any other food! Have you seen a person wishing to leave this world eat?”

After some time, one of Mawlânâ Khâlid al-Baghdâdî’s disciples, **Ibn ‘Âbidîn**, entered the room with a contemplative demeanor and shared a vision he had during his prayer:

“–Sir! Last night, I saw in my prayer that ‘Uthmân ﷺ had passed away. A vast crowd had gathered, and I led the funeral prayer.”

In response, Mawlânâ Khâlid said to him with a sense of certainty:

“O Ibn ‘Âbidîn! Know that this humble soul (i.e., Khâlid) is from the lineage of ‘Uthmân . Therefore, you should be aware that I will also pass away, and you will lead the funeral prayer with a large congregation.”

Hearing these words, Ibn ‘Âbidîn’s eyes filled with tears, feeling great sorrow at the prospect of losing his beloved teacher.

Like his predecessor Mawlânâ Rûmî, Mawlânâ Khâlid al-Baghdâdî embraced death as a joyful reunion with his Lord, referring to it as a ‘wedding night’ (*şeb-i arûs*). He shared the following advice with those around him:

*“—Do not deviate from the right path! Remain patient and steadfast during times of hardships, trials, and tribulations. Do not distress my soul by weeping and holding me in high regard after my passing. Write letters to everyone and admonish them not to grieve or cry over my death. Those who love me and have faith, if possible, should sacrifice an animal for the sake of Allah and dedicate its rewards to my soul. Additionally, let them recite the Noble Quran and offer the Fâtiḥah (the opening chapter) for me. Unlike those who claim, «I do not need the rewards of charity. I do not need the Quran recited on my behalf», I am in great need of the recitation of Şûrahs al-Fâtiḥah and Ikhlâş for my soul.”*

*Do not write anything on my grave other than something to this effect:*

*«This is the grave of so-and-so, al-Naqshbandî al-Mujaddidî, seeking the mercy of his Lord, the Exceedingly Benevolent».*”

As the night drew to a close and morning approached, Mawlânâ Khâlid turned his gaze toward the qiblah while lying on his right side, engrossed in deep reflection and contemplation. Despite the severity of his illness, he never once complained, and his entire being radiated signs of his remembrance of Allah. When the melodious call to prayer began, Mawlânâ Khâlid recited the final passages of Şûrah al-Fajr:

**“O soul at peace! Return to thy Lord, well-pleased, well-pleasing! Enter thy among My servants! Enter thou my paradise!”** (Şûrah al-Fajr, 27-30).



After the recitation of the final passages of Şûrah al-Fajr, Mawlânâ Khâlid al-Baghdâdî peacefully surrendered his soul to his Lord, enveloped in spiritual bliss.

**May Allah's mercy be upon him!**

The news of his passing spread swiftly, and an unprecedented crowd gathered at his funeral, coming to pay their respects to the revered spiritual master. As previously foretold, his devoted disciple, Ibn 'Âbidîn, led the funeral prayer, guiding the congregation in their final farewell to their beloved teacher.

As Mawlânâ Khâlid al-Baghdâdî was gently laid to rest in his grave, a divine and enchanting fragrance emanated from his blessed body, embracing the souls of those present. This delicate scent was felt and experienced by all, leaving an indelible impression. Remarkably, some spiritually enlightened individuals claim that the fragrance of his presence still lingers to this day.

Mawlânâ Khâlid al-Baghdâdî was genuinely beloved by the friends of Allah, esteemed scholars, and wise sages of his era. Despite his physical departure, his spiritual legacy endures, and his benevolence continues to shine brightly. Renowned for his compassion and pure-hearted radiance, he is affectionately known as *kalbi sâlik pür-ziyâ* ('pure-hearted radiant light').

His memory lives on through the hearts and souls of those who were touched by his teachings and guidance, as his profound spiritual inspiration remains an enduring source of blessing and enlightenment for generations to come. May his noble soul rest in eternal peace, and may his legacy of love and spiritual wisdom continue to enrich the lives of countless seekers on the path to Allah.



Below are some selections from his letters:

*"Be sagacious! If a person considers themselves superior to another, this signifies an attempt at claiming divinity. This causes one to be eternally expelled from Allah's divine mercy. May He protect us from this! Here is the state of the Devil as an example:*

*The accursed one obliviously said to Allah with great indecency:*

*«I am superior to Adam».*



*He did not bother to repent. And Allah cast him out of His mercy forever.*

*That is why a person treading the path of Allah must see themselves as lower in rank than anyone else. For, there are many sinners, honored with sincere repentance, that turned to Allah trembling, became among the rightly guided, and were recorded in the book of the righteous. Likewise, many renuncians ended up as wrongdoers.*

*Although the deeds of the saints may seem similar in appearance to those of other people, you ought to know they are different in reality.*

*O travelers on the path of Allah! Never approve or permit laxity and laziness in the religion of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ! For steadfastness and perseverance on this path are better than countless wondrous feats. It should also be known that mystical unveilings and wonders are nothing but a nuisance if they do not serve to strengthen one's observance of religious commandments. I have always said this on various occasions and will say it once more; all of the great saints agree that those who do not obey the prescriptions and prohibitions of this religion are considered apostates and heretics.*

*However, walking on the right path toward the eternal journey is difficult without treading the Sufi path (sayr wa sulûk). Because the commanding soul (nafs al-ammârah) involves all kinds of tribulation and mischief that destroy people. Even if a person absorbs all the knowledge known from books, it is still impossible to rid their carnal soul of all its ruses. These deceptions can only be eliminated with the spiritual training and disposition of a Sufi master. Otherwise, the servant will not experience spiritual revelations that will cultivate their heart nor be able to proceed on the path of Islam with sincerity.*

*Therefore, it is vital to understand that the path of taṣawwuf serves as a spiritual vehicle, infusing the eagerness and vitality required to fulfill the commandments of Islam.*

*Furthermore, mere acquisition of knowledge without inward cultivation is an offense, and inner cultivation that contradicts the prescriptions and prohibitions of the religion is a form of perversity. We seek refuge in Allah from both..."*

On a certain day, he addressed his disciples, advising them:

*"Abandon the pre-Islamic (Jâhiliyyah) customs and embrace the noble Prophetic way! Do not befriend those who are solely concerned with satisfying*



*their bodily desires. I also urge you to relinquish the desire to associate with the wealthy and influential, expecting favors in return. When confronted with situations that may necessitate questionable actions due to necessity, choose the option that is less corrupt. The individuals I hold most dear are those who have little interest in worldly matters, burden no one, and are devoted to fiqh and hadith.*

*This humble servant of Allah implores everyone to turn to their Lord with utmost devotion. Remember, the world is not about material wealth and luxurious possessions. It is defined by whatever a person ardently desires and endeavors to attain. As for my loved ones, I earnestly request that they engage in deeds that will radiate their faces with divine light when they meet their Lord. Seek refuge in Allah, the Protector, for on that dreadful day, faces will pale in awe! Remember that every deed, good or bad, belongs solely to the individual who performs it.”*

Khâlid wrote the following to one of his students:

*“As long as you are alive, remain steadfast in adhering to the prescriptions and prohibitions of Allah! Remember and invoke Allah abundantly at all times. Seek refuge and place your trust solely in Him. Do not allow your heart to be captivated by the deceptive and fleeting world; yearn for the eternal instead. Do not forget about death, your solitude in the grave, and the Day of Reckoning; prepare adequately and earnestly for these inevitable realities. Embrace the guidance of the Noble Quran and the Prophetic way, and shun reprehensible innovations. Pray for the success and victory of the Muslims, and the defeat of the apostates and enemies of the faith.*

*Remain firmly on the path of piety, treating people with kindness and avoiding causing trouble to anyone, especially in the sacred spaces of Mecca and Medina. Refrain from backbiting, even if others speak ill of you. Consider everyone to be better than yourself, and forget any good deeds you have done, so that your ego does not claim a share in them. Regard yourself as having done no good deeds, but never lose hope in Allah’s boundless mercy.*

*Know that it is better for Allah to bestow His favor upon you than for your deeds to equal the sum of all humans and jinn. Continue to cultivate the remembrance and contemplation of Allah in your heart, and do not neglect it. Embrace the spiritual essence transmitted by the masters of this path, and honor the people of knowledge and the devoted adherers to the Quran. Recite*

*the Quran abundantly and immerse yourself in the study of fiqh. Do not allow the thought of maintaining Allah's presence in your heart to deter you from the pursuit of religious knowledge, as true worship is incomplete without understanding the faith.*

*Persist in your supererogatory prayers of tahajjud, ishrâq, duḥâ, and aw-wâbîn. Always be in a state of ritual ablution, and make moderation a constant companion in your life. Sleep little, be content with what you have, and tirelessly dedicate yourself to the path of Allah day and night!..”*

**O Lord! Grant us and all the people of faith the opportunity to benefit from the teachings and example of Mawlânâ Khâlid, who devoted himself day and night to serving You and living Islam scrupulously!**

**Âmîn!..**





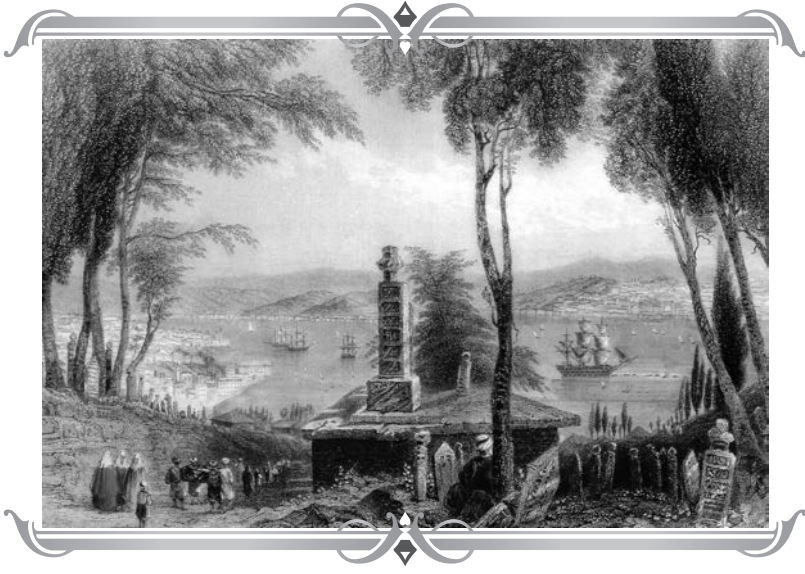
## THE SPIRITUAL FABRIC OF OTTOMAN SOCIETY

The Ottomans achieved numerous victories and established a legacy of honor and glory, shaped by their remarkable historical characteristics. Among these blessings, the strong social and spiritual fabric of their community stands out as a significant achievement.

The friends of Allah, whose examples we have mentioned only a few among many, played a vital role in weaving Ottoman society into a network of spiritual guidance and blessings. Their patronage and teachings nurtured countless great personalities and people of the heart across all strata of society, from the illiterate to the ulema, and even among leaders and soldiers. These exemplary individuals formed the foundation of the Ottoman state's impressive triumphs and achievements, making it the longest-lasting among Islamic states, with armies dedicated to both warfare and prayer.

One illustrative story, known as the tale of “**Meyyit-zâde**,” exemplifies the spiritual qualities of faith, sincerity, steadfastness, trust, and submission that found a place in people's hearts due to the teachings and guidance of the spiritual lineage starting from Edabali and continuing through the ages in the Ottoman state. This event serves as a typical portrayal of the profound spiritual essence embedded within the Ottoman people and the inner world of the people of the heart.





*The Blessings of Submitting to Allah and Trusting in Him*

## MEYYIT-ZÂDE

(1596-?)

During the reign of **Sultan Ahmad Khan I**, there was a renowned Ottoman scholar named Meyyit-zâde, widely respected for his virtue and esoteric knowledge. The name **Meyyit-zâde**, meaning “**the son of the dead**,” is attributed to a miraculous event surrounding his birth.

Meyyit-zâde’s father was a brave warrior who was called to join **Sultan Mehmed III’s Egri expedition** in 1596. However, at that time, his wife was pregnant, and her delivery was approaching. Despite the imminent campaign, the father, who held *jihâd* in the path of Allah above all else, made necessary preparations and reconciled with his pregnant wife with love and kindness. Filled with the spirit of the sacred mission, the exhilarating sound of the kettledrum echoing in his soul, he bid his radiant, faithful, and devoted wife a final farewell. Knowing he could not be present during the birth, he raised his hands, which would wield the sword against the enemy, and with a heart full of sadness, he beseeched Allah. Tears of compassion welled up in his eyes as he spoke:

*“My Lord! I embark on this sacred campaign in Your name, fully aware that I have no one but You! My Lord! I entrust to You my son, who will be born to my faithful and selfless wife. Protect him with Your grace and generosity!”*

The father, having mounted his horse, swiftly rode toward Egri with the Ottoman army, battling the enemy valiantly like lions. Through the grace and favor of Allah, the Ottoman forces achieved a resounding victory. Upon their triumphant return to Istanbul, known as Dersaâdet (The Gate of Bliss) at that time, each brave soldier, from the commander to the foot soldier, wore halos of honor and victory on their foreheads, adorning the city with the fragrance of success.

Upon reaching home, the father, eager to reunite with his wife, found an empty house despite the news of the victorious return being widely known. Fear gripped his heart as he rushed to the neighbors, hoping to find solace in their words. However, the somber expressions of the neighbors confirmed his worst fears. They offered their condolences, and the father’s heart was overwhelmed with a burning pain.

“No, this cannot be,” he stuttered, seeking refuge in his unwavering trust in Allah, the Lord of the universe, whom he had entrusted with his unborn child.

In a moment of deep silence, the grieving father made a firm proclamation:

“Indeed, Allah, the Merciful, is the best of protectors! Show me the grave of my wife!”

Together, they headed to the cemetery, and with an inspired heart, the father carried a pickaxe and shovel. When they reached the grave, he pressed his ear against the soil, listening intently. He exclaimed with conviction:

**“–Behold, I hear my child’s voice!”**

With the support of those present, the father fervently dug up the grave. As they removed the earth, an astonishing and awe-inspiring sight emerged – a baby, like a radiant ball of light, was clinging to its deceased mother’s chest.

Without hesitation, the father tenderly cradled his child in his arms, showering him with kisses on his rosy cheeks. He wrapped the baby in a warm blanket and gently closed the grave while reciting Şûrah al-Fâtihah for his departed



wife. Witnessing this wondrous and divine event, those around him were left amazed and overwhelmed by the profound manifestation of Allah's mercy.

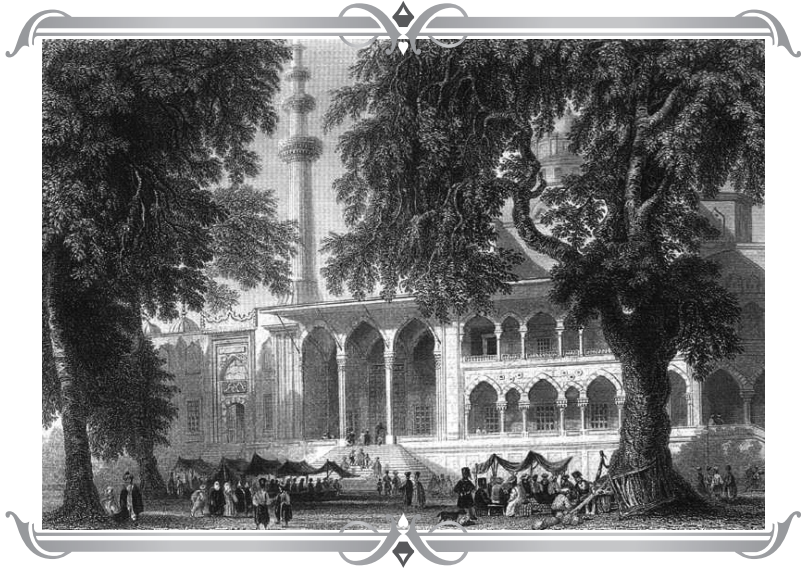
With immense gratitude and reverence, the father glorified and praised Allah. He prostrated with moist eyes, expressing both sorrow over his wife's passing and boundless joy for the miraculous gift of his son.

Indeed, the life of **Meyyit-zâde** stands as a testament to the profound wisdom and divine mercy of Allah. His miraculous survival and subsequent upbringing into a renowned scholar showcase the extraordinary power and grace of the Almighty.

Just as Allah prevented the fire from burning Prophet Ibrâhîm عليه السلام and created Prophet Jesus عليه السلام without a human father, the birth of Meyyit-zâde from a deceased mother was a manifestation of Allah's boundless ability to bestow blessings beyond human comprehension. This miraculous event was a result of his father's pure and sincere intention, which was met with divine favor.

**Power, strength, and greatness belong to Allah alone.**





## RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY

The Ottoman state operated under the rule of law based on core Islamic principles, establishing a government where the legal system prevailed over individual whims. This achievement was built on two key elements:

1. The laws in the Ottoman state were not arbitrary decisions made by rulers.

While there were activities such as *ijtihâd* (mental exertion when offering a legal opinion) and *qiyâs* (analogy), the jurists were bound by the logic and objectives of divine laws. This meant that all legal practitioners, including the head of state, had no authority to introduce laws favoring or opposing any individual or group. Those in power were obliged to adhere to legal regulations, which were objective in their contents. For instance, the judgment to apprehend Fâtih Sultan Mehmed and amputate his arm serves as a clear example. The alignment between the political will and divine laws ensured the legitimacy of their actions, and legitimacy was measured by this conformity.

2. In Islam, the law is determined by religious legal rulings (*fatâwâ*; sing. *fatwâ*), which must be rooted in the Quran and Sunnah and serve the common good. In the Ottoman state, those who issued legal rulings held religious-based authority while also possessing political jurisdiction. The shaykh al-Islam, as the deputy of the ruler known as “caliph,” ranked above the grand vizier, the deputy of the ruler known as “sultan.” This hierarchical structure was fundamental to the administration and persisted until the fall of the state.

The shaykh al-Islams in the Ottoman state held their positions for life, similar to the sultans, and were rarely dismissed for issuing unacceptable legal rulings. Any removals usually resulted from extreme old age or health-related issues, in contrast to the number of deposed sultans. While political authority could lead to the killings of viziers, the same fate rarely befell the shaykh al-Islams, except for a few cases involving bribery throughout 623 years of Ottoman history.

Despite being human and prone to error, the shaykh al-Islam could make mistakes or be influenced by political maneuvers. In recent periods, it was seldom observed that the political authority pressured this office to issue unjust legal rulings. However, exceptions did occur, like the unauthorized legal ruling leading to the deposition of Sultan Abdulhamîd Khan. These exceptions were not the fault of the legal system but rather of the political authority.

In general, the Ottoman legal order effectively sought to prevent administrators from deviating from the Quran and Sunnah. The shaykh al-Islam wielded the authority to dethrone even the sultan who appointed him, as long as the reason was rooted in religious grounds. As the head of the hierarchy in the Ottoman state, the shaykh al-Islam ensured the supremacy of law while also directing and, when necessary, controlling the will of the sultan. Thus, many shaykh al-Islams in Ottoman history issued legal rulings that did not align with the desires of powerful rulers, yet they retained their positions. **Kamâl Pashazâde** serves as a notable example in this regard.





*The Grand Mufti Who Resided on the Throne of  
Knowledge and Wisdom*

## **SHAYKH AL-ISLAM KAMÂL PASHAZÂDE**

*(1468/9-1534)*

He was the most well-known Ottoman shaykh al-Islam.

This distinguished individual was **Shamsaddîn Ahmad Chelebi**, one of the leading figures of the entire Muslim world at the time. His father was **Shujâ'uddîn Sulaymân Bey**, and his grandfather was **Kamâl Pasha**, who lived during the reign of Fâtih. He was remembered as **Kamâl Pashazâde**, or **Ibn Kamâl Pasha**, in reference to his grandfather.

Coming from a family with a background in both senior-official and scholarly classes, Kamâl Pashazâde received a balanced upbringing as a soldier and a great scholar. However, as an adolescent, he developed a deep passion for knowledge, dedicating his time and energy day and night to scholarly pursuits. As a result, he decided to leave his military service and commit himself entirely to academic endeavors. He once explained the reason behind this choice, and some sources narrate his words as follows:



“We were on a campaign with Sultan **Bâyazîd Khan**, accompanied by the vizier **Ibrahim Pasha** and the renowned commander Evranosoğlu. The respect and esteem for Evranosoğlu were such that no other commander dared to stand in his way or sit ahead of him in the assemblies. However, at that moment, a humble scholar, dressed in worn-out clothing, arrived and was seated above the commander. I was utterly surprised that no one said or did anything to prevent it. I asked those next to me:

«–Who is this person that went and sat ahead of commander Evranosoğlu?»

«–He is **Molla Lutfî**, a scholar and virtuous person!»

«–How much does he get paid?» I asked.

«–Thirty dirhams», they said.

Astonished, I said:

«–How could a person in this rank be given priority over such an unrivaled commander?»

They then said:

«–**The ulema are regarded as such because of the exaltedness of the religious disciplines they have mastered. Otherwise, the pashas and commanders, already imbued with faith, wisdom, and decency, will not accept the contrary!.**».

Feeling that my qualifications would not be as good as these commanders but could excel in the field of knowledge, I left the military, devoting my full attention to education.”

After this decision, Kamâl Pashazâde reached a high level of scholarly attainment, which came to be expressed by the phrase *farîd al-aşr* (unexcelled in his century). After the passing of **Zenbilli Ali Efendi**, he became the nineteenth Shaykh al-Islam of the Ottoman state.



As one of the rare figures in history, Kamâl Pashazâde possessed a very different quality from other shaykh al-Islams. He was known for issuing legal injunctions not only to people but also to the jinn, earning him the title of *Mufî al-Thaqalayn*, or ‘one who gives rulings to humans and the jinn’.



Tashköprizâde writes:

“He made the scholars before him forgotten. He restored the foundation of knowledge.”

Kamâl Pashazâde, in his youth, was compared to Sâdaddîn Taftâzânî and Sayyid Sharîf Jurjânî, two of the greats of the ulema. He was acknowledged as *Mu‘allim al-Awwal* (“The First Teacher”) among the Ottoman ulema for his scholarly abilities. Ebussuûd Efendi is also mentioned as *Mu‘allim al-Thânî* (“The Second Teacher”).

Kamâl Pashazâde excelled in almost all fields of knowledge, thanks to his superior skill and competence. He thoroughly analyzed and resolved matters, authoring treatises on various subjects. As a result, he became, in the words of his time, **“brilliant and renowned among the learned in every field”** (*her fende fâzıl ve fuzalâ-yı nâm-dar*).

What set him apart from other scholars was his ability to turn knowledge into wisdom, elevating the realm of his heart to the level of *wilâyah*, or ‘spiritual authority bestowed on a person by virtue of their intimacy with Allah’.

In the span of a day, Kamâl Pashazâde would issue several legal rulings, engage in study sessions and discussions on various subjects, give lessons to his students, and write a short work. This led some to describe him as follows:

*“You are either an angel or a spirit in human form! For it is not possible for a person to acquire such superior virtues.”*

In addition to being a robust and profound scholar, Kamâl Pashazâde also distinguished himself as a great historian, writer, and poet. His three hundred or so works, primarily written in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish, mostly in the form of treatises, bear testimony to this.

Kamâl Pashazâde adopted the *hikamî* style in his poems and wrote beautiful couplets such as the following:

*It is your destiny that takes you to different places, even if you ascend to the heavens, destiny will find you!*

*Giving the pickaxe to your own desires,*

*Do not let anyone dig a well on your path!*

*Everyone who digs a well in someone else’s path,*

*Falls into the well with their face down!*



*The incompetent becomes the adversary of the competent,  
Every Aḥmad finds his Abû Jahl!  
Since a person's life is destined to end,  
It is better to die on the path of struggle!*



Kamâl Pashazâde was a notable figure, known for both his scholarly identity and his sound views on social issues.

He played a crucial role in preparing Yavuz's religious justifications for his military expedition to Persia, showcasing his prudence and gaining appreciation from the Sultan. Being a historian as well, he understood Shâh Ismâ'îl's intentions within the limits of Yavuz's vulnerability. Shâh Ismâ'îl's disastrous massacres after the destruction of the Aq Qoyunlu State revealed his true intentions when he had the opportunity.

Kamâl Pashazâde described Shâh Ismâ'îl's actions as follows:

*"He deprived the great cities under the dome of Islam from the lights of the Shariah, filled them with the darkness of oppression, misguidance, adultery, and reprehensible innovations, resulting in the martyrdom of many good people and the destruction of their madrasahs and mosques."*

He declared that the war to remove the dagger that Shâh Ismâ'îl had stabbed into the bosom of Islam was a *jihâd*.

Additionally, Kamâl Pashazâde participated in the Egyptian campaign alongside Yavuz Sultan Selîm Khan. Upon conquering Egypt, he liberated the lands of Khayrbak and Egypt. During their return, an incident occurred where mud splashed from Kamâl Pashazâde's horse, staining Yavuz's kaftan. This incident became famous due to the Sultan's apt response. The Sultan requested to be buried with the muddy robe, stating that the mud from the hoof of the scholar's horse was an honor for him.



Kâmâl Pashazâde was highly sensitive when it came to religious matters and dedicated great efforts to protect the principles of faith. He played a crucial role in maintaining peace and tranquility by imposing necessary punish-





ments on individuals like **Molla Kâbız**, who disrupted the minds and creedal beliefs of the people, plunging society into crisis.

Molla Kâbız claimed to be a Muslim but denied the virtue of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ by showing no importance to his character and honor. He spread mischief within the Muslim community and was eventually killed for his actions. However, the decision to hold him accountable was not made indiscriminately. **Kamâl Pashazâde** and **Sâdullâh Sâdî Efendi**, the qadi of Istanbul, first listened to Kâbız in the Ottoman council. During these discussions, their ideas were systematically refuted, and their crimes were revealed. Kâbız was given the chance to repent, and it was declared that he would be pardoned and released if he did so. Despite this opportunity, Kâbız remained obstinate, and due to his defiance, he was deemed deserving of punishment by death.

The following verse written by Ibn Kamâl Pasha about corrupt and evil people is well-known:

*The Shariah is the glorious palace,  
Truth is its property, an unfaltering structure.  
Whoever moves the stone of the moment,  
It is advisable to place your head on the path...*

Kamâl Pashazâde's close and pleasant relationship with Yavuz continued with Kânûnî Sultan Sulaymân Khan. This was evident in how he put himself in danger and departed from convention by reporting a matter directly to the Sultan, which should have been presented to the Grand Vizier, in order to protect a person from the religious institution (*ilmiye*).

He was known for his piety, intelligence, and quick-wittedness, and he lived according to the Shariah. He had a forgiving nature and never held grudges. When Kânûnî left the decision of punishing a scholar who tried to humiliate Kamâl Pashazâde to him, he chose to grant the person amnesty upon the request of someone he loved.

During his reign, Kamâl Pashazâde worked tirelessly to prevent the spread of Bâṭinî sects in the Ottoman lands, particularly those influenced by Iran. He aimed to counter the Bâṭinîs' misleading attempts to satisfy the yearning of those seeking truth and reality. To achieve this, he introduced people to the authentic path of Sufism, which he understood as the essence of the Sha-



riah, and provided valuable insights to ensure harmony between the Shariah and Sufi practices. In doing so, he outlined the characteristics of a true shaykh as follows:

1. Having sufficient knowledge to dispel religious and worldly doubts of their disciples.
2. Abstaining from excessive love and attachment to the material world and not being enslaved by their own desires.
3. Being self-sufficient and not coveting the possessions or means available to their disciples or others.
4. Ensuring that all their actions and words are in compliance with the Shariah.

If a person claims to be a shaykh but lacks these qualities, then they are an imposter. The primary duty of a shaykh and their disciple is to have a thorough understanding of the Shariah, which comprises the commands and prohibitions of Allah and His Messenger ﷺ.

If a shaykh possesses these four conditions, then their guidance and counsel are acceptable, and such a person is considered a true representative of Allah and His Messenger ﷺ. Otherwise, they are nothing but followers of Satan.

However, Kamâl Pashazâde acknowledged that Sufism is a vast and profound field. He emphasized that discussing these matters without a strong foundation in both the Shariah and Sufism would not lead to accurate conclusions. Regarding **Ibn ‘Arabî**, Kamâl Pashazâde is known for giving the following legal ruling:

*“He who denies him has erred. And if he persists, he has gone astray. Some of the issues he deals with in his works are in agreement with the Noble Quran and the Sunnah in their literal and metaphorical sense. Some parts are only intelligible to people who have undergone mystical unveiling and possess hidden truths, but concealed to the understanding of those who remain on the outward.”*

On the other hand, Kamâl Pashazâde described a faithful dream related to **Rûmî**’s *Mathnawî* as follows:

“In my dream, I saw the Messenger of Allah ﷺ holding the *Mathnawî* in his hand, and he said:





«There are many spiritual books of note. But no book like the *Mathnawî* was written among them»”

This demonstrates how Ibn Kamâl Pasha, who held the official position as shaykh al-Islam, while opposing the mistakes and errors made in the name of Sufism, also aspired for the continuation of the authentic Sufi path. The following couplet, where he defines Sufism, expresses this sentiment:

*Sufism is to surpass the ego,  
By not getting hurt by the words of others!*

Kamâl Pashazâde’s approach was not to critique the entirety of Sufism as a spiritual path but to address and oppose the false manifestations of Sufism that deviated from its true essence in practice. He valued the genuine teachings of Sufism that promoted spiritual growth and adherence to the principles of the Shariah.

Kamâl Pashazâde’s scholarly credentials and esteemed position did not diminish his humility and his deep connection to Sufi values. This is evident in his final testament, where he expressed his humble wishes for his funeral and burial:

*“When I have passed away, I request someone to recite the Quran modestly and contemplatively and to reiterate the Islamic declaration of faith. When my soul is taken, have fourteen people say seventy thousand times the Islamic declaration of faith and confer their blessings on me. And gift those people money. Have a righteous person who has never washed a dead body before washing my corpse. Do not announce my death except from the minarets of the Mosque of Sultan Muḥammad.*

*Ensure that my funeral prayer be performed as they would for a dervish and do not allow anything contrary to the Prophetic way. Have my grave be in a Muslim cemetery close to the road and in a high place. But do not make the top of the grave high. And erect an unprocessed stone to serve as a marker... When they bury me, they will not sacrifice an animal; instead, let them distribute money to the poor. I have bequeathed five thousand silver coins for the Hajj; give it to someone and have them perform the pilgrimage. Let them accept and fulfill my last will and testament...”*



His last prayer, “O *Aḥad* (the One unitive Creator)! *Najjinâ mimmâ nakhâf* (Protect us from what we fear),” was also dated using numerology for his death.

**May Allah’s mercy be upon him!**

**O Lord! We beseech You to bestow upon the Ummah of Muḥammad ﷺ such great personalities in the field of knowledge and to safeguard the religion from all kinds of deceptions, reprehensible innovations, and distortions!**

**Âmîn!..**





## AHMAD CEVDET PASHA

(1823-1895)

Ahmad Cevdet Pasha was a prominent figure of the Ottoman state, born in 1823 in the Bulgarian town of Lovech. His real name was Ahmad, and his sobriquet “Cevdet” was bestowed upon him by the poet Sulaymân Fahim Efendi during his student years.

From a young age, Ahmad Cevdet Pasha dedicated himself to seeking knowledge. He received lessons in various fields from well-known scholars of his time and mastered Arabic, Persian, French, and Bulgarian. Remarkably, he excelled to the extent that he was deemed worthy of teaching even while still a student, a testament to his diligence and success.

Additionally, Ahmad Cevdet Pasha displayed great talent in poetry and literature, obtaining licensure to teach the *Mathnawî*. His erudition and intellectual prominence were the results of his exceptional capabilities and untiring efforts. He passionately read books during his leisure time, and religious holidays were the only periods when he allowed himself a break from his studies.

Having perfected his outward knowledge and self, Cevdet Pasha also recognized the importance of spiritual education. He actively participated in the lessons of **Kuşadalı İbrahim Efendi**, a renowned Sufi of his time. The motivation that drove him to become a scholar originated from the saints and their wisdom, insight, and inspirational teachings.

As a youth, Ahmad Cevdet Pasha aspired to follow the Sufi path and become a dervish in the lodge of Azîz Mahmûd Hudâyî. With this intention, he wholeheartedly applied himself. However, after deep contemplation, the lodge's shaykh directed him in the following manner:

**“Dear son! Because Allah has blessed you with remarkable abilities, important duties await you in the outward Islamic disciplines and government service. You will be under our protection on this path. It is hoped that the Ummah of Muḥammad ﷺ will greatly benefit from you this way!..”**

This guidance marked a turning point in the life of Ahmad Cevdet Pasha. It led him not to remain a disciple confined within the lodge but to utilize his potential to carry out vital services while being amongst the people, in the way of Allah.

With his cultivated inward and outward knowledge, Ahmad Cevdet Pasha commenced his service as the judge of the Përmet district, under the chief qadiship of Rumelia, at the age of twenty-two. Just a year later, he assumed the position of head professor in Istanbul and began lecturing in the city's mosques.

Although Ahmad Cevdet Pasha initially desired to “earn enough to dedicate himself in the service of knowledge while living in the madrasah,” he found himself drawn into political matters out of necessity and gradually developed an interest in them. Consequently, his vast knowledge, power of persuasion, and wisdom led to him being entrusted with essential duties within the Ottoman state, eventually earning him the position of **Minister of Justice**.

One of Cevdet Pasha's most significant contributions as a minister was his remarkable astuteness and success in creating the legal text known as «*Ma-jallah al-Aḥkâm al-‘Adliyyah*».

During Cevdet Pasha's tenure as the Minister of Justice, there was a period of upheaval where there was a strong desire to modernize Ottoman insti-



tutions in line with European models. This influence extended to the judicial system, and some advocated adopting Western laws into the Ottoman legal framework, which had been shaped for centuries by its own customs and religious principles. However, Ahmad Cevdet Pasha, displaying great prudence and foresight, firmly opposed this trend based on his expertise in the field. He understood the potential pitfalls that such an approach might entail and courageously prevented the adoption of this misguided path.

Thanks to Cevdet Pasha's dedicated efforts, the «*Majallah al-Ahkâm al-'Adliyyah*», or simply «*Majallah*», came into existence. This monumental achievement was prepared by a scholarly committee under his leadership.

As it is known, Islamic law is rooted in a case-based legal system, where every possible scenario is connected to *ijtihâd* (exerting one's mental efforts in reaching a legal decision). This system ensures that Islamic law can meet the needs of humanity until the end of time. Thus, innovation must always be evaluated and judged within the framework of Islamic principles. To maintain this flexibility, the gates of *ijtihâd* were left open in Islamic law and were declared to remain open until the Day of Judgment. However, this practice of *ijtihâd* only applies to matters where there is no *naşş* (an authoritative text, such as the Quran, from which a clear legal injunction is derived). Otherwise, if an all-encompassing *ijtihâd* were allowed based on the *naşş*, the content of the religion would change from century to century, risking a fate similar to that of other religions. Therefore, the Islamic legal maxim, "With the change of time, it cannot be denied that the laws are changed," applies solely to issues where there is no clear commandment from authoritative texts.

The teaching and learning of law, which constitutes a fundamental pillar of life and social order, is highly encouraged in Islam. The well-known Prophetic narration states: «If Allah wishes good for a person, He will make him a *faqîh* (a person possessing profound understanding; also, specifically, a Muslim jurist) in the religion». Furthermore, it is mentioned that a *mujtahid* (an individual qualified to engage in *ijtihâd*) who meets the necessary conditions will be rewarded with two good deeds if his *ijtihâd* is sound, or one good deed otherwise. These legal principles have paved the way for various *ijtihâds* and scholarly activities in the field of law throughout the history of Islam. However, over time, the vast number of *ijtihâds* made it increasingly challenging to identify the most suitable one for any given issue.



As a result, some statesmen, influenced by a distorted mentality, sought to address this challenge by translating, importing, and applying the famous **Napoleonic Civil Code**, developed in France during the time of Napoleon. Their efforts in this direction were initiated during the Tanzîmat period.

Ahmad Cevdet Pasha, actively engaged in the negotiations and debates surrounding this issue, opposed the decision based on his religious conviction. He recognized that instead of getting lost in the countless *ijtihâds* in Islamic law, there should be a clear, unambiguous, and concise legal text readily available to judges. Ahmad Cevdet Pasha confidently responded:

**“–This can also be developed in our legal system!”**

At that time, the extent of this deterioration was not yet fully understood, and Ahmad Cevdet Pasha successfully hindered the progressive schemes aimed at reshaping the country in the likeness of Europe. He accomplished this by authoring the *Majallah* with the support of a few statesmen and particularly **Sultan Abdulazîz**.

Islam is an evolutionary rather than revolutionary religion. The development brought about by the *Majallah* marked a radical transformation in the field of Islamic law. However, since all the rulings were compiled with a Shariah content and derived from the *ijtihâds* of previous *mujtahid* scholars, there were no objections to its conception.

On the other hand, though this change implied a form of *tafîiq al-madhâhib*, which means the synthesis of Islamic schools of legal thought, it was not deemed objectionable by the esteemed scholars of that time. The prohibition of such a synthesis arises from the concern that it might lead to a selective collation of convenient rulings, resulting in a perversion of religion. In this case, however, an *ijtihâd* was preferred not for its ease but for its suitability for the common good in that particular era.

According to historical records, the *Majallah* was implemented without violating any Islamic principle. Although it was based on Ḥanafî fiqh, legal maxims were carefully extracted from all other schools of Islamic law and included accordingly.

Prior to the *Majallah*, rulings were established based on the *ijtihâds* of the respective schools of thought in different regions, such as Shâfi‘î *ijtihâds* in Shâfi‘î regions and Ḥanafî *ijtihâds* in Ḥanafî regions. However, after the *Majallah*’s introduction, its application became uniform across all regions.



The creation of the *Majallah* was an extraordinary legal achievement that took around ten years to complete and consisted of 1851 articles. It is considered one of the most magnificent works on law in history. **Despite the fact that the emergence of the *Majallah* prevented the adoption of the French civil code, the honorable and fair-minded scholars of the French Academy of Sciences recognized its significance and awarded Ahmad Cevdet Pasha a gold medal as the head of the society responsible for its production.**

Some researchers may omit the *Majallah* from Cevdet Pasha's individual works because it was written by a commission. However, it should be recognized that such a monumental work would not have been possible without his pivotal role. Before the preparations for the *Majallah* began, Cevdet Pasha had to contend with advocates of the French Civil Code, including the French ambassador **De Bourée**, and face opposition from traitors like the Grand Vizier **Âli Pasha**. Therefore, his idea to create a legal text suited to the Ottomans' own structure instead of the French Civil Code, as well as his persistent and unwavering commitment to completing the *Majallah* until the very end, were crucial contributions to its authorship. Furthermore, the *Majallah* holds the distinction of being the first codified law prepared in the field of Islamic jurisprudence in all Muslim-ruled states.

Although the legality of the *Majallah* was abolished when the Swiss Civil Code was translated and put into force on October 4, 1926, it continued to be applied as a civil law in modern secular courts in several countries that separated from the Ottoman state after 1918. This includes Lebanon until 1932, Syria until 1949, Iraq until 1953, and Israel until 1968. The *Majallah* also remained in effect in Cyprus and Jordan for an extended period.

The *Majallah* was such a monumental work that, even after it lost its legal validity, its principles remained applicable as "general principles of law." Specifically, the first hundred articles of the *Majallah*, comprising the section titled *aḥkâm al-'umûmiyyah* ('general legal judgments'), included some notable principles:

**1. Custom is a source of law (*Âdet muhkemdir*).**

This principle continues to be relevant as a general guideline in resolving disputes arising from unspecified aspects of agreements. When parties encounter such issues, the prevailing custom in that region is taken as the basis for resolution since the parties are likely to be aware of the customary practice.

**2. A poor example cannot be considered representative (*Sû-i misâl, misâl olmaz*).**

This legal and logical principle holds true even today. It indicates that an illegitimate act cannot serve as a precedent to legitimize similar actions. For instance, if a thief justifies his theft by citing another thief's actions, it does not absolve him of his crime.

**3. If there is no evidence, a person is considered innocent (*Berâet-i zimmet, asıldır*).**

This principle presumes innocence until proven otherwise.

**4. Certainty is not overruled by doubt (*Şek ile yakîn zâil olmaz*).**

This principle means that something established as certain cannot be dismissed by subsequent doubts. It is applicable across various legal judgments, including worship, interpersonal transactions, and criminal law. In the Quranic passage, we find that «... *and [since] they have no knowledge whatever thereof, they follow nothing but surmise: yet, behold, never can surmise take the place of truth ...*» (Şûrah Yûnus, 36).

If someone doubts whether they have invalidated their ritual ablution after performing it, they are considered to have ablution. However, if there is doubt as to whether or not one has performed ablution after invalidating it, then the person is deemed not to have performed ablution.

Similarly, if a person remits the debt of the person to whom he is a creditor (saying that you do not owe me anything) and then doubts it and says that he is in debt, the remission remains valid, and the debt is cleared.

**5. The lesser of the two evils is to be preferred (*Ehven-i şerreyn ihtiyâr olunur*).**

If someone is compelled to choose between two evils, they should opt for the lesser evil and avoid the greater one. Here, evil refers to actions that are not in accordance with religious law.

Fratricide, an issue much discussed in the Ottoman state tradition, was explained by citing these and similar laws.

**6. In order to eliminate a public harm, a private harm is to be preferred (*Zarar-ı âmmı def için zarar-ı hâs ihtiyâr olunur*).**



In certain situations, it may be necessary to choose a private harm to prevent a greater public harm. For instance, untrained physicians should not perform medical duties to avoid harming patients. Likewise, when prices rise excessively, the qadi may take measures to keep them stable by consulting experts.

**7. The removal of an evil precedes the realization of a good (*Def‘-i mefâsid celb-i menâfiden evlâdur*).**

When the occurrence of good requires committing an evil, it is better to abandon the benefit to avoid causing harm. The importance of avoiding evil is considered more significant than pursuing benefits. However, if a greater good can be achieved, the occurrence of some harm may be tolerated.

If a blacksmith’s shop were to be opened in the vicinity of a person’s house and causes considerable harm to the household due to it, this may be used as grounds to close the shop.

**8. When there is difficulty in a matter, ease comes (*Bir iş dıyk oldukta müttesî olur*).**

This principle is similar in content to the previous one. In situations of exceptional difficulty, facilitation is provided until the matter is alleviated. For example, someone struggling to repay a debt might be granted more time to make the payment. Once the difficulty is resolved, the original judgment is reinstated.

**9. Difficulty begets ease (*Meşakkat teysîri celbeder*).**

This legal maxim is one of the most fundamental principles in *fiqh*, and it plays a significant role in the dispensations and judgments made by Muslim jurists. This principle allows for certain concessions and facilitations when faced with difficulties that would otherwise be cumbersome or impractical.

For instance, consider the situation where it is challenging to avoid rain-water splashing on one’s clothing while walking on the streets. Due to the difficulty of avoiding it, such an occurrence is considered pardonable.

Another example of a derivative judgment based on this principle is the acceptance of women’s testimony in cases where men cannot be sure or where specific knowledge is required.

However, it is crucial to understand that for this principle to lead to facilitation, the difficulty must genuinely differ from the normal circumstances one faces during worship. For example, the challenges of performing ritual ablution for prayer on cold days or fasting on long and hot days do not warrant any facilitation. Again, in a matter about which there is conclusive evidence, and if that thing is strictly forbidden, the contrary cannot be done under the pretext of its difficulty.

Ahmad Cevdet Pasha was not only a leading scholar of law in his time but also an esteemed figure in history and other fields. His contributions spanned various domains, showcasing his scholarly and intellectual caliber.

As an Ottoman chronicler, he authored the twelve-volume work *Târîh-i Cevdet* on Ottoman history, along with source books like *Tazâkir* and *Mârûzât*, which demonstrate his extensive knowledge in history and its significance as a philosophy of history. His approach to history earned him comparisons to the renowned historian Arnold J. Toynbee, leading some researchers to call him the “Toynbee of the Ottomans.”

His cherished work *Qışaş al-Anbiyâ’*, written with an appreciation of the Shariah, became a primary source for subsequent similar books.

Ahmad Cevdet Pasha’s legacy extended to his daughter, **Fatima Aliyye Khanum**, who was recognized as one of the exceptional Ottoman women. She, like her father, demonstrated erudition through her written works.

As a distinguished figure of his time, Ahmad Cevdet Pasha represented the epitome of the last Ottoman ulema, displaying scholarly depth, contemplative breadth, and moral fortitude. He remained loyal to Sultan Abdulhamîd Khan until the very end, consistently opposing the disgraceful events under the Tanzîmat and Constitutional Monarchy. His integrity and principles were evident in his role in the trial of Mithat Pasha in Yıldız as the Minister of Justice.

Beyond his public role, he was also a devoted husband and a caring father to his children. Despite his weighty state duties, he did not neglect his family, demonstrating a profound sense of justice and fairness. He lived a humble life with his wife, son, and two daughters.

When Ahmad Cevdet Pasha passed away in 1895, having witnessed the reigns of four sultans (Abdulmajîd, Abdulazîz, Murâd V, and Abdulhamîd II),





he left behind a splendid legacy. His funeral was attended with great reverence and respect, a rare sight for hostile pashas during that era. He had won the hearts of the people through his public services and enduring works. He was laid to rest in the courtyard of the Fatih Mosque amidst heartfelt prayers.

The epitaph on his tomb reads:

*He was the Ibn Kamâl of our century*

*Alas! He left the world*

**May Allah's mercy be upon him!**

**The need for distinguished personalities like Ahmad Cevdet Pasha in politics and scholarship remains even in the present day. May Allah bestow material and spiritual support, and grant the reemergence of such illustrious figures to benefit humanity once again.**

Âmîn!..





## FROM LAND TO SEA

To play a leading role in the world, a state must not only assert its dominance over strategically important lands but also establish control over the seas. Islamic history reflects this need, as the rapid conquests in Turkistan and North Africa were soon accompanied by an expansion into the seas. During the time of ‘Uthmân رضي الله عنه, the governor of Syria, Mu‘âwiyah, successfully conquered the island of Cyprus, marking a significant milestone in this direction.

Expanding into the seas was not only seen as a strategic move but also aligned with the cause of spreading Islam. Prophet Muḥammad صلى الله عليه وسلم encouraged and motivated his followers to engage in naval battles by highlighting the exceptional reward and significance of such endeavors. He said:

*“A battle at sea is equivalent in reward to ten battles on land. A person who is seasick during a battle at sea is like a person who writhes in the wound he received in the way of Allah”* (Ibn Mâjah, Jihâd, 10).

Elsewhere, the Prophet Muḥammad صلى الله عليه وسلم once woke up in **Umm Harâm**’s house with a smile, and when she asked why, he said:



*“Some of my Ummah were riding on the green sea, like rulers on their thrones. They were on their way to engage in a sea battle in the way of Allah. That is why I smiled (pleasantly)”* (Bukhârî, Jihâd, 3).

The Ottoman state, with its purpose of spreading and elevating Islam, recognized the need for a navy during its formative years. This navy would enable the Ottomans to advance through Rumelia and besiege Byzantium from the rear. An anecdotal account relates how **Sulaymân Pasha**, the conqueror of Rumelia, used a makeshift raft to cross the Dardanelles, inspired by a Quranic passage recited by Prophet Noah ﷺ as he boarded his ship (Şûrah Hûd, 41).

**“In Allah’s Name shall be its course and its berthing. Surely my Lord is All-forgiving”** (Şûrah Hûd, 41). Afterward, he stepped on the European side with this Quranic passage as his litany.

However, during the initial period and even later stages of the Ottoman state, the primary focus was on completing conquests on land. Consequently, there was limited emphasis on developing a substantial navy, which led to challenges when it came to intervening effectively during the fall of the ‘Umayyad Caliphate of Andalusia due to the lack of a large navy.

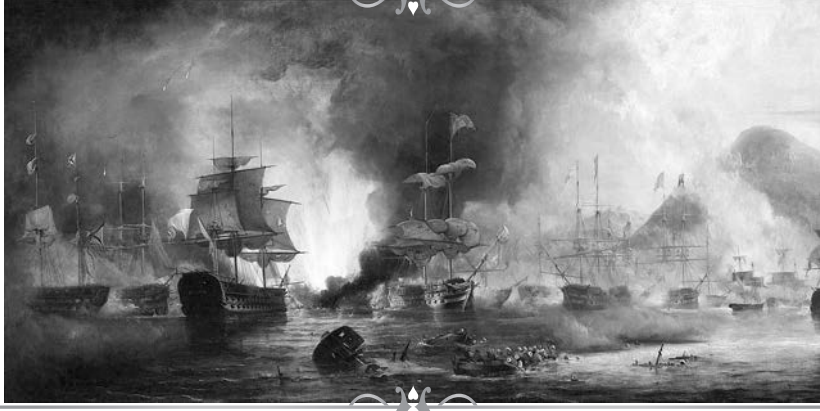
Similarly, during the reign of Yavuz Sultan Selîm, the conquest of Egypt was predominantly accomplished through land operations, and thus, a large navy was not seen as an immediate necessity.

However, as the Ottoman state’s land conquests expanded both in the east and the west under the reign of Kânûnî Sultan Sulayman, the need arose to safeguard these newly acquired territories from potential sea-based attacks. Consequently, the Ottoman state established the largest navy of its time. This era also witnessed the emergence of skilled naval captains known as *deryâ kurdu* (“sea wolves”) and a series of admirals who represented the Ottoman naval power.

The foremost among them was undoubtedly **Barbarossa Hayraddîn Pasha**, one of history’s most extraordinary admirals.







*A great hero who performed legendary feats at sea with his faith,  
turning the Mediterranean into a sphere dominated by Turks*

## **BARBAROSSA HAYRADDÎN PASHA**

*(1466-1546)*

Barbarossa Hayreddin Pasha, whose real name was Khidr, was undeniably one of the Ottoman state's greatest sea captains, responsible for establishing dominance in the seas. Sultan Sulayman the Magnificent bestowed upon him the nickname "Hayraddîn" to honor his noble services to both the state and religion. The Europeans, on the other hand, referred to him as "Barbarossa," meaning red-bearded.

Hayraddîn Pasha's father, Yâ'qûb Agha, hailed from a courageous cavalryman lineage and was among the families settled in Mytilene by Fatih Sultan Mehmed Khan. The esteemed admiral had three siblings: two older brothers named Ishâq and Oruç, as well as a younger brother, Ilyâs.



Before embracing the banner of *jihâd*, the three brothers, Ilyas, Oruç, and Khidr, were involved in maritime trade, a venture that brought considerable risks in the Mediterranean. However, their lives took a dramatic turn when Oruç was captured by the pirates of Rhodes. Determined to free his brother, Khidr spared no effort and expended substantial sums of money as ransom. Despite his attempts, the treacherous pirates did not honor their word and prolonged Oruç's captivity. In an attempt to force him to convert to Christianity, they even sent a priest to him, but Oruç fiercely defended his faith, stating:

“–How can I leave a true religion and become a member of a false one!”

His steadfastness struck a blow to the heedless pirates, infuriating them. Enraged by his reply, the pirates said:

“–Then let Muḥammad save you” and chained him like a criminal to a boat as a punishment.

With unwavering faith and trust in Allah, Oruç sought refuge and confidently declared:

“–You shall see how my Prophet will come to my aid!”

Miraculously, after some time, a group of men, wearing white kaftans and green turbans, appeared and were seen by the unbelievers. These mysterious men unchained Oruç and set him free into the vast sea, liberating him from his captivity. This divine intervention showcased the blessings of his faith, submission, and trust in Allah.

Following this incident, Oruç and his brother Khidr embarked on a relentless struggle against the Mediterranean pirates. Many daring men soon rallied behind them to join their cause, and they proclaimed:

**“–It is time to embark on the sacred campaign; let’s go, in the Name of Allah!”**

Their call to the path of Allah gradually gained momentum. Oruç and Khidr achieved remarkable victories over Genoese, French, Spanish, and Venetian ships, which spread their power and prestige throughout Europe, keeping emperors awake at night. Eventually, these fearless men conquered Algiers and established a state there, solidifying their legacy as courageous leaders and defenders of their faith.

Oruç, affectionately known as “Baba” by his loyal followers, ascended to the title of Sultan of Algiers, a testament to his exceptional leadership and bravery. Fearless and undeterred by danger, he and his brother Khidr showcased their heroism and valor in the face of adversaries. Together, their dynamic partnership melded Oruç’s warrior spirit with Khidr’s statesmanship, giving rise to a formidable power in the Mediterranean.



The two brothers, **Oruç** and **Khidr**, maintained close contact with **Yavuz Selîm Khan**, the Ottoman sultan at that time, seeking his blessings as a spiritual reinforcement. They exchanged various gifts, and Yavuz prayed for their success and protection in their endeavors.

With this spiritual support, Oruç, Khidr, and their naval soldiers fearlessly confronted their enemies. The mere mention of “*Allah, Allah!*” sent terror into the hearts of the Frank captains, who would flee in response, acknowledging the prowess of the Muslim forces.

As the days passed, their efforts resulted in significant victories, but unfortunately, Oruç was eventually martyred in a fierce battle with the Spaniards. Nevertheless, **Khidr** carried on the mission to spread and elevate the Word of Allah without interruption, taking control of the Mediterranean and continuing the sacred campaigns.

Khidr, distinguished by his appearance and prudence, quickly rose to prominence due to his natural abilities and foresight. He became one of the foremost figures in Ottoman history, playing a crucial role in the sixteenth-century era known as the “**Turkish century.**”

Oruç represented tremendous courage, transforming sea raids into a state power, while Khidr not only displayed bravery but also implemented precautionary measures, providing a sense of balance to their endeavors.

Following Oruç’s martyrdom, the Spaniards attempted to take advantage of the perceived loss of principal support and demanded that Khidr surrender the fortress of Algiers. However, he adamantly refused, declaring that he would not yield even a single pebble on their shores to the enemies of Muslims. With fierce determination, Khidr fought back, swiftly defeating the enemy fleet.



Khidr, being aware that the cause he inherited from his brother would weaken and wane if he pursued it alone, demonstrated great selflessness and foresight. In 1519, he sent a delegation to Sultan Yavuz Selîm Khan, offering his territories for Ottoman rule. Pleased with Khidr's sacrifice and commitment to preserving Islamic unity, Sultan Yavuz Selîm Khan appointed him as the Governor-General of Algiers. He bestowed upon Khidr a banner, two thousand Janissaries, artillery, and permission to recruit soldiers from Anatolia.

Throughout history, **three individuals** have exemplified remarkable passion and wisdom in their pursuit of Islamic unity, leaving behind memories of virtuous deeds and pious works.

The first among them was **Ḥasan** ﷺ, the grandson of the Prophet ﷺ. After serving as the Caliph for six months, he transferred leadership to Mu'âwiyah, aiming to prevent political unrest and the division of the Ummah, and to spare the masses from fighting and shedding Muslim blood.

**The second** individual is **Idrîs Bitlisî**, who united the eastern provinces with the Ottomans through a wave of love and diplomacy, without resorting to the sword. Despite receiving numerous privileges from Yavuz Sultan Selîm Khan, he made decisions after consulting the Ottoman Sultan.

**The third** figure is **Barbarossa Hayraddîn Pasha**, the ruler of Algerian territories and other regions. Rather than seeking personal authority and rule, he chose to integrate the lands under his command into the Ottoman province, driven by his commitment to Islamic unity. He became a devoted functionary of the great Ottoman state, preferring it over ruling a small country. His wise and insightful words to the ghazis, leaders, and naval soldiers reflect his dedication to the cause:

*"We must give the sword its due! Why should we remain alone in Algiers when we can give strength and support to Islam together with the Muslim caliph? Swift action must be taken against the Crusader force who are eager to take revenge against Muslims everywhere. We need a force to support us in this cause we have undertaken. This is essential for fulfilling our sacred duty of spreading and elevating the Word of Allah. As long as I am in this province, it is my wish that the Friday sermon should be read in the name of the Caliph, and coins minted in his honor. This necessitates annexation to that lofty Sultan of sultans. He is Sultan Selîm Khan, the beloved ruler of the Ottoman state."*

Upon receiving news of Khidr’s decision to submit to Ottoman rule and govern the territories, Yavuz Selîm Khan expressed great satisfaction, praising Khidr as one of his finest subjects. He wholeheartedly embraced Khidr’s actions and permitted him to rule over the lands, with sermons and coins bearing the Sultan’s name.

Khidr wasted no time and swiftly gathered all the seamen under his command, assembling a fleet of forty ships. With this newfound position and support, Khidr operated relentlessly, showing no mercy to his enemies. Even when the renowned **Charles V** dispatched **Andrea Doria** against him, this cruel and arrogant captain could not defeat Khidr. None dared to challenge him in the vast waters of the Mediterranean.

Khidr’s exploits in the Mediterranean spawned numerous legendary tales, transforming him into the symbol of a magnificent power that originated from humble beginnings and grew into a formidable state. His remarkable achievements with just a handful of loyal followers emphasized the key factor behind his victories, defying expectations and embodying the very truths experienced by esteemed personalities. The triumphs of Hayraddîn Pasha align with the profound realities mentioned in the Noble Quran:

كَمْ مِنْ فِئَةٍ قَلِيلَةٍ غَلَبَتْ فِئَةً كَثِيرَةً بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ

**“...How often a little company has overcome a numerous company...”** (Şûrah al-Baqarah, 249).

Enemy ships that encountered Hayraddîn Pasha’s banner had no choice but to either flee or surrender. Even the king of Spain, considering himself the natural owner of all undiscovered places in **America**, expressed his despair at his inability to thwart Barbarossa’s triumphs. His commanders shared in his helplessness, acknowledging that all their efforts proved futile against this legendary figure in the Mediterranean:

**“–We were all helpless against Barbarossa. Whatever we did, it was to no avail. He managed to defeat us every time. If one of us sets sail with any purpose, Barbarossa’s navy would be there, ready and waiting!..”**

The captains surrounding Barbarossa dared not plot against him or utter a single negative word, for they knew he possessed formidable intelligence, both material and mental. Swiftly taking action based on the intelligence he received, he foiled his enemies’ deceptions and schemes, earning their fear and respect.



Hayraddîn Pasha exemplified tremendous abilities and saintly qualities, pledging loyalty to both Kânûnî Sultan Sulaymân Khan and Yavuz Sultan Selîm Khan. Recognizing his spiritual rank, **Kânûnî Sultan Sulaymân Khan** held a fond regard for him. The Sultan once expressed his admiration, referring to Hayraddîn Pasha as a saint.

Despite such accolades, Hayraddîn Pasha remained humble, reminding others to «*Be humble like the earth so Allah may elevate your rank!*». He possessed a unique connection with divine inspiration, at times seeking guidance from Khidr ؑ or even the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. His dreams often revealed insights on conquering fortresses, tactics for naval battles, and enemy activities, including their secret plans, all of which played a pivotal role in his successes. It was even known that Hayraddîn Pasha would occasionally instruct his men during sea expeditions through his dreams.

For instance, when a captain named Aydın was about to embark on a naval expedition, Hayraddîn Pasha appeared to him in a dream and forewarned of an imminent attack:

“—Be careful! The enemy is behind you. They will launch an assault in the morning with fifteen ships. Do not worry. Plan a counterattack and advance toward them! Let me see you seize those ships and bring them to me!”

After waking up from his dream, Aydın performed ritual ablution and prayed. He recited the Quran, sent blessings upon the Prophet ﷺ, and began to wait. As he did not give orders to move, the other captains who had an excess of booty in their hands said that they could not fight against the enemy ships coming from behind due to their lack of mobility and suggested to continue sailing. Aydın then informed them of the orders he received from Hayraddîn Pasha in his dream. Shortly after, the enemy ships arrived, and, by Allah’s leave, they achieved victory.

Indeed, the stories and accounts of Hayraddîn Pasha’s bravery, administration, and spiritual prowess are not mere works of imagination but well-documented historical occurrences found in his memoir.

Hence, Hayraddîn Pasha’s leadership was not the sole reason for his popularity; he was also revered as a friend of Allah by his brave and conscientious soldiers. Witnessing his many wondrous feats, they rushed to fulfill his every order, showering him with admiration and respect.

In return for their loyalty and devotion, Hayraddîn Pasha displayed humility, faithfulness, mercy, and forgiveness toward the sea captains, ghazis,

and naval soldiers with whom he achieved success and victories. He treated them like benevolent fathers, nurturing their growth as warriors while striving for their spiritual development as perfect believers and monotheists. To address misunderstandings caused by various mistakes his captains and soldiers made, he utilized spiritual methods for remedy rather than resorting to external measures. Instead of holding minor issues against them, he welcomed them back into the ranks of warriors, avoiding fueling any incidents that led to separation and fragmentation. Even if he was disobeyed, he followed the path of reconciliation, urging everyone to forget about past disagreements and refrain from discussing them elsewhere.

His emphasis on unity, solidarity, and brotherhood ensured that empty and self-contentious disputes never prevailed among his men, as he knew how to unite their hearts in the right direction.

Apart from his spiritual qualities, Hayraddîn Pasha demonstrated unparalleled practical expertise in his field. He always utilized the most advanced technology of his time, ensuring that each ship he built surpassed the previous one in efficiency and craftsmanship. His navigation skills outshined those of his contemporaries, often defeating enemies before other captains even arrived. He viewed death as a noble rank in the sight of Allah, a cause for martyrdom that made the enemy fearful and forced them to flee.

Before embarking on a sea expedition, he would always beseech Allah for help and victory against the unbelievers:

***“O Allah! Help and grant me victory against the unbelievers! Make them so terrified that they will be afraid to open their eyes in front of us. Allow not the enemy to inflict harm on me, my naval soldiers, and my ships! Always show us strong and numerous in the eyes of the enemy! May my men not fear the unbelievers, and may their hearts be filled with courage and zeal!”***

And with the blessing of these lofty virtues, Allah helped Hayraddîn Pasha in many ways, as expressed in the couplet:

*If Allah is with a person as his helper  
No one can be against them, for they are like a king!*

He instilled much fear in the hearts of his enemies and achieved extraordinary victories.



In front of Algiers lay an island under Spanish control, boasting a formidable fortress. Despite the defensive measures the Spaniards took both from land and sea, Hayraddin Pasha conquered this strategic location with resolute determination. Upon hearing about this significant defeat, the king of Spain was overcome with despair, throwing himself off his throne and even attempting suicide. His advisors attempted to console him, reminding him as follows:

“–O your Highness! A fortress is just a pile of stone, and a ship is a piece of wood.”

However, the king’s condition worsened, and he ultimately succumbed to a heart attack upon learning of another victorious feat by Barbarossa.

The succeeding king, fueled by vengeance, joined forces with the priests, seeking a solution to their predicament. Their actions escalated the persecution of Andalusian Muslims, driven by vindictiveness and cruelty. The priests did not find the actions taken sufficient, saying:

“–O mighty king! Leave not any foreigner in our land! Especially considering that Muslims praying five times a day in congregation is very upsetting to us. It is a huge mistake to have them continue living in our country. In our books, it is written that no one is of any benefit to us but ourselves, which indicates how dangerous Muslims are to us. You ought to prohibit Muslims from worshipping hereon in. If you forbid not, it will be to the detriment of the Christians. The time will come when they will make the Christians here Muslim and conquer our entire land again. Especially if the Christian children of today become Muslims, this situation will not bring much good for you!”

Upon hearing these words from the clergy, the king immediately issued a series of edicts to carry out executions, saying:

“Woe to non-Christian Muslims!” and thus began his heinous acts.

The Muslims were being burned alive under the pretext that their souls were possessed by the devil, which therefore meant they denied the divinity of **Jesus** ﷺ. Western Christians, who today try to teach the world about humanity and civilization, have a hideous record in history beyond comprehension.

Hayraddin Pasha was overwhelmed with grief after learning of these heart-wrenching atrocities. He rushed to their aid with extraordinary compassion. When Spanish soldiers attacked and started to massacre the Muslims who had gathered on the **Balkan** mountain, a remnant of the long-gone ‘**Umayyad**



**caliphate**, Hayraddîn Pasha and his brave warriors suddenly appeared before them. Upon seeing Hayraddîn Pasha and his men, the Spanish soldiers fled like a covey of birds.

In a display of great courage and compassion, Hayraddîn Pasha and his fleet rescued as many Muslims as they could, transporting them to Algiers. Over seven voyages, they successfully transferred seventy thousand Muslims to safety. Additionally, many Muslim Andalusians sought refuge in Algiers, donning Turkish attire to escape the Spanish atrocities.

The Spanish had developed a profound fear of the Turks, particularly Barbarossa, to the extent that they became panic-stricken regardless of who wore Turkish clothing. Hayraddîn Pasha's reputation and prowess as a leader instilled such dread in the Spanish that they were unsure how to respond to this unexpected resistance. The resilience of Hayraddîn Pasha and his forces proved crucial in rescuing and safeguarding the lives of thousands of oppressed Muslims.

Despite Barbarossa's efforts, finding a lasting solution to the Muslim massacre in Spain proved elusive. The cruelty endured by the Muslim community in Spain persisted, leaving bitter memories in history. Barbarossa, while possessing a formidable naval force, lacked a regular and large-scale land army, hindering a more substantial response. Additionally, the significant decline in the Spanish Muslim population made it challenging to effect change. The once spiritual life of the Muslim community in Spain was tragically transformed into a worldly one, and principalities were forced to align with Christians against each other, exacerbating the plight of the oppressed Muslims.

However, Barbarossa's actions in favor of the Muslims of Andalusia should not be overlooked or underestimated. His bombardment of the entire Spanish coast and the transportation of thousands of Muslims to Africa were commendable efforts. Kânûnî Sultan Sulaymân Khan was equally determined to come to the aid of the oppressed Muslims in response to Spain's actions, maintaining constant communication with Barbarossa on this issue.

In response to Barbarossa's planned sea expedition, Kânûnî issued a decree urging him to join the campaign against Spain. The Sultan expressed his commitment to protecting Muslim lands as if they were his own, emphasizing the importance of defending them against any harm:



*“I intend to launch a campaign against Spain. You must join me! Now, appoint a deputy to safeguard the places in your region and come to Istanbul promptly! But if you do not have anyone you trust, then stay where you are! I will protect Muslim lands as if they were my own. Any harm done to them is like harm has been done to me!.. Do what needs to be done!”*

Hayraddîn Pasha, following the imperial edict, left his trusted deputy, **Hasan Agha**, in charge of Algiers and set out for Istanbul. However, when rumors spread that the King of Spain was coming to Algiers with a large navy, Hayraddîn Pasha devised a clever scheme. Pretending to damage his ships, disband the navy, and leave, he deceived the enemies who set sail thinking they had the upper hand. In a swift and calculated attack, Hayraddîn Pasha defeated the enemy fleet, including the notorious **Andrea Doria**.

Upon returning to Istanbul, he was received with great respect by the Sultan, who reaffirmed Hayraddîn Pasha’s position as the Governor of Algiers. With an expanded navy, he embarked on countless victorious sea expeditions.

Hayraddîn Pasha prioritized peace and attended to the needs of his people, demonstrating forgiveness and tolerance even to those who had rebelled against him on various occasions. Once, when the Pasha wanted to pardon the people of Algiers who had rebelled against him by saying, “They defended Algiers with us against the Spaniards!” some of his soldiers, still suffering from the calamities caused by the rebellion, said:

**“Pasha! If you are so merciful, lock yourself in a madrasah! The gentleman side of you should be a little more severe!..”**

The Pasha was deeply saddened by the disrespect shown to him in front of the people. Despite the hurt, he remained composed, refraining from punishing his scorners. Instead, he sought solace in Allah, praying for guidance with a heavy heart, saying:

*“O Lord! Show me what is good for me!”*

In response, he had a dream of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ assisting him in loading his belongings onto a ship. Recognizing the significance of his dream, he decided to leave Algiers and settle in another fortress, where he stayed for three years. A spiritual sign then guided him to return to Algeria. In another dream, the Prophet ﷺ appeared with his four successors, instructing him:

*“O Hayraddîn! Trust in Allah and return to Algiers! Secure victories and triumph over the unbelievers and hypocrites who have harbored animosity toward you!”*

He promptly obeyed the Prophet’s ﷺ order, returning to Algiers, much to the delight and celebration of the Muslim population, who had endured persecution during his absence.

These events highlight that Hayraddîn Pasha’s ultimate goal was not to seek power for himself but to sincerely spread and elevate the Word of Allah. His superior morals and virtues brought divine rewards and Allah’s support in all his expeditions. Many of his strategic moves and successful plans were inspired by divine dreams and inspirations that flowed through his heart.

Furthermore, these events shed light on the challenges Hayraddîn Pasha faced in dealing with power struggles among Muslim nobles in his region. Some nobles engaged in rivalry and even rebelled against him, with a few collaborating with the enemy. The Pasha was particularly angered by those who cooperated with the enemy against fellow Muslims. In a crucial letter addressed to **Mas‘ûd**, whom he had appointed as the chief of **Tlemcen**, Hayraddîn Pasha expressed the sensitivity of a true believer against Mas‘ûd’s rebellion:

*“O Mas ‘ûd who is not worthy of being called Mas ‘ûd! What happened to the covenant and the agreement you made with me? Where is your promise not to rebel and recognize the enemy as such and not to make a pact with Spain? Is this line of conduct acceptable in Islam? What a miserable person you are to go and flatter the unbeliever! Do you not know you will ultimately face difficult situations and negative consequences? What kind of rationale do you have that you cannot even see your fate? You are close to the wrath of Allah and my wrath. May your sin be at your peril, and the world becomes constricted around you! Do not forget that you will be removed from the throne you sit on without your realization and enduring any hardship!..”*

Mas‘ûd had strayed from the right path, becoming like a second Pharaoh in pursuit of his self-interest, aligning with the unbelievers. He had forgotten the following truth:

*When an ant sprouts wings, it thinks it is a glad tidings,  
The poor thing does not know this is a sign of its death!*





However, when confronted with Hayraddîn Pasha's stern letter, he grew uneasy and attempted to make amends by sending a mediator. Wise and insightful, the Pasha responded to the mediator, cautioning against placing trust in those who had embraced Christian ideas and filled their stomachs with bread from the unbelievers. He shared a couplet that emphasized the fate of traitors:

*Do not think that a traitor will be safe,  
Their fate is either to be executed or to suffer!*

Barbarossa Hayraddîn Pasha had a keen eye for identifying capable individuals and assigning them to appropriate positions. He was equally adept at recognizing and dealing with harmful and inept individuals. Courageous, honest, hardworking, devout, and prudent individuals found favor with him, and he appointed them as leaders. On the other hand, those who lacked utility, relied on empty rhetoric, and falsely claimed abilities they did not possess were avoided and kept at a distance.

His life was one of continuous effort and toil. He believed that only the believer would find true rest in the highest level of Heaven. An instructive incident he shared illustrated this point:

“Once, due to the fatigue caused by the great conquests I had achieved, I wished to rest for a bit, so I sent **Sinan Pasha** on a new expedition in my place. That night, in my dream, I was told:

*«–O Hayraddîn! There is no rest in this deceptive world. Rest is only in the highest Heaven. Take immediate action, and know that Allah's help is with you!..»*

When I woke up, I said to myself:

*«–This is the blessing of these saints. Thanks to them, they saved me from a great mistake».* I then distributed much charity and fed and clothed many poor people.”

Hayraddîn Pasha's reliance on divine guidance and his acts of charity showcased his unwavering commitment to his principles and the well-being of those around him.



Hayraddîn Pasha's unwavering dedication to serving the state and spreading the Word of Allah was evident in his actions. After becoming an Ottoman



pasha in the navy, he conquered **Tunis** with a small force. During this time, he received news that the King of Spain was approaching with a large fleet and immediately sent the imperial navy to Istanbul and prepared for war with his own ships. When those around him said,

“–Pasha! This is suicide!”

He replied, “–Comrades! I will not have anyone say, «Hayraddîn Pasha destroyed the imperial fleet!».”

He then skillfully maneuvered through enemy lines and reassured his commanders and soldiers:

“–There is nothing to worry about; fate is in the hands of Allah.” He then quickly regrouped and surrounded the enemy.

Seeing this, the enemy was bewildered and said,

“–We saw him fleeing Tunis alone a few days ago! How is this possible?”

Everyone’s ears echoed the following words about Barbarossa:

“–*He never returns without taking the place he set out to conquer!*”

The final victory belonged to the Muslims. Among the enemies who fled in desperation was **Andrea Doria**. In a state of shock due to the incident that had transpired, Andrea Doria called out to Hayraddîn Pasha unintentionally from afar and said:

“–No one can rival your knowledge and skill at sea! What is the source of this power and bravery?”

Hayraddîn Pasha replied gracefully:

“–*Know that this is a miracle of our Prophet ﷺ, and whoever enters his religion and adheres sincerely to it will become valorous!..*”

In addition, Andrea Doria could not help but murmur the following truths he had observed:

“The scripture of the Muslims writes, «He who flees from battle cannot enter Heaven!» They even say, «If a healthy Muslim flees from two unbelievers, he will end up in Hell!» But in our scripture, it is stated, «If one of us dies in battle, he cannot enter Paradise!» The advice of the Pope and the priests



are always like this! Does that damned Pope need to witness more calamities besides what we are currently experiencing to come to his senses?!”

After that, the king of Spain sent Andrea Doria back to attack Barbarossa with forty ships, but this captain, whose courage waned, could not confront him.

In the meantime, Kânûnî Sultan Sulaymân, who had returned victorious from Baghdad, sent Hayraddîn Pasha to Istanbul. Following the Sultan’s orders, Hayraddîn Pasha ensured Ottoman domination of the Mediterranean and then appeared before the Sultan. Kanûnî, showing deep affection for him, said, **“Thanks be to Allah that this sage has come back healthy, and I am blessed to see him with my own eyes in this world.”** He then kissed Hayraddîn Pasha on the forehead and appointed him the **captain of the Ottoman navy**, granting him extensive powers. Hayraddîn Pasha immediately set to work, strengthening and organizing the navy, elevating the Ottoman state’s power at sea to an unmatched and invincible level, complementing its dominance on land. The Europeans, urged by the Pope, reacted by forming a large **Crusader army** equipped with a powerful naval fleet of 600 ships under the command of **Andrea Doria**, and they launched it into the Mediterranean.

At that time, Kânûnî Sultan Sulaymân was on a military campaign in **Moldavia**. Hayraddîn Pasha, with his fleet of 120 ships, took immediate action and cautiously advanced on the enemy with calculated maneuvers. Two great navies faced each other in **Preveza**. It was approaching evening time, and the largest naval battle in history was about to take place the following day. After performing two cycles of ritual prayer, Hayraddîn Pasha raised his hands to the heavens and supplicated.:

*“–O Allah! For the sake of your beloved, Muḥammad ﷺ, show me in my dream tonight whether it is better for me to attack the enemy or to stay in my place! Reveal the signs that will lead to victory with your grace once again! Until now, you have blessed us with your divine grace and made us victorious on numerous occasions as your humble servants. Grant us your favor and guidance, O my Lord, and make us victorious again!”*

That night, Hayraddîn Pasha had the dream he pleaded for. In his dream, he saw many small fish with slits in their bellies appearing by the shore where his fleet had anchored. Shortly after, a few people approached him and said:

«–His Majesty the Sultan sent these fish to you».

Upon waking up, Hayraddîn Pasha took the fish and thanked Allah. With his knowledge of dream interpretation, he understood that the dream indicated Kânûnî Sultan Sulaymân’s conquest of Moldavia and concluded that he needed to attack the enemy.

At dawn, Hayraddîn Pasha first led the enemy fleet to the shores of Preveza. However, the wind was blowing in a direction that favored the enemy fleet. There was a possibility that the Sultans’ light galleys would be destroyed in front of the heavy enemy ships, whose sails swelled due to the wind. To seek divine assistance, Hayraddîn Pasha had two passages from **Şûrah al-Fath** (“The Victory”) written and placed on the right and left sides of his ship. Miraculously, the strong wind stopped, and the sea became calm, while the enemy ships stood motionless like skeletons in front of them. Filled with gratitude, Pasha exclaimed:

**“–Here are the fish I saw in my dream!”** and then initiated the attack.

With this fierce attack, the Ottoman fleet, under the leadership of Hayraddîn Pasha, began to capture the enemy ships one by one, like fish. The enemy fleet, desperate to save their vessels, tried to lure the Ottomans with small boats as bait, hoping to distract them and collect spoils. However, Hayraddîn Pasha, wise and experienced in battle, had prepared his soldiers beforehand. He cautioned them not to be tempted by wealth and prisoners before decisively defeating the enemy fleet. Instead, he urged them to focus on the victory, believing that Allah would grant them the spoils and riches afterward.

Following their commander’s instructions, the Ottoman sailors refrained from being enticed by the enemy’s traps. They chanted «Allah, Allah» with great faith after sinking each ship and proceeded to attack the next one. Hayraddîn Pasha fervently invoked Allah, praying for the destruction of the enemies of Islam and the favor of victory to be bestowed upon the soldiers of Islam. With strategic maneuvers and relentless attacks, the Ottoman navy brought disorder and destruction to the enemy fleet, leading to a decisive victory.

This unparalleled naval battle, lasting until the afternoon, further enhanced Hayraddîn Pasha’s legendary heroism. Nevertheless, he humbly recognized that this victory was a divine gift from Allah, and he prostrated in gratitude like a humble and ordinary soldier. His character epitomized a blend





of magnificence and humility, making him a formidable opponent in front of the enemy and a devoted and humble servant of Allah. As Hayraddîn Pasha returned to Istanbul with the captured enemy galleys, his power and glory became unmatched in the Mediterranean, and the sea came under the dominion of the Ottomans.

Meanwhile, the Spanish king, infuriated by the defeat in Preveza, hastily assembled a revengeful fleet and set sail. He assumed that Hayraddîn Pasha had left Algiers vulnerable and targeted it as his first objective. However, **Hasan Agha**, appointed by Hayraddîn Pasha as a deputy in Algiers, stood firm like an impregnable fortress against the Spanish king's forces. The king, astonished by Hasan Agha's courage, questioned how he dared to confront him despite his empire and his goal of defeating Sultan Sulaymân:

“—How can this Hasan Agha confront me without considering his state of affairs? I am a king who has established an empire, and my goal is to defeat Sultan Sulaymân. Tell him to surrender, or I will destroy the towers of his fortress!..”

Hasan Agha fearlessly recited this verse:

*If only words could turn into reality,  
All the paupers would become sultans...*

Then he said, “—O wretched one who aspires to establish an empire! You should know that you are not equal to either my Pasha or Sultan. You are only equal to me! Here is the battlefield!” and sought refuge in Allah and delivered the arrogant Spanish king a blow that bewildered him.

Subsequently, heavy rain started pouring down and a fierce storm took hold, completely devastating the enemy. They had neither provisions nor strength to continue fighting. They began to feed on their horses due to hunger. Finally, with one last move by Hasan Agha, a decisive victory was achieved, and the cruel king boarded a ship as he barely saved himself.

The Spanish king's defeat was so profound that he abandoned his throne, sought refuge in a church, and eventually succumbed to grief. Meanwhile, the news of this triumph reached Istanbul, filling Hayraddîn Pasha's heart with joy. In recognition of Hasan Agha's bravery and leadership, the Sultan rewarded him by appointing him as the Governor of Algiers.







In light of all these historical facts, Barbarossa Hayraddîn Pasha emerges as a prominent figure who played a significant role in achieving extraordinary conquests and hindering sizable Crusader armies from challenging Kânûnî Sultan Sulaymân’s raids and campaigns within Europe. Through his exceptional leadership and the captains he trained, he devastated many opponents in the Mediterranean, extending the Ottoman state’s borders all the way to Morocco. Beyond his military prowess, Hayraddîn Pasha was known for his consciousness and charity. He believed that:

*A man is one who leaves his mark in the world,  
Without a mark, he becomes like the gusting wind!*

After every victory, he made it a habit to donate and provide for the poor and needy, ensuring that no one went hungry or neglected in the areas he governed. As a result, he was not only respected as a state dignitary but also loved and regarded as a compassionate elder or “*baba*” by the people. When he left Algiers, the people eagerly awaited his return, and his departure was met with tears.

Hayraddîn Pasha was also a great benefactor. He built a madrasah in Beşiktaş established various public facilities and institutions, such as inns, public baths, townhouses, mills, and bakeries, converting them into pious endowments. He allocated a substantial portion of the revenues from these establishments to support madrasah students and professors. Additionally, he displayed a deep commitment to his faith, taking the piety of the Companions  of the Prophet  as his model. Despite being involved in worldly affairs, he never neglected his religious duties, considering his mundane dealings as acts of worship. **He dedicated his nights to sleeping, worship, and reciting the Quran, all while devising tactics and plans for his future endeavors.**

In 1544, after countless victories and invaluable services to the Ottoman state, Barbarossa Hayraddîn Pasha returned to Istanbul. However, in 1546, he passed away, leaving behind a legacy of military triumphs and charitable endeavors.

**May Allah’s mercy be upon him!**

The era of Barbarossa Hayraddîn Pasha indeed marked a time of great renown and magnificence for the Ottoman state, both on land and at sea. One notable incident that showcases the Ottoman’s grandeur was the response





given by Kânûnî Sultan Sulaymân Khan to the plea sent by the mother of the imprisoned French king, Francis, who was held captive by the Germans. After listing the countries he ruled, Kânûnî said:

**“...I, the ruler of these lands, the son of a khan, am Ghazi Sultan Sulaymân Khan. And you, Francesco, are the governor of the French province!..”** He then dispatched Barbarossa Hayraddîn Pasha with a large navy to protect France’s independence in Nice.

Barbarossa Hayraddîn Pasha acted swiftly and even attempted to conquer Rome during his campaign. However, upon the pleading of the French ambassador, who feared the consequences of a Christian West backlash, Hayraddîn Pasha chose to temporarily abandon the conquest. Instead, he anchored the Ottoman navy in Nice, and the naval soldiers went ashore to perform their ritual prayers five times a day in congregation after the call to prayer. As an act of benevolence, the Ottoman state provided millions of gold coins in aid to France without any expectation of interest, demonstrating a generosity uncommon in modern Europe’s high-interest loans.

Indeed, this era was marked by the greatness and influence of the Ottoman state, where a mere threat expressed in a letter was sufficient to secure the release of kings from prison. Barbarossa Hayraddîn Pasha stood as one of the zenith points of this remarkable time.

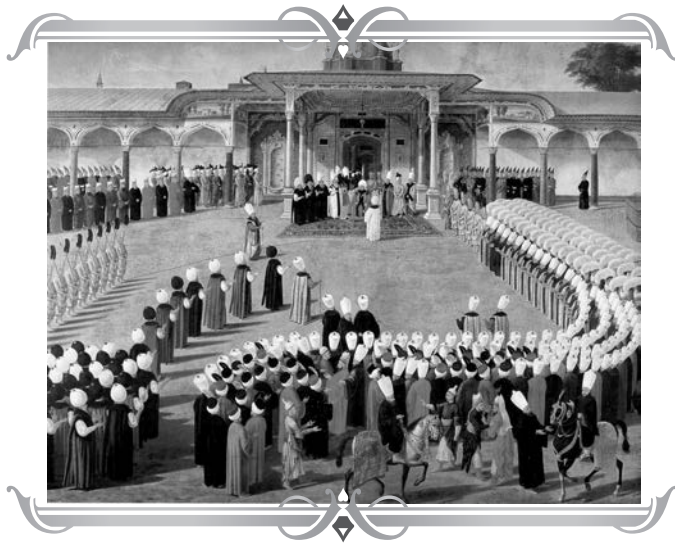


We ask **our esteemed readers** to recite thrice **Şûrah al-Ikhlâş** and once **Şûrah al-Fâtîhah** for the blessed soul of this exceptional friend of Allah, Hayraddîn Pasha, when passing through **Beşiktaş**.

**O Lord! Bestow your blessings upon those who stand worthy of upholding your cause, who carry the solemn responsibility of safeguarding the trust of the Muslims as we journey into the twenty-first century. May individuals akin to Barbarossa Hayraddîn Pasha emerge, those who perceive it as an honor to emulate the ways of the Companions ﷺ, exhibiting qualities of sacrifice, selflessness, integrity, wisdom, discretion, courage, agility, and devoutness. These souls are profoundly deserving of your guidance, support, and protection!..**

**Âmîn!..**





## OTTOMAN STATESMEN

In the 1400-year tapestry of Islamic history, the Ottoman centuries stand as paramount epochs following the era of divine contentment, the time of the Prophet ﷺ, often referred to as *aşr al-sa'âdah*, when it came to shielding Islam against its external adversaries and comprehending and embodying Islam with the utmost proximity to perfection. Among the core constituents ensuring this distinction, the exceptional qualities of statesmen undoubtedly hold a significant position.

In the Ottoman state, statesmen have always been divided into two categories:

- a. People of the Sword (the warrior class)
- b. People of the Pen (the scholarly class)

A state's endurance over time cannot solely rely on **material power** or the exclusive pursuit of **knowledge and morality**. The culmination of these attributes manifested harmoniously during the zenith of Ottoman grandeur and splendor. Nevertheless, during periods of decline – whose underlying reasons



can be explored at length – there is an observable regression in their quality and the erosion of their integrity and unity.

The aim here is not to provide a linear history of the Ottoman state, but rather to illuminate key figures that can offer insights into our modern world and kindle the spirits of younger generations with purpose and vitality. Among these figures are those who wield both the sword and the pen (*şâhib al-sayf wa al-qalam*), meaning individuals with dual facets (*dhu al-janâhayn*). While numerous instances of such multifaceted individuals exist, ranging from sultans to pashas, our focus will be on a few from the People of the Sword and Pen. Regarding the first category, our attention will be directed toward personalities from the later Ottoman period, a phase often associated with stagnation and decline. The rationale behind this choice is as follows:

The realm of greatness encompasses both individuals and institutions. This principle also extends to the sphere of decline and collapse. However, as we shall observe from the instances below, despite numerous unfavorable factors, significant triumphs and scholarly accomplishments can still be attained when circumstances are adeptly utilized. This hinges on the presence of qualified individuals. When we transpose this concept to our contemporary era, the irrationality of succumbing to hopelessness becomes evident. The key lies in according sufficient importance to education and drawing lessons from history...

Three exceptional individuals, in particular, have achieved extraordinary victories despite formidable odds: **Özdemiroğlu Osman Pasha**, **Tiryaki Hasan Pasha**, and **Abdulazal Pasha**.

These figures serve as prime examples of how remarkable achievements can be reached, even under challenging circumstances, when individuals possess exceptional attributes and steadfastly confront internal and external trials. It is crucial to underscore that there exists no obstacle insurmountable to an individual equipped with lessons from history and provided proper attention is dedicated to education...





*The Victorious Commander of the Battle of Torches and the  
Conqueror of the Caucasus*

## **ÖZDEMIROĞLU OSMAN PASHA**

*(1527-1585)*

He was an eminent Ottoman Grand Vizier during the sixteenth century.

Osman Pasha's father, **Özdemir Pasha**, was a valiant and adept commander renowned for his triumphs in **Yemen** and **Abyssinia**, ascending to the esteemed position of governor.

Fueled by his father's accomplishments and service, Osman Pasha cultivated exceptional aptitude at a tender age and assumed pivotal roles within the state's structure. Before reaching the age of twenty, he ascended to the position of a county governor (*sancak beyi*). Over time, he assumed the mantle of Emir of Egypt and succeeded his father as the Governor of Abyssinia. He further extended his influence by taking up the role of Governor of Sana'a and Yemen.

In the subsequent years, he held the posts of Governor of Basra and later Diyarbakir, where his contributions left indelible marks. He took part in



the expedition against the new Shâh of Iran, Ismâ'îl II, who had ravaged and razed Ottoman-controlled **Georgia**. Osman Pasha accomplished a significant triumph on this mission, rescuing the Ottoman vanguard forces from potential defeat at the hands of the 30,000-strong Iranian army under the command of **Tokmak Khan**. Displaying valor and strategic acumen, he dispersed the opposing forces through a series of astute maneuvers, ultimately emerging victorious in the decisive **Battle of Çıldır**.

In the midst of this scenario, the Iranian Shâh found himself disheartened and consumed by the bitterness of defeat. Swallowing his pride proved impossible, prompting him to dispatch a substantial army to obstruct the Shirvan route. Yet, Osman Pasha swiftly orchestrated a response, triumphing over this opposition. Subsequently, another contingent was sent, only to meet a similar fate. What remnants remained of the shattered Iranian forces were subsequently vanquished by the Sunni Muslims of Shirvan. These successive victories led to the incorporation of the region known as **Shirvan** in **northern Azerbaijan** into Ottoman territory.

During this juncture, a substantial portion of the Ottoman army withdrew to the Erzurum barracks, presuming their mission accomplished. Seizing this opportunity, the Şafavids launched a renewed assault. However, Osman Pasha, who remained in the vicinity, thwarted the Iranian forces again in **Shamakhi** despite being outnumbered.

The repeated successes of Osman Pasha and the consecutive failures suffered by the Iranian army plunged the Şafavid imperial center into disarray. The concept that only a member of the royal family could defeat this resolute Pasha was eventually embraced. Crown Prince **Hamza Mirza** was dispatched at the head of a formidable 100,000-strong army to confront Osman.

During this period, Osman Pasha commanded a force numbering merely 13,000, freshly emerged from the Battle of Shamakhi. Undeterred, the Şafavids entered Shamakhi and launched an unforeseen attack. Yet, resembling an indomitable lion, Osman Pasha swiftly reclaimed the city through a determined assault on the second day. However, lacking essential reinforcements, he withdrew to Demirkapi, delivering one final decisive strike.

In the ensuing year spent at Demirkapi, he quelled a 15,000-strong Şafavid contingent that had infiltrated the region via Baku and Shirvan, fortifying his position.

However, despite Osman Pasha's resounding triumphs and the urgent need for troops, the army stationed on the eastern front remained idle in Erzurum due to certain pashas within the palace who harbored jealousy toward him. The aid requested by Özdemiroğlu never materialized. Some of these pashas were sorely shortsighted, under the impression that their own advancement would be impeded should Osman Pasha achieve further triumphs. Furthermore, despite the Khan of Crimea's insistence on pressing forward, he retreated, citing the winter season as justification, leaving Osman Pasha stranded in a challenging predicament without support on the battlefield.

Cognizant of how to surmount his precarious situation, Osman Pasha drafted a direct report to **Murâd Khan III**, aiming to steer the conquest toward a triumphant conclusion. He elucidated that the inactivity on the Iranian front resulted from the ineptitude of certain individuals at court, and that the Crimean Khan's assistance had been lacking, thereby squandering numerous strategic opportunities. Osman Pasha implored Sultan Murâd III for aid, underscoring that the continued repetition of such errors would tarnish the honor of the state.

Murâd Khan III, upon learning of these revelations and exhibiting profound sensitivity toward the matter, promptly dispatched reinforcements to Osman Pasha, along with 140,000 gold coins earmarked for military expenses. Consequently, Osman Pasha finally received the reinforcements he had long awaited.

The Şafavid governor of **Ganja**, perturbed by the prospect of Osman Pasha's reinforced might, harbored apprehensions that these augmented forces could potentially assail Iran. In a bid to preempt this perceived threat, he aimed to dismantle Osman Pasha's power before it escalated further.

Yet, Osman Pasha, a seasoned commander well-acquainted with the intricacies of the battlefield, preemptively enacted strategies upon uncovering the governor's stratagem. When the two opposing armies converged upon the **Bilasa** plain, both sides launched fierce assaults with unyielding fervor. As daylight gave way to night, the conflict persisted, illuminated by the glow of torches. On the fourth day, Osman Pasha skillfully outmaneuvered the adversary, orchestrating a feigned retreat before turning the tide in his favor. This confrontation, distinguished by the use of torchlight during the nighttime, came to be known as the '**Battle of Torches**'.





This resounding victory secured Dagestan and Georgia against invasion, not to mention the reclamation of Shirvan. Moreover, Osman Pasha's mastery extended to the subjugation of the entire Caucasus region. Following these accomplishments, he expeditiously shifted his focus to Crimea. He held the Crimean Khan accountable for his open rebellion against the Ottoman state, triggered by his failure to comply with the imperial order for assistance. Osman Pasha then facilitated a peaceful transition of power to the new Crimean Khan, Ghazi Islam Giray.

Upon amassing an array of remarkable achievements and conquests, Osman Pasha returned to Istanbul, carrying with him immense honor and a demeanor of pride. The venerable city of Istanbul accorded this heroic figure a gracious and enthusiastic welcome.

Sultan Murâd III extended his hospitality to Osman Pasha at his seaside mansion. The Sultan's delight in Osman's victories, which had brought great distinction to the Ottoman state, was so profound that it transcended the confines of palace tradition. Their interaction appeared as though two individuals brimming with mutual fondness and regard were engaged in conversation:

**“–Welcome, Osman. Please, take a seat!”** remarked the Sultan, inviting Osman to recount the events that unfolded in the Caucasus.

The heartfelt exchange between these two steadfast friends extended over the course of four hours. As Özdemiroğlu recounted his conquest over Urus Khan, Sultan Murâd III interjected with praise:

**“–Well done, Osman!”** The Sultan then took Osman Pasha's crest and affixed it upon his head using an intricately designed needle.


When the Pasha recounted his triumph against Hamza Mirza, the Sultan, once again, brimmed with excitement and adorned Osman Pasha's waist with a valuable dagger.

Finally, during the narration of his victory in Ganja, the Sultan bestowed upon the Pasha yet another embellished crest, this one more precious than the former.

Upon Özdemiroğlu Osman Pasha's retelling of his victory over the Crimean Khan with a modest military force in Kefe, Sultan Murâd III was moved to tears. He raised his hands skyward, proclaiming:





**“–Pasha! May Allah be pleased with you! May your countenance be illuminated in both worlds! May triumph accompany you wherever you tread! May you find yourself in the company of ‘Uthmân  in a celestial palace and at a table in Paradise! May you forever dwell with honor and strength!”**

As an expression of profound recognition for Osman Pasha’s auspicious contributions, Sultan Murâd III appointed him as **Grand Vizier**. After serving in this capacity for approximately four months, upon his own request, Özdemiroğlu Osman Pasha tendered his resignation and once again resumed his role as a commander. This decision was prompted by news of a rebellion in Crimea. By the time he intervened, the insurrection had been quelled. With an imperial decree, he was subsequently entrusted with the command of the eastern front.

Yet, after enduring protracted periods in the scorching climates of Abyssinia (modern-day Ethiopia), Sudan, and Yemen, and traversing the deserts of Basra and Lahsa, followed by six years amidst the severe cold of the Caucasus, Osman Pasha’s health deteriorated. His frailty reached a point where he had to travel in a sedan chair (*taht-ı revân*) due to his inability to ride a horse.

Osman Pasha emerged as one of history’s rare individuals, achieving feats of heroism even in his enfeebled state. Undeterred, he pressed on with his mission, utilizing the last vestiges of his strength. He triumphantly captured **Tabriz**, elevating it to an Ottoman province. Upon his return from Tabriz, despite his frail health, he managed to overcome the Şafavid army in **Shenb-i Gazan**. However, this marked his final victory. A night thereafter, his body, which had remained devoted to Allah for countless years, could no longer bear the weight of his noble spirit, yielding it to its rightful possessor. Thus, Osman Pasha rejoined his Creator and entered the ranks of the immortals after achieving martyrdom – a loftiest rank in the path of sacred warfare.

**May Allah’s mercy be upon him!**

The spiritual training Özdemiroğlu Osman Pasha underwent endowed him with the capacity to stand out as both a humble and honorable soldier and commander. This spiritual foundation also fueled his engagement in acts of heroism, infused with unwavering faith, love, and fervor, throughout his lifetime. His ability to exhibit humility even in the wake of his most remarkable accomplishments serves as a testament to his colossal triumphs against





external adversaries as well as the inner conflicts within his own soul. As a result, the allure of the Grand Vizier position, the second-highest echelon of governance within the expansive Ottoman realm, did not entice him. Instead, he willingly relinquished this role, dedicating himself to the service of Allah until his final breath. It can be asserted that Özdemiroğlu Osman Pasha occupies a singular position amidst the multitude of statesmen who embellished the six-and-a-half centuries of Ottoman history with extraordinary victories.

**O Allah! Bless us with the virtues, knowledge, and foresight exemplified by Özdemiroğlu Osman Pasha – attributes our generation is in dire need of, particularly in the present day. Bestow upon us a portion of his selflessness and an awareness firmly attuned to serving the people!**

Âmîn!..





*The Renowned Defender of Nagykanizsa*

## **TIRYÂKI HASAN PASHA**

*(1517?-1611)*

He stands as one of the exceptional figures in Ottoman military history. Tiryâki Hasan Pasha emerged as an extraordinary personality who received his training in the esteemed royal school of *Enderun*, subsequently ascending to the esteemed rank of governor-general (*mîr-i mîrân*).

His significant contributions to the Ottoman army, coupled with unparalleled triumphs on the battlefield, paved the way for his assignment to numerous critical responsibilities. Hasan Pasha carried out each undertaking with unwavering dedication and resolute determination. He quelled the renowned Transylvania rebellion and reclaimed the **Filnak** and **Lippa** castles from enemy control. His next task was to oversee the strategically vital **Nagykanizsa fortress**, which set the stage for the well-known siege of Nagykanizsa:

Observing the imminent prospect of Nagykanizsa – an essential fortress – falling into Ottoman control, the Austrians resolved to take action. In



response, they assembled a formidable Crusader army comprising 100,000 soldiers, commanded by **Archduke Ferdinand**. This formidable coalition encompassed troops from Germany, Italy, Spain, France, Hungary, the Papal State, and Malta, with Aldoprandini, the nephew of Pope Clement VIII, leading the Papal contingent.

The grand and self-assured Crusader army set forth confidently and initiated the siege of the Nagykanizsa fortress on September 9, 1601.

During this time, Hasan Pasha, a venerable figure with a long white beard, commanded a mere 9,000 soldiers to safeguard the fortress. Despite the glaring numerical discrepancy, he was renowned for his strategic acumen, valor, and especially his tactical deceptions that consistently baffled the enemy forces. Though vastly outnumbered, he possessed extensive experience and a deeply cultivated spiritual nature. Confronted by the imposing Crusader army converging upon his stronghold, he exhibited no signs of panic. Addressing his valiant troops, he declared:

**“Regardless of their superior numbers, fear the enemy we shall not; never shall fear overcome us!..”** He organized his forces in a staunch defensive formation and awaited the imminent enemy assault while plotting his next moves.

Archduke Ferdinand exuded excessive confidence, bolstered by ample military provisions and a substantial army at his disposal. He initiated the campaign by dispatching his vanguard to the fortress, intending to gauge the Ottoman military’s internal strength. Recognizing Ferdinand’s intentions, Hasan Pasha responded solely with rifle shots to the vanguard’s advances, thereby creating an illusion of lacking cannons. This deliberate action led Ferdinand to believe he had garnered the intelligence he sought. Subsequently, he directed his army toward the fortress and its towers, bellowing:

“Advance!”

The Crusaders abruptly launched a full-scale offensive. As they drew near the walls to ascertain the absence of artillery within the fortress, Tiryâki Hasan Pasha swiftly triggered a volley from a hundred concealed cannons. Instantaneously, chaos erupted. The enemy’s ranks were thrown into disarray by this unforeseen attack. The once-arrogant Crusader soldiers succumbed to panic, fleeing in terror and trampling upon each other in their haste. Capital-

izing on this tumult, Hasan Pasha swung open the castle gates for his warriors, delivering a crippling blow to the adversary. The Crusaders barely managed to escape across the Nagykanizsa River to the Szigetvár side.

Infuriated by his entrapment, Ferdinand unleashed unrelenting bombardment upon the fortress walls, relentlessly deploying his artillery.

Meanwhile, each day, Hasan Pasha ingeniously devised new strategies to surprise the enemy and inflict losses upon them. He even dispatched a courageous warrior named **Kara Penche Osman** to the Grand Vizier, beseeching for aid. The Grand Vizier pledged to come to their rescue in Nagykanizsa, yet upon receiving news of **Istina-Belgrade**'s fall, he promptly altered his course. He communicated his predicament to Tiryâki Hasan Pasha in a letter, conveying his powerlessness due to his compulsion to venture to Belgrade, a place plagued by merciless torment and death, even befalling children. Unable to extend assistance in Nagykanizsa, he could only entreat and beseech, «May Allah help you!».

Upon receiving this communication, Hasan Pasha discerned that the battle had to be continued single-handedly. Mindful not to undermine the soldiers' morale, he refrained from disclosing the letter's contents. Instead, he conveyed an implicit assurance that the imperial army would render aid. Simultaneously, he crafted several letters addressed to the Grand Vizier, intimating that Nagykanizsa required no further troops or ammunition. Intentionally, he ensured that these letters landed in the hands of the adversary. This tactic disheartened the Crusaders, who had struggled fruitlessly for days, rendering them virtually devoid of the resolve necessary to advance an assault.

Yet, the predicament at the Nagykanizsa fortress appeared far from promising. Hasan Pasha and his men, who seemed almost superhuman, found no respite, toiling ceaselessly day and night to mend the walls relentlessly bombarded by cannon fire. Despite these daunting circumstances, Hasan Pasha sustained the defense without yielding to panic. However, the dwindling gunpowder reserves rendered defeat an almost certain outcome. In the midst of his desperate contemplation on how to proceed, a courageous sergeant, perceiving the dire situation, approached him in a hushed tone:

**“–Permit us to craft our own gunpowder, if it pleases you!”**



This adept sergeant, Uzun Ahmad, displayed his remarkable skills, astonishing and invigorating Hasan Pasha. Curious, Hasan Pasha queried:

**“–What do you propose, my son? How could such a feat be achieved?”**

Uzun Ahmad replied:

**“Observe those willow trees yonder. They possess the potential to furnish us with ample gunpowder, as long as Almighty Allah preserves your guidance.”**

Hasan Pasha, brimming with delight, responded:

**“Very well, my son! Show us your expertise! May Allah Almighty assist us!”** He issued the order for immediate action.

Sergeant Ahmad toiled diligently for three days, successfully producing a substantial quantity of gunpowder. In gratitude, he invoked blessings upon his master, who had imparted this secret knowledge. It is recounted that the Ottomans’ reverence for the willow tree stemmed from this very incident.

During this period, an additional contingent joined the Crusader army. **Archduke Mathias**, who had captured the Belgrade fortress, arrived at Nagykanizsa with the Austrian army to bolster the Crusaders’ ranks. Galvanized by this reinforcement, the Crusaders proposed to Hasan Pasha that he **surrender**, convinced that resistance was no longer tenable.

Hasan Pasha’s response came in the form of a barrage of artillery fire, prompting the adversary to launch a fierce and all-encompassing assault. Several of their forces even scaled the towers, yet their efforts proved futile against the defenders of Nagykanizsa, who outwitted them through cunning stratagems. At every instance of a fatigued soldier, Hasan Pasha himself lent aid, revealing an astonishing agility despite his advanced age. He addressed his warriors with impassioned fervor:

**“My valiant comrades! Be not daunted by the numerical superiority of the enemy. They lack the mantle of faith, while we are illuminated by the radiance of faith. Throughout history, many modest bands of believers have, with Allah’s blessing, triumphed over vast assemblages of disbelievers. The same shall be our fate today, by the will of Allah. And should we perish on this path, we shall attain martyrdom and ascend to the realm of Paradise; if we emerge unscathed, we shall be hailed as esteemed war-**



**riors. This is a day for courage, and our strife is for the sake of Allah. Forge ahead with courage; victory is nigh, by Allah’s decree!”**

These impassioned words ignited even greater zeal within the valiant warriors, spurring them to mount a resistance so formidable that the Crusaders were eventually compelled to retreat, leaving behind a trail of thousands slain, including the Pope’s nephew Aldoprandini.

In an act of deep reverence, Tiryâki Hasan Pasha dropped to his knees in prostration, extending his heartfelt felicitations to his ghazis, and addressed them:

**“–My brave young men, recall that the siege imposed by the unbelievers commenced on the night of the 12th of Rabî‘ al-Awwal, the same blessed night when the Prophet ﷺ, the master of all realms, graced this world. By the virtue of that sanctified night, Allah shall not permit us, the followers of Islam, to be vanquished or obliterated by the unbelievers. As long as we, champions of Islam, wield our swords with unwavering faith!”**

For days, they remained steadfast, guarding their secrets closely, unbeknownst to the enemy. Nevertheless, at a certain juncture, two conscripted boys of Hungarian origin managed to escape and divulge all they knew about the fortress to the adversary. This development unsettled a few warriors, yet Tiryâki Hasan Pasha remained undisturbed and reassured them:

**“–Fret not; managing this situation is well within our means.”** Summoning two prisoners from the enemy camp before him, he inquired:

**“–Did the king confer with the two men I dispatched to him?”**

The apprehensive prisoners confirmed that these two men had indeed apprised the king of all the circumstances prevailing within the fortress, elaborating on how Hasan Pasha and his troops faced dire straits. Seemingly infuriated, Hasan Pasha issued the order for the prisoners’ execution, orchestrating their demise under the charge of Kara Omar Bey, in line with a premeditated plan.

As Kara Omar led the prisoners away from Hasan Pasha, he artfully assumed an air of camaraderie and remarked:

**“–Remain mute; I stand by your side! I shall unquestionably extricate you, as I have rescued numerous captives before. However, relay to the king that this pasha is an astute strategist. He warrants the king’s**



**utmost vigilance! He craftily dispatched the two young men amidst your ranks. His intent is to ensnare the king with a fresh scheme, luring him nearer to the fortress, subsequently entrapping him, just as he has done in prior campaigns. The fortress is far from being besieged by adversity, contrary to the assertion of those two boys. Quite the contrary, it stands resolute, equipped to endure for an extended period, bolstered by a year's worth of provisions and gunpowder. Moreover, it is merely a matter of time until the forces from Szigetvár arrive here in our support."**

Kara Omar demonstrated bags purportedly filled with gunpowder to the captives, although these were in reality sandbags containing a scant amount of gunpowder. Regardless, this theatrical display left the captives in astonishment, and following their release with a loaf of bread, they hastened to their sovereigns.

Based on the captives' accounts, coupled with the letters that Hasan Pasha artfully orchestrated to fall into the Crusaders' possession, Ferdinand deduced that the two youths who had presented themselves to him were spies. Swiftly, he ordered their execution, impaling their severed heads atop a spear's point. Raising his voice toward the castle, he jeered:

**"–Hasan Pasha, Hasan Pasha! Behold, the heads of the young spies you dispatched are displayed here. Understand that the letters destined for your Grand Vizier are now within my grasp, baring your situation before me. Henceforth, indulge in such trickery for your own sake!.."**

Unbeknownst to Ferdinand, Hasan Pasha and his valiant troops stood atop the towers, their countenances adorned with contented smiles upon hearing his taunting words.



In the passage of ensuing months, winter's arrival brought forth its unrelenting vigor, with ceaseless snowfall accompanied by fierce gusts of wind. Even the waters succumbed to freezing temperatures.

Tiryâki Hasan Pasha, acknowledging that the Grand Vizier's intervention was no longer forthcoming, commenced contemplating innovative strategies to expel the Crusaders, leveraging every available resource at their disposal. Surveying the enemy's predicament, he learned that the harsh winter had sapped their resolve, sparking discord within the Crusader alliance. Seizing





this opportune moment, he dispatched a unit of 300 horsemen, led by Kara Omar Bey, to clandestinely traverse the frozen Berk River. Additionally, all the fortress' cannons were unleashed simultaneously, wreaking havoc upon the enemy encampment. Simultaneously, Tiryâki Hasan Pasha personally led a contingent of 500 men to launch an assault on the enemy's central headquarters. Through these final tactical maneuvers, the formidable Crusader army, numbering over 100,000, met a resounding defeat. The once zealous Crusaders who had converged on Nagykanizsa now found themselves in flight, abandoning tens of thousands of corpses in their wake. The vainglorious Archduke was among those who managed to escape, accompanied by a mere hundred loyalists who stood by his side despite his relinquishment of crown and throne upon the battlefield.

And thus, that monumental victory etched into history as the defense of Nagykanizsa was eternally etched into memory on that fateful day. The venerable commander, Tiryâki Hasan Pasha, was acutely aware that their triumphant success emerged against unprecedented odds, a rarity in the annals of history, solely by the benevolence of Allah. With tearful eyes of gratitude, he performed two cycles of the ritual prayer, earnestly beseeched Allah, and spoke to his gallant warriors:

**“–Rest assured, my dear warriors, that this triumph is a favor bestowed by Allah and a manifestation of the miraculous blessings of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. Every individual who partook in this sacred campaign shall, with Allah's permission, find solace for their misdeeds.”**

Throughout this war, an abundance of spoils was amassed, requiring several days to transfer to the fortress. When the captured enemy prisoners were questioned about their defeat, their hearts still trembling from fear, they responded:

**“–In this conflict, we encountered unfamiliar individuals alongside you. Those bearing green turbans filled us with terror. Whenever you launched an assault, they concurrently followed suit...”**

Indeed, rumors circulated that the ruler of Malta, **Don Juan**, upon beholding these men adorned with green turbans, cloaked himself in fabric out of sheer dread and concealed himself in a trench for four days, suffering from ailments.





Certainly, this occurrence bore witness to the enduring manifestation of divine assistance, much akin to the support that Allah extended to the few believers during the **Battle of Badr**. Allah says:

“(In Badr) **There has already been a sign for you in the two companies that encountered, one company fighting in the way of Allah and another unbelieving; they saw them twice the like of them, as the eyes see, but Allah confirms with His help whom He will. Surely in that is a lesson for men possessed of eyes**” (Şûrah Âli ‘Imrân, 13).

“(O Messenger of Allah! On that day) **You did not slay them, but Allah slew them; and when thou threwest, it was not thyself that threw, but Allah threw, and that He might confer on the believers a fair benefit; surely Allah is All-hearing, All-knowing**” (Şûrah al-Anfâl, 17).

And he acted with prudence having realized the secret: “لَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ: **There is no power or strength save in Allah!**” العليّ العظيم

Upon learning of the triumph at Nagykanizsa, the news brought immeasurable delight to the palace, and **Sultan Mehmed III** was particularly elated. In recognition of the instrumental role played by the illustrious commander Hasan Pasha in securing the victory, the Sultan bestowed upon him the prestigious title of vizier. Furthermore, Sultan Mehmed III dispatched a royal decree accompanied by valuable tokens of appreciation to Hasan Pasha. The contents of the decree were succinct yet impactful:

“**Governor of Nagykanizsa, venerable commander of mine, and devoted vizier! May Allah’s blessings be upon you! The valiant warriors at your side are akin to my own sons, and they bear the endorsement of my imperial mandate. May their countenances forever radiate with light!..**”

In an act of modesty, Tiryâki Hasan Pasha read aloud the imperial decree before his fellow soldiers, fresh from securing the victory. Turning to those present, he spoke with humility:

“**—Our esteemed Sultan, in recognition of what may seem like a minor duty such as the defense of Nagykanizsa, has seen fit to grant me the title of vizier. However, I merely performed what I perceived as my duty. Should an aged individual like myself befit the role of vizier within the Ottoman state? May Allah safeguard our state and our people from decline!**”



Nevertheless, this distinguished commander went on to achieve numerous more triumphs even after securing this particular victory in his advanced years. At an age surpassing eighty, he even confronted the rebel **Canbolatoğlu** in the Oruç Plain, displaying unmatched heroism in the process. Thus, he embarked upon his journey to the eternal realm, leaving behind a legacy of remarkable contributions to the world.

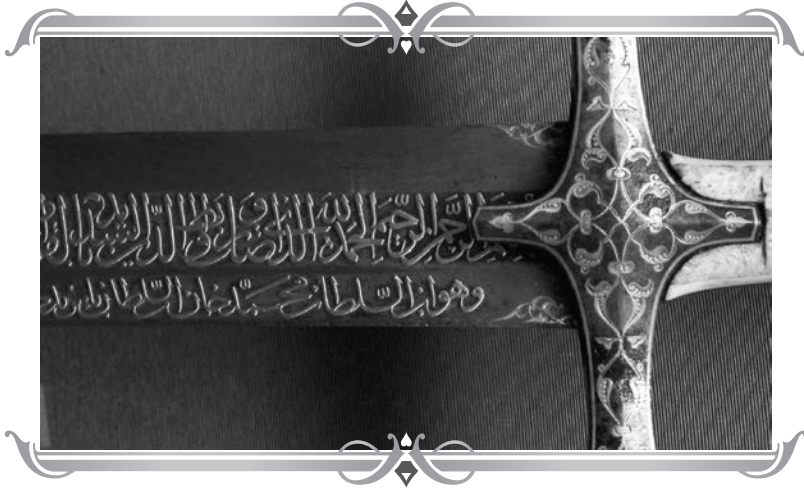
**May Allah’s mercy be upon him!**

Tiryâki Hasan Pasha stood as a fearless leader and a political visionary, embodying the wisdom of the prophetic adage, “War is deceit.” His creed became one of steadfastness, allegiance, and dedication for the sake of Allah. Despite his advanced age, he fought shoulder to shoulder with his comrades, kindling their spirits with his own courage and fortitude. Even in the direst moments, he maintained his equanimity and employed strategic acumen to surmount challenges. Aware that every triumph was a manifestation of Allah’s divine benevolence, he sought refuge solely in Him. His humility, magnanimity, empathy, and mercy were palpable, to the extent that he commanded that even a wounded adversary should be spared from harm.

**O Allah! Bestow upon us the patience and determination to pursue our endeavors, and through the blessings of the vast knowledge and wisdom You have granted to Tiryâki Hasan Pasha, grant us our portion!**

**Âmîn!..**





## FROM SOLDIER TO PASHA

The **Kayihan** (or Kayi) **tribe**, which played a pivotal role in the foundation of the Ottoman state, originated from the Mahan region. During the era of **Jalâladdîn-Harzamshah**, who valiantly resisted the Mongol invasions, they gained their initial military experience under his leadership. When the Mongols obliterated the Harzam Turkish state, this tribe migrated to Anatolia alongside other Muslim-Turkish groups and sought refuge from the Seljukid Sultan. Recognizing the potential of a community that had weathered such tribulations, the Sultan settled them in Söğüt.

Consequently, the survival of their tribe in Söğüt hinged on their capacity to stand firm against the Byzantine rulers. The early Ottomans comprehended this reality and swiftly realized the necessity of organizing every able-bodied individual as defenders of Islam. From the outset, they understood that expanding and safeguarding their position demanded a potent military force. Gradually, they fostered a military cohesion within a small tribe, ultimately molding it into the most formidable army globally.

Commencing with Osman Ghazi, this army would go on to achieve remarkable triumphs. Its strength was rooted in disciplined strategy, military tactics, and adept weapon deployment. One **core principle** underscored their journey:

Advancement was premised on merit, not age or formal education – distinct from the practice in many contemporary armies. The army encompassed a diverse array of active personnel, spanning from foot soldiers to commissioned officers. Put differently, military service was not confined to a one or two-year term, as seen in numerous modern nations; it was a lifelong profession. Individuals who embarked on their military journey as children persisted until their beards turned gray.

Contemporary military formations often boast a professional officer corps alongside enlisted conscripts serving temporary roles. In contrast, the Ottomans maintained a standing army. In subsequent eras, while officers received specialized education to impart advanced military techniques as weaponry grew more intricate, soldiers who committed to military service as a career commenced their journey after undergoing basic training. Moreover, they encountered no barriers to achieving ranks on par with highly educated officers. Merit in battle constituted the key to promotions. This divergence in career paths between those without formal military education (*alayli*) and those with it (*mektepli*) led to a distinction in later Ottoman periods, with the former sometimes facing a degree of disdain.

However, many Anatolian youths entered the military realm as ordinary soldiers and progressively ascended to commanding heights. One such figure was the eminent commander of recent history, **Shâhîd Abdulazîz Pasha**.





*An Exemplar of Courage and Heroism on the Battlefields*

## **ABDULAZAL PASHA**

*(?-1898)*

Abdulazal Pasha emerged as a prominent military figure during the reign of Sultan Abdulhamîd II, leaving a notable legacy in the annals of Ottoman history. He was a person of significance who, from an early age, became a hafiz (one who commits the Quran to memory) and was raised with the values of Anatolian culture.

Despite initially enlisting in the army as a common soldier at the age of sixteen, he rapidly ascended the ranks due to his exceptional dedication and merit.

His pivotal role was witnessed during the **Crimean War**, where he demonstrated his bravery and capabilities in quelling uprisings in **Karadağ** and **Crete**. His reputation further solidified as he stood as the trusted comrade of Ghazi Osman Pasha during the heroic defense of **Plevne**. His valor caught the attention of Sultan Abdulhamîd Khan II, who personally commended his unwavering contributions and awarded him the esteemed **Plevne Medal** in recognition of his extraordinary heroism.

Throughout his life, Abdulazal Pasha showcased immense sacrifice and courage on the battlefield. His resolute spirit was particularly evident during the Ottoman-Greek War of 1897. This conflict would prove to be the final chapter in his illustrious journey, as he attained martyrdom at the age of seventy, leaving behind a tale of epic proportions.

During his tenure as a pasha, the Ottoman state faced a series of external and internal threats that inflicted substantial damage. The Greeks, perceiving this turmoil as an opportunity, sought to expand their dominion. They initiated their strategy by dispatching troops to Crete and unleashing brutal atrocities and massacres against the Turkish populace on the island. In response, the Ottomans issued a demand for Greece to evacuate Crete within a six-day window. When Greece remained indifferent to this ultimatum, the Ottoman state declared war.

Amidst this conflict, Abdulazal Pasha was assigned the command of the Second Brigade of the Alasonya army. At the time, Greek forces were mounting offensives along the Ottoman border in their quest for success.

Without delay, Abdulazal Pasha sprang into action and swiftly reached the border where Ottoman soldiers in the defense towers valiantly resisted the Greek forces besieging them. Despite the relentless barrage of cannon fire and bullets, these courageous soldiers displayed unwavering determination and sacrifice, one after another.

Upon witnessing this heart-wrenching scene, Abdulazal Pasha attempted to rush to the aid of these brave defenders. However, the enemy’s intense artillery barrages prevented him from getting close to the towers. Filled with compassion and sorrow, he rode his horse back and forth, expressing his sadness and frustration:

*“–O my Lord! Our brethren are being consumed by flames and falling as martyrs. These courageous sons of the Ummah are perishing within the towers. If only the night would fall, so we could come to their aid!”* He continued to be restless, anxiously awaiting the nightfall.

As darkness finally descended, he assembled a battalion of soldiers and successfully extricated the fervent defenders from the towers. The following day, Abdulazal Pasha launched a significant assault. He played an active role in the battle, leading his soldiers with lightning-like swiftness toward the en-



emy lines. Enveloped in the throes of combat, they fervently chanted «Allah, Allah» as they pressed forward. Seeing his commanders concerned, they warned the seventy-year-old commander that he might be struck by a stray enemy bullet and should step back slightly. In response, the intrepid and seasoned commander, Abdulazal Pasha, fearlessly countered:

**“–O warriors! You are well aware that no one’s life ends before its appointed time. I have witnessed this truth repeatedly on the battlefields for fifty years. Furthermore, you should know that my heart has long burned with the yearning to attain martyrdom. Hence, do not dare ask me to relinquish my position and retreat!”**

Then, he turned to his brave soldiers, and under the hail of bullets, he said:

*“My courageous men! The time has come to impart a profound lesson to the enemy who takes aim at our faith, our dignity, and our homeland. Let us launch our assault with the resounding call of «Allah, Allah»!.. If we can conquer that hill, a vast field of victory adorned with blossoms will unveil itself before us.*

*My ghazis! Your mothers nurtured you for these very days! Sultan Abdulhamîd II, the caliph of the world, has raised you for these moments.*

*Now, if I am destined to become a martyr before we capture that hill, I beseech you, do not lay me to rest where I fall. Instead, seize that hill and bury me there! If accomplishing this proves unattainable, then leave my lifeless body upon the ground for the wolves and the birds of the sky!*

*Allah’s divine assistance shall be our guiding light, the Prophet’s benevolent support shall shape our fate, and the favor of the caliph shall stand as our protector. Forge ahead, my brave warriors! In the name of Allah, always surge forward!..”*

Having voiced these impassioned words, Abdulazal Pasha immediately spurred his horse onward, charging toward the enemy lines. His fellow Ottoman soldiers followed suit, rallying behind him like a tempest, as they unleashed a ferocious assault upon the Greek forces. Overwhelmed by the unexpected aggression, the Greek troops found themselves unable to withstand the onslaught and began to scatter in retreat. Meanwhile, Abdulazal Pasha exhibited the vigor and agility of a young commander, skillfully directing the troops with unwavering enthusiasm.



Amidst this intense battlefield action, a bullet found its mark on his forehead. In that moment, Abdulazal Pasha achieved the second source of rapture he had long yearned for: the divine grace of martyrdom. Embraced by the exalted sanctity of martyrdom, he spread his wings to the realm of divine mercy, reuniting with his Creator.

As his lifeless body was removed from his horse and gently placed on the ground, his countenance retained traces of ecstasy and contentment. He had achieved the honor and glory of martyrdom for the Beloved, his face still bearing the marks of delight. It is said that during a visit to his hometown before his final battle, he confided in his close companions:

**“–Allah has graced me with the blessings of being a hafiz and the rank of a pasha. Now, my wish is for a third blessing – the rank of martyrdom!”**

Undoubtedly, his supplication was answered, and Allah granted him the blessing of martyrdom.

**May Allah’s mercy be upon him!**

His funeral procession was solemnly held at Pürnarstepe, and he was laid to rest in the cemetery of the Alasonya Çarşı Mosque. In recognition of his remarkable contributions, dedication, and selfless sacrifices for his faith, nation, and state, Sultan Abdulhamîd II commissioned the construction of a magnificent mausoleum over his grave. This mausoleum stands as a tribute of gratitude, ensuring that his memory remains alive and revered, inspiring future generations with his legacy of valor and devotion.

Beyond his prowess as a seasoned and fearless commander, Abdulazal Pasha also exhibited a steadfast commitment to religious principles and ethics. As a hafiz who had memorized the Quran, he regularly recited the entire scripture, infusing his surroundings with the profound resonance of his beautiful recitation.

**O Allah! Grant honor and elevation to the ranks of all individuals like Abdulazal Pasha, who dedicate themselves and attain martyrdom in service to your cause! May their deeds and sacrifices be forever remembered and inspire the hearts of those who follow.**

**Âmîn!..**





## OTTOMAN ARCHITECTURE

Ottoman architecture stands as a testament to the fact that a state's greatness cannot be solely built on military conquests. While military victories might offer temporary glory, a lasting civilization requires more profound foundations that incorporate faith, love, and cultural achievements. States that focus exclusively on warfare often leave behind a legacy of ruins and transitory dominance. Historical examples such as the Mongol invasions and Alexander the Great's campaigns serve as reminders of this pattern.

In contrast, true greatness emerges when a state engages in civil initiatives that support and complement its military and political accomplishments. This holistic approach leads to a well-rounded civilization, where achievements span science, art, politics, and more. The Ottoman state recognized this truth and demonstrated its commitment to excellence by excelling in various scholarly disciplines and fine arts during the sixteenth century.

The sixteenth century is often referred to as the "**Turkish Century**" due to the remarkable achievements across different fields. Alongside the military

and political brilliance under rulers like Yavuz and Kânûnî, this era witnessed extraordinary accomplishments in knowledge and the arts.

Among these achievements, **Ottoman architecture** stands out as an exceptional manifestation of greatness. The Ottomans skillfully merged architectural techniques from various civilizations, creating a distinct and refined style that was characterized by a harmonious blend of foreign influences.

This unique architectural approach gave rise to mosques and sanctuaries that became integral parts of society, offering serene and peaceful spaces. Ottoman architecture outshone both Eastern architecture and the somber, dark churches of the West. Unlike the gloomy church architecture that constricted individuals' souls and isolated them from the external world, Ottoman architecture embraced bright and tranquil spaces that instilled a sense of calm and reflected deep religious devotion.

Under the masterful hands of architects like Mîmar Sinan, Ottoman architecture pushed the boundaries of design and ushered in new possibilities. The brilliance of Ottoman architectural achievements appeared to reach an unparalleled zenith, setting the Ottomans apart in the world of architecture.





*An Unparalleled Genius Who Reflected the Power and Nobility  
of the Ottomans in Architecture*

## **MÎMAR SINAN: THE CHIEF ARCHITECT**

*(1489/90-1588)*

Mîmar Sinan, renowned as ‘the head architect of the sultans’ (*ser-mîmârân-ı hâssa*), left an indelible mark on Ottoman architecture and remains an icon in architectural history.

According to some sources, his father was **Abdulmannân**, and his grandfather was **Dulger Yûsuf**. Sinan was recruited from Ağırnas, a village in Caesarea (Kayseri), as part of the *devshirme* (child levy) system during Sultan Selîm’s reign, in which children were recruited from Anatolia alongside Rumelia. He acknowledged his humble origins in a couplet he composed upon the death of Sultan Selîm, expressing his loyalty and gratitude to the Sultan.

*I am a devshirme of the present age*

....

*May his [i.e. Sultan Selîm’s] abode be a garden in Paradise*

While some historical sources might debate Sinan's exact ethnic background, it is important to focus on his character, achievements, and contributions rather than dwelling on such matters. Sinan's sincere devotion to Islam and his upbringing in the heart of Anatolian Muslim society were the key influences on his life and work. Therefore, rather than getting entangled in discussions about his ethnicity, it is more meaningful to recognize and appreciate Sinan's legacy in the realm of architecture. His artistic brilliance and innovative architectural style laid the groundwork for the development of Turkish architecture. Today, architects and enthusiasts alike can draw from Sinan's architectural achievements to enrich and revitalize Turkish architecture, forging new paths while paying homage to his remarkable contributions.

Sinan's early years were marked by a combination of education and firsthand experiences gained through his participation in battles and campaigns. His seven-year education provided him with a solid foundation, and his involvement with the Janissaries during battles allowed him to observe and study artistic monuments in various regions. These experiences enriched his creative abilities and contributed to the development of his unique artistic style.

During the siege of the Van fortress, a pivotal moment in his early career, Sinan's artistic talent was first revealed. Grand Vizier **Lutfu Pasha** tasked him with building ships to gather information about the Iranians across Lake Van. Lutfu Pasha called Sinan and said:

*"See to it that the ships are built!"*

Despite the limited resources, Sinan managed to construct three galleys in a remarkably short period. His quick and skillful accomplishment earned him praise and recognition from Lutfu Pasha.

Sinan's exceptional abilities and achievements led to his rapid ascent through the ranks. He was appointed as the head of the palace guards, known as *Hasekibaşı*, a prestigious position within the Janissary corps. His expertise in building and engineering proved to be crucial during military campaigns, contributing to the success of the Ottoman forces.

An illustrative example of his engineering prowess was demonstrated during Sultan Kânûnî Sultan Süleyman's Moldavian campaign. Sinan constructed a bridge over the Prut River within just thirteen days. Although some officials suggested building a fortress to protect the bridge, this idea was rejected to



maintain the soldiers' morale. Sultan Kânûnî liked this idea and praised Sinan, saying:

*“It should not be forgotten that when Muslims first set foot on the European continent, they burned the ships that carried them through the Strait of Gibraltar. We must also show the same determination. Are we going to build a fortress here and create a gateway for the soldiers to escape when they become distressed?”*

Sultan Kânûnî possessed a remarkable ability to recognize and appreciate the talents of skilled individuals, particularly in the arts. This quality led him to discover Mîmar Sinan, recognizing his exceptional abilities and appointing him as the successor to **Ajam Ali**, the head architect responsible for the sultan's personal projects. This decision marked the beginning of a glorious era in Ottoman architecture, characterized by the creation of magnificent structures that were like rows of pearls, showcasing a divine gift to the world.

Under Sinan's guidance, Ottoman architecture flourished, producing an array of unprecedented and awe-inspiring works. Sinan's approach was to surpass all previous achievements with each new project, embracing the motto **“Let it be unprecedented!”** This mindset led to the creation of numerous groundbreaking structures that left an indelible mark on the architectural landscape.

Sinan's contributions to Istanbul were particularly significant. After the city's conquest, the need to reconstruct Istanbul with an Ottoman architectural style was paramount. This endeavor was highlighted early on, with Sultan Mehmed II recognizing the importance of utilizing the spoils of war for charitable and constructive purposes in the city. Sultan Mehmed II hosted a banquet at the Hippodrome for those who participated in the war effort, and Akşamsaddîn made a speech in which he said:

*“O warriors! By the Will of Allah, our sins shall be pardoned. But do not waste the spoils of war; rather, spend it on good works and charitable acts for the people in Istanbul! And always obey and love your Sultan!”*

The reconstruction of Istanbul involved not only the efforts of the sultans but also the establishment of numerous pious foundations. These endeavors aimed to reshape the city's architectural and social landscape, and they found their ultimate realization through the visionary leadership of Mîmar Sinan.

Indeed, Mîmar Sinan's architectural legacy greatly enriched the Ottoman capital with its unparalleled elegance and grandeur. One of Sinan's distinctive approaches was to strategically position his structures on elevated sites or hills, ensuring that they commanded attention and showcased their magnificence to the city below. This method not only added to the visual impact of the buildings but also provided a sense of spiritual elevation and connection to the divine.

Sinan's architectural style was deeply rooted in Islamic and Turkish traditions, resulting in places of worship that blended spirituality and aesthetic beauty in harmonious unity. One of his earliest major works, the **Şehzâde Mosque**, stands as a testament to his innovative approach and artistic vision. This mosque, dedicated to the memory of Şehzâde Mehmed, the son of Sultan Kânûnî Sultan Sulaymân, is often referred to as the “**work of an apprentice**,” marking the beginning of Sinan's remarkable career as an architect.

Another notable achievement by Sinan is the **Rustem Pasha Mosque**, renowned for its intricate tile work that adorns the interior. The mosque's ornate decoration gives it a jewel-like quality, and Sinan's masterful touch is evident in every detail. The Rustem Pasha Mosque stands as a prime example of how Sinan elevated the art of architecture by integrating aesthetic elements with spiritual significance.



Mîmar Sinan's contributions extended beyond architectural masterpieces; his remarkable achievements in water engineering significantly impacted the well-being of Istanbul's population and beyond. Under the directive of Sultan Sulaymân the Magnificent, Sinan embarked on an ambitious endeavor to address the acute water shortage faced by the Muslim population in Istanbul. This project involved a comprehensive plan to ensure the availability and distribution of fresh water throughout the city, underscoring the Sultan's commitment to the welfare of his subjects.

The magnitude of Sultan Sulaymân's dedication to resolving the water scarcity issue is evident in his proclamation:

*“My goal is to have water flow to every neighborhood! Fountains shall be built in suitable areas... Wells are to be dug in places where it is not fea-*



*sible... This way, fresh water will be distributed everywhere... And all my subjects will benefit from it, and will pray for the continuation of my state!..”*

Sinan executed this vision by constructing numerous fountains across different parts of Istanbul. He also implemented innovative solutions, such as the invention of spiral-tube taps, to prevent water wastage. The amount of resources allocated to this endeavor surpassed even the funds allocated to grand structures like the Sulaymâniye Mosque, demonstrating the importance the Ottoman leadership placed on providing basic necessities to their citizens.

Furthermore, Sinan’s water engineering initiatives extended beyond Istanbul. Mihrimah Sultan, Sultan Sulaymân’s daughter known for her charitable contributions, tasked Sinan with repairing the aqueducts that carried the “**Ayn-i Zubayda**” water to the sacred lands. This effort served the needs of both the local population and pilgrims, highlighting the Ottoman state’s commitment to providing for its people and visitors.

Indeed, Mîmar Sinan’s legacy in water engineering is an integral part of the Ottoman legacy, often referred to as “**the civilization of water.**” His dedication to improving the quality of life through innovative water solutions exemplifies the holistic approach the Ottomans took in shaping their civilization, where architecture, infrastructure, and the well-being of their subjects were intricately interwoven.



The construction of the **Sulaymâniye Mosque** marked a pivotal moment in Mîmar Sinan’s career, as well as in Ottoman architectural history. Commissioned by Sultan Sulaymân the Magnificent, this mosque was not only a testament to architectural brilliance but also a spiritual endeavor that bore the guidance of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ himself.

According to a well-known tradition, Sultan Sulaymân had a dream in which the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ appeared to him and provided explicit instructions on the location, design, and features of the mosque. In his dream, the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ guided Sultan Sulaymân about the placement of essential elements like the pulpit, mihrab, and podium. Overwhelmed with emotion, Sultan Sulaymân woke from the dream with tears of gratitude and immediately set his heart on fulfilling this divine directive.





Without hesitation, Sultan Sulaymân approached Mîmar Sinan, entrusting him with the construction of this sacred mosque. Astonishingly, Sinan informed the Sultan that he too had experienced the same dream, recounting the Prophet's instructions to build the mosque in the exact same manner. This shared dream confirmed the divine significance of the project and further solidified the bond between the Sultan and the architect.

In response, Sultan Sulaymân, filled with joy and certainty, issued an imperial edict to begin the construction of the Sulaymâniye Mosque. Sinan, who had meticulously prepared for this moment, wasted no time and immediately commenced the project. The construction began with the laying of the first stone by the Grand Mufti Ebussuud Efendi.

Despite the technological limitations of the time, Mîmar Sinan's mastery and the commitment of countless workers and artisans allowed the mosque to be completed within a remarkably short span of seven years. The Sulaymâniye Mosque, with its awe-inspiring size, exquisite architectural details, and deep spiritual significance, stands as a lasting testament to the harmony of divine guidance and human craftsmanship.

Sinan's unrivaled mastery in capturing the grandeur of the Ottoman era through architecture is strikingly evident in the Sulaymâniye Mosque. During the initial stages of the project, Sinan skillfully constructed a monument that ignited a sense of excitement within the hearts of the people. To achieve this, he sourced four imposing columns from diverse locations – Alexandria, Baalbek, Saray-ı Amire, and Kızıtaşı – which became integral to the mosque's construction. The pristine white marble used in the building was quarried from the Marmara island, while the striking green marble hailed from Arabia. The entrance doors, crafted from ebony, exuded an air of opulence, while the walls were adorned with meticulously detailed tiles from Iznik. The artistic flair of calligrapher Karahisârî and his protégé Hasan Chelebi embellished the mosque with exquisite calligraphic masterpieces.

According to tradition, Karahisârî, responsible for inscribing the dome of the mosque, demonstrated such meticulous attention to detail in his calligraphy that it became an essential part of the mosque's grandeur. In the final moments of embellishing the last letter, his dedication was so profound that he forfeited his eyesight, rendering him permanently blind. In a sacrificial act,



he closed the window to the world, offering his eyes to the splendor of this majestic mosque.

Sinan, a master of bringing together an array of talented artists like Karahisârî, skillfully intertwined serenity and nobility in this extraordinary masterpiece. He sculpted a simple yet harmonious silhouette, skillfully fashioning the building's form around the central dome in a way that it gracefully ascends from the ground, culminating in a breathtaking "unity." The intricate interplay of the central dome with the half-domes and other smaller domes stands as a magnificent embodiment of the esoteric principle found in Sufism:

**"The unity in multiplicity, and multiplicity in unity."**

Those who grasp the essence of this principle find themselves immersed in a spiritual ecstasy, pondering whether the *tarâwîh* prayers conducted within these walls occur on earthly ground or transcend into the heavens.

The Sulaymâniye Mosque unfolds as a captivating sequence of profound symbolism of the "One," representing the journey toward the ultimate unity of Allah. Amidst an abundance of intricate details, Sinan expertly weaves a tapestry that continually guides one's gaze back to the central unity, in a display of boundless elegance and beauty. Sinan's brilliance lies in his ability to harmoniously integrate every element within the composition, allowing each to shine while contributing to the grand design. This testament to his extraordinary diligence, precision, and genius is indisputable.

Within the dome's interior and corners, Sinan ingeniously placed 64 cubes, each measuring 50 centimeters in height, their openings oriented toward the interior. This subtle arrangement grants the mosque a delicate **acoustic** quality. Moreover, the intentional gaps between the inner and outer domes, spanning two to three meters, not only enhance the acoustics but also regulate the temperature during varying seasons. Sinan's dedication to acoustic excellence is evident, as he reportedly mended parts of the mosque damaged by the bubbling sounds of water from nargileh pipes. Although some questioned the prolonged construction time and voiced their grievances to Sultan Sulaymân, Sinan remained resolute and unwavering in his pursuit. His sincerity and sacrifice propelled him toward his vision, ultimately yielding results that garnered admiration from all quarters. One poet eloquently captures this awe-inspiring triumph with these words:




*«What profundity is this!» I said to myself,  
 «What mystery is this!» echoed the playful sounds...  
 Grandeur, subtlety, meaning, color, presentation...  
 How did Sinan have them all coalesce?*

Sinan held the grand dome in deep reverence, likening it to a symbol for the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. He envisioned the dome as a representation of the sacred duty to channel the recitations of the Quran, prayers, and other acts of devotion to the faithful congregated within the mosque. Just as the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ conveyed the divine instructions from Allah to his Ummah, the dome stood as a conduit to transmit spiritual guidance to believers. This profound analogy underlines Sinan’s intricate understanding of architecture as a medium for conveying spiritual and religious significance.

Beyond this allegorical significance, the exquisite harmony between the larger central dome and the surrounding smaller domes resonates with a sense of tranquility that touches the very essence of the soul. This harmony is so profound that it inspired a poet to muse:

*Like a family all around, are these small domes  
 The offspring of the larger one?  
 Or are they the doves or pigeons  
 Of this blessed abode?*

The comparison conjures images of unity and continuity, where the smaller domes appear as extensions of the grand central dome, much like a family united under a common purpose. This poetic inquiry captures the sense of interconnectedness and unity that Sinan artfully imbued into the architectural composition, elevating it beyond the realm of construction and into the realm of contemplation and spiritual reflection.

The vibrant windows, skillfully crafted by the renowned master **Ibrahim Usta**, stand as yet another masterpiece within the mosque’s design. Positioned above the mihrab, these windows not only contribute to the visual splendor of the mosque but also hold a deeper symbolic meaning. Sinan attributed the sunlight streaming through these windows to the wings of the Angel Gabriel , infusing the space with an ethereal and transcendent quality. This connection to the divine messenger Gabriel adds an additional layer of spiritual significance to the mosque’s already rich symbolism.





In a similar vein, Sinan drew a parallel between the four imposing main columns, each measuring 9.02 meters in height, 1.14 meters in diameter, and weighing between forty to fifty tons, and the first four caliphs ﷺ. Through this analogy, he wove historical and religious connotations into the mosque's architecture, elevating it beyond the realm of mere construction and into a realm of profound spiritual reflection:

*This mosque is like the Kaaba,  
These four columns are like the four Companions ﷺ*

The poetic comparison underscores Sinan's ability to infuse architectural elements with layers of meaning and historical resonance, transforming the physical structure into a medium for conveying spiritual and cultural narratives.

Moreover, the four majestic minarets of the mosque carry a specific symbolic significance. They serve as representations of Kânûnî Sultan Sulaymân, the fourth Ottoman Sultan subsequent to the conquest of Istanbul and the tenth ruler of the Ottoman state.

With its minarets reaching the sky, the mosque resembles hands raised in prayer and supplication to Allah. The poet expresses his emotions upon witnessing this scene:

*The column stands tall in qiyâm, the arch bows low in rukû';  
The minarets are supplicating in all their forms...  
As we open our two palms in prayer,  
It supplicates for us with its four hands!*

*The clouds migrating from continent to continent  
Kissing the minarets as they pass by!  
Blessed nights spread their stars  
Over its blessed dome as they pass by!*

The mosque also has an **ink chamber** where the highest quality ink is produced thanks to the regulated airflow.

During the construction of the mosque, Sinan took a one-year hiatus to allow the building's foundation to properly settle. In reality, Sinan's absence was tied to the restoration and reconstruction of the ancient waterways known as Ayn-ı Zubayda, stretching from Baghdad to Arafat. However, Mihrimah



Sultan, the esteemed daughter of Sultan Sulaymân, who dedicated all her resources to this endeavor, wished to conceal her benevolent actions. As a result, it was made to appear as if Sinan had vanished unexpectedly. His disappearance was widely attributed to a necessary halt in the construction process, aimed at ensuring the solidification of the foundation, considering the Sultan's eagerness to expedite the mosque's construction.



According to tradition, it is believed that one of the Frankish kings once sent a high-quality marble intended for use inside the mosque. However, Sinan, harboring suspicions about a non-Muslim monarch's motives for aiding in mosque construction, had the marble split. This act revealed a concealed cross, purposely hidden during its creation. As a didactic gesture, Sinan positioned the marble in a neighborhood where pedestrians would traverse it, serving as a reminder. This marble remains on display in that location to this day.

Mirroring the grandeur seen throughout the Sulaymâniye Mosque, its foundations also exhibit remarkable magnificence. These foundations are structured as a grid system, facilitating easy mobility. Covered drains made of wood were constructed over these pathways at the mosque's central areas. These conduits led to reservoirs that distributed water across all sections of the mosque, offering a form of "climate control" akin to a heating and cooling mechanism. Regrettably, some of these systems have been decommissioned or obscured with stone lids. When these lids are opened, the resulting airflow is truly remarkable. The foundation was also engineered to enhance resilience against earthquakes, allowing the mosque to remain steadfast despite enduring numerous seismic events over the centuries. With the weight of history upon it, the mosque gains an air of growing mystique with each passing moment.

Mîmar Sinan's work presents numerous marvels that defy explanation considering the scientific and technical capabilities of his era. One such marvel is the interior ornamentation involving 300 ostrich eggs imported from Africa to deter spiders from weaving webs on the domes.

Evidently, Mîmar Sinan's role extended beyond mere construction; he aimed to manifest the unparalleled essence of Islamic architecture within his creations. He fastidiously selected every material, ensuring the longevity of his work across centuries. He innovatively combined these materials, achieving both economic and aesthetic harmony.



However, Kânûnî Sultan Sulaymân's perspective was understandable. Believing that such an exceptional masterpiece could not be expedited, and conscious of his advanced age, he expressed concern about witnessing the project's completion. His urgency in urging Sinan to hasten the construction was, therefore, warranted.

Mîmar Sinan, on the contrary, adhered to the belief that time, knowledge, and materials must be judiciously employed to achieve the pinnacle of craftsmanship in his undertakings. Furthermore, the myriad projects he accomplished over his extensive lifespan were not the result of concentrating on a single endeavor at a time. Rather, he adeptly managed the simultaneous progress of numerous ventures as the leader of a sizable team. However, this approach led some of Sinan's critics, fueled by envy of his esteemed reputation in the Sultan's eyes, to propagate baseless falsehoods, alleging that he intentionally prolonged his work. Among the murmurs were assertions such as:

"—Your Majesty! The stability of the dome is questionable!" Concurrently, certain governmental officials, in response to the apparent delay, asserted:

"—This is part of the supplementary aspects of the mosque," and thus directed Sinan to initiate the construction of a mausoleum. They then approached the Sultan, spreading these unfounded rumors.

Incensed by these unfolding events, Kânûnî Sultan Sulaymân abruptly visited the construction site one day. Sinan, engrossed in arranging the mihrab and minbar during that moment, was evidently tasked with numerous time-intensive assignments for the grand mosque. Sultan Sulaymân, his temper flaring, addressed his Chief Architect:

"—Mîmar Sinan! Why do you divert your attention to other tasks instead of dedicating yourself to my mosque? Shouldn't the architectural legacy of my forefather Sultan Mehmed Khan suffice as an example for you?"

In response, he stated with a firm tone:

"—You must promptly apprise me of the mosque's readiness for worship; the repercussions will be clear if you fail to do so!

Though taken aback by these words, Sinan was already aware of the circulating rumors and thus embraced the Sultan's ire. Deep in thought, he gazed into the distance. After a contemplative pause, he addressed the Sultan with unwavering resolve:

“–Your Highness, with Allah’s blessing, it shall be completed within two months...”

This declaration left the Sultan astonished, his anger nearly supplanted by a creeping belief in the allegations against Sinan. Opportunistic onlookers reveled in this unfolding drama, deeming the prospect of finishing the Sulaymâniye Mosque within two months as nothing short of an impossible aspiration.

However, as those two months elapsed, Sinan defied expectations. Contrary to anticipation, he tirelessly navigated challenges, working day and night to finalize the remaining segments of the mosque. In the presence of the Sultan and amidst the incredulous gazes of all present, he presented the keys to the mosque.

Kânûnî, both astonished and impressed by this monumental accomplishment, expressed his profound satisfaction:

*“–The honor of inaugurating this mosque for worship belongs to our esteemed Chief Architect Sinan, who has constructed it with magnificent and splendid precision.”*

Having imbibed the virtue of humility as the foremost lesson of his craft, Sinan reflected upon the selfless dedication of the calligrapher Karahisârî. While showcasing the outward splendor of his architectural prowess, Sinan also revealed the profound depths of his character by modestly responding to the Sultan’s words:

*“–Your Majesty! Karahisârî devoted his eyes in adorning this mosque with his calligraphy. I beseech you to bestow this honor upon him!”*

In response, Kânûnî sanctioned the mosque’s inauguration to be carried out by Karahisârî, a moving ceremony that moved those in attendance to tears.

Subsequently, a dedicated team of 275 individuals was assigned to the service of this grand mosque. The call to prayer resounded five times a day for countless years, gracing Istanbul with an enchanting symphony of sound, unity, and benevolence.

With the completion of this masterpiece, Mîmar Sinan ascended to the zenith of fame and distinction. He was heralded as a visionary of the Ottoman epoch, adorned with titles such as **«the preeminent architect of the world and the unparalleled engineer of the era»**. Only architecture, infused with





such spiritual devotion, could attain such an extraordinary embodiment of worship's essence.

The sentiments of Yaḥyâ Kamâl during his early morning visit to the Sulaymâniye Mosque on Eid are eloquently conveyed:

.....

*Some rush to the doors from the sky, others from the earth,  
Entering the divine edifice in a seamless procession...*

.....

*The boldest and mightiest among armies and nations,  
Dedicated such a structure to their beloved Allah.  
This is the proper form of the architecture he envisioned,  
A resplendent sanctuary for the last religion.  
To behold eternity from every vista,  
This hallowed hill on Istanbul's horizon was ordained.  
The architect and countless workers mastered the stone,  
Stone and burden borne by generals and common soldiers.  
Opening a gateway to the heavens,  
For this vast and free homeland, day and night.  
So that legions of souls may traverse into eternal mercy.  
The architect of this victory is but one soldier.*

*O noble mosque! Today, I have comprehended your essence,  
I am proud of being your inheritor today.  
Once regarded as a geometrical masterpiece,  
But now, under your dome, looking at this community;  
I feel like I have entered the aura of forgiveness of my ancestors,  
An aspiration I've yearned for and envisioned across the years.  
I witness a multitude, one voice, one heart, one faith,  
Harmonizing in spirit and converging in unity.  
As they invoke Allah in unison,  
A wave of a thousand takbîrs coalesces into a singular resonance!..*

Indeed, it is a noteworthy fact that Mimar Sinan, the mastermind behind the construction of the Sulaymâniye Mosque along with its adjuncts like the bathhouse, library, almshouse, and madrasah, effectively crafting an entire city within itself, seems to have materialized **Sultan Bâyezîd Khan II's** foresight concerning Ottoman architecture in bygone eras. His exceptional insight





not only gave birth to landmarks like the Sulaymâniye Mosque but also instigated a plethora of advancements.

Through these groundbreaking undertakings, Mîmar Sinan, under the patronage of **Kânûnî Sultan Sulaymân**, led the construction of almshouses, complexes, fountains, inns, bathhouses, palaces, and libraries throughout the Ottoman realm, a legacy that continued during the reign of **Sultan Selîm Khan II**. His prolific body of work remains a riddle, confounding us as to how he managed to accomplish such feats within a single lifetime. After all, he achieved in one lifetime what might have taken four centuries to accomplish.

Despite his unmatched expertise and merit, Mîmar Sinan's choice not to inscribe a visible signature on the resplendent Sulaymâniye stands as a testament to the sublimity and purpose embedded within his magnum opus. His humility and dedication are enshrined as he erected his own tomb outside yet near the Sulaymâniye complex, accompanied by his modest signature at the base of this historic artifact.

In the sway of these exalted emotions, a poet pens:

*Surpassing all reckoning, his magnum opus stands,  
The architect retreats from the foreground, hand in hand...  
Triumph resides here, humility dwells here:  
The creation's grandeur, the signature a mere dot!*

*Beholding these two stalwarts,  
Whom he dispatched as paragons to guide us,  
I beseech, «O Allah, unto us, noble companions,  
Send Sinan and Sulaymân!»*



The **Selîmiye Mosque**, another of Mîmar Sina's extraordinary achievements, following in the footsteps of the Sulaymâniye Mosque, which he humbly regarded as an "apprentice's work," radiates distinct artistic finesse and splendor in every facet, standing out among all preceding masterpieces.

Mîmar Sinan was an impressive eighty-four years of age when he embarked on the creation of the Selîmiye Mosque. The inception of this endeavor carries significant instructive insights. The narrative unfolds as follows:



Despite the Ottomans' commanding influence over the Mediterranean, the island of Cyprus remained unconquered due to the brevity of Kânûnî's lifespan. This persistent issue generated unease, posing a threat to the security of Muslim pilgrims journeying to Mecca via the sea route. Consequently, Sultan Selîm II was resolute in his determination to conquer Cyprus, a feat eluding his father, Kânûnî.

Subsequently, state dignitaries convened to transform the aspiration of Cypriot conquest into a reality. After extensive deliberations, they issued an imperial decree and dispatched the imperial navy to sea, pledging:

*"If the conquest of this island is achieved, I shall erect a grand mosque as an act of gratitude to Allah!"*

Through divine favor, the conquest culminated in success, annexing Cyprus into the Muslim domain. However, Sultan Selim II's commitment to his pledge waned amidst the demands of state affairs and other diversions. A short while later, the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ appeared to him in a dream, conveying the following message:

***"—O Selîm! You desired, and Allah granted. Uphold your promise. Erect the mosque in Edirne as you pledged, employing the spoils from Cyprus!.."***

Sultan Selim II awoke, awestruck and amazed. His remorse for failing to honor his word was coupled with profound elation at encountering the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ in his dream.

Come morning, he recounted his experience to his confidant, Mustafa Pasha, who listened intently and responded with astonishment:

*"—Your Majesty! Curiously, you share the very dream I was about to reveal!"*

The Sultan and his trusted confidant, both gratified by the shared dream, voiced their praise and gratitude to Allah. Emotions overflowed, and tears of joy flowed as they sent blessings and salutations upon the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ.

Without delay, Sultan Selîm II summoned an assembly of state dignitaries, including ministers, ambassadors, and scholars. He resolved to heed the command of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and construct the sanctuary in Edirne. Turning to Sinan, present as the era's foremost architect, he spoke:

*“–O Illustrious Master, who has bestowed upon the Ottoman realm countless mosques and edifices for the benefit of humankind! You’ve heard and comprehended the directive. Let this endeavor stand as an unparalleled creation in the world!”*

Sinan reciprocated with the same fervor, his eyes glistening with tears, he answered:

**“–Your Majesty! As the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ has personally expressed interest in this endeavor, it shall endure unwaveringly, by Allah’s decree, till the end of days!”**

Without delay, the Sultan, accompanied by his retinue and Sinan, embarked for Edirne. Surveying various locations, Sinan identified a fitting site at Sari Bayır Kavak Square, graced by a tulip garden that rendered its surroundings lackluster by comparison.

Yet, the owner, Laleci Baba, possessed a stubborn disposition. He steadfastly resisted the idea of his garden’s obliteration. Even when the Sultan issued a decree stating:

“–The cost of this plot must be met manifold times over!” he remained resolute in protecting his garden, unwavering in his stance.

Ultimately, Laleci Baba relented, swayed by Sinan’s soothing words that invoked the spiritual sign from the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ concerning the Sultan. He generously bequeathed his entire garden for the mosque’s construction, stipulating only the engraving of a single tulip flower on its wall.

Sinan, content with this resolution, fulfilled Laleci Baba’s request by having the tulip motif etched in reverse on the column beneath the muezzin’s platform, an amiable gesture. Consequently, this particular tulip became known as the “wayward flower of a wayward man.” However, Laleci Baba’s ultimate refusal of any compensation and his selfless contribution of his cherished garden in the name of the Divine unquestionably showcased a remarkable virtue. Recognizing this virtuous act, Sinan incorporated not only the requested tulip motif but also echoed the garden’s essence throughout the mosque’s ornamentation. Tiles and patterns were adorned with tulips, hyacinths, violets, roses, carnations, and a vibrant array of blossoms.

A staggering workforce of 14,000 laborers and 400 supervisors toiled in the creation of this magnificent mosque, its foundation laid with grandeur dur-





ing a ceremony attended by Sultan Selim Khan II and Sinan. Encompassing a sprawling area of 22,000 square meters, inclusive of its complex, this masterpiece was painstakingly crafted over six years (1569-1575), every intricate detail attended to.

In the determination of the qiblah's direction, Sinan invested considerable effort. During this process, a venerable man approached him and inquired about his undertaking. Upon learning of the situation, the man pointed to a slab of marble and instructed:

“—O Chief Architect! Ascend that marble, and by Allah's permission, you will clearly discern the qiblah.”

Sinan ascended the designated marble and beheld the Kaaba directly before him, thus pinpointing the qiblah's orientation.



As an expression of gratitude for the triumph of the Cyprus conquest, Sinan, under the patronage of Sultan Selim Khan II, positioned his final masterpiece, the Selimiye Mosque, with an unparalleled brilliance on the Edirne skyline. Irrespective of the direction from which you approach Edirne, your eyes are inevitably drawn to this splendid and refined edifice, its slender and graceful minarets leaving visitors awestruck. These exceptional minarets present themselves as pairs, triplets, and even quadruplets from varying angles.

Among the marvels crafted by Sinan, the design of three distinct staircases within each narrow minaret, allowing ascent without observers seeing one another, stands as a testament to his artistic ingenuity. Furthermore, within the two minarets featuring three pathways, the initial staircase leads solely to the first gallery, the second connects to the first and middle galleries, while the third staircase offers access to all three galleries.

Additionally, Sinan's ability to extend the slender minarets so loftily toward the heavens reflects an entirely different dimension of genius. Some apprentices initially failed to grasp the subtlety of his intentions and queried:

“—O Great Master! Why must the minarets be so tall?”

Sinan responded with an instructive and meaningful retort:



***“–No adversary can enter this land; and even if they manage, they shall not endure! For these minarets shall resound to the Throne till eternity: «This land belongs to Muslims!»..”***

In the annals of architectural history, only the Selîmiye Mosque features the most expansive and shallow dome. This mosque arguably surpasses all other creations in terms of height, lighting arrangement, and spatial expanse.

Evident across his diverse works, Sinan pursued a distinct style for each. Consequently, the single-centered dome design that emerged in the classical Ottoman architectural period garnered an unparalleled aesthetic significance within global architectural history due to his contributions. In Sinan’s designs, the dome boasts a resplendent composition both in external form and internal structure.

Due to the requirement of the congregational layout demanding a square cube foundation, Sinan employed arches and domes in the superstructure to soften this rigid outline. This creative approach established a harmonious interplay between straight lines and opposing curves in Sinan’s mosques, akin to the harmonization of the heavens and earth. It is this brilliance that endows the grand domes designed by Sinan with the illusion of being suspended within the sky.

Sinan, ever attentive to this distinctive characteristic across his oeuvre, bestowed particular consideration upon the size of the dome within the Selîmiye Mosque. In this context, he remarked:

*“I had heard Christian architects boasting: «We have outshone the Muslims; a dome comparable to Hagia Sophia’s could not be erected within the Islamic realm!» These words lingered as a source of vexation in the heart of this humble individual for quite some time. Eventually, by the grace of my Lord, we achieved triumph over the non-Muslim architects by crafting the dome of Selîmiye six zirâ‘ higher and four zirâ‘ wider than that of Hagia Sophia...”*

Sinan internalized and embraced the noble principles of the Islamic world, expressing them vividly in his creations. In response to this manifestation, a poet exclaims with awe:

*Master of inspiration and toil, how grand!  
Enigmas concealed within the stones he laid:  
Generations and centuries stand amazed  
Before the magnificence of this lead and marble!*



Indeed, Sinan embedded numerous enigmas within the stones. Through positioning the muezzin platform in a projection exactly at the dome's center, he conveyed the symbolism of "the **Throne** and the **Universe**" throughout the entirety of the Selîmiye Mosque. Additionally, within the projection of the Throne, he ingeniously represented the *Bayt al-Ma'mûr* (a celestial realm directly above the Kaaba) as well as the **Kaaba** itself. The semi-circular projection from the square plan corresponded to the **Hatîm**, the semi-circular area adjacent to the Kaaba. Sinan meticulously employed exactly half of the Kaaba's dimensions for the muezzin platform. He executed these measurements with such equilibrium and harmony that it appeared as if:

*No hand faltered, no error was made...  
Not even the tiniest particle was displaced.  
Precise as a hair's breath, front and back...  
Each component content with its place.*

Furthermore, within this unparalleled creation:

- a. The five lines of calligraphy symbolize the five pillars of Islam.*
- b. The three pathways within each of the two minarets embody the six articles of faith.*
- c. The twelve legs supporting the muezzin's platform represent the twelve obligatory ritual prayers.*
- d. The four pulpits correspond to the four major Islamic legal schools.*
- e. The cumulative thirty-two doors within the complex mirror the thirty-two obligations in Islam.*
- f. The reverence for the Kaaba is evident in the 999 windows, symbolizing its spiritual significance (it is commonly believed that the Kaaba has a thousand windows).*
- g. The dome's width is purported to have been designed to surpass Christian architectural feats.*

Despite his monumental achievements, Sinan maintained the perspective of a humble ant in the presence of Allah. His mastery over modesty was unparalleled. Amidst the grandeur of his iconic constructions, he remained impervious to pride or arrogance. Within his signatures and seals, he humbly employed phrases such as *mûr-i nâtüvân* ('the feeble ant') and *el-fakîrû'l-*

*hakîr* ('the insignificant creature'), juxtaposed with his title *ser-mîmârân-ı hâssa* ('the chief architect'). When urged to have his name engraved on a plaque upon the completion of the Selîmiye Mosque, he replied:

*"Who am I to inscribe my name within Allah's abode?.."* Thus, he unveiled his profound spiritual depth, resonating with the magnificence of his creations.

Perhaps it was this profound humility that allowed Sinan to relegate the imposing walls of his edifices to the background. Indeed, in his works, the walls recede in significance against the inner façade, within the radiant ambience crafted by ceramic panels, calligraphic inscriptions, ornate embellishments, and windows.

Once more, it is this profound humility that endowed Sinan, who was raised as an ordinary villager, to gradually ascend as a peerless artist and genius within Islamic civilization. This ascent, owed in no small part to the excellence of the Ottoman system, extended not only to world architecture but also to the heights of human creativity.

Across centuries, Sinan's unparalleled stature has garnered admiration and acknowledgment from countless professionals, particularly within the fields of architecture, both domestic and international. Below are some sentiments expressed about his Selîmiye Mosque:

*"I find it difficult to believe that this masterpiece is the product of a human being"* (A European researcher).

*"Even if this great dome were flipped upside down and filled with gold, the architecture of the 20th century would struggle to replicate it without Mîmar Sinan"* (British High Architect Elvis).

*"Artworks on Earth are akin to stars in the sky. The Hagia Sophia is like a moon, but the Selîmiye is a sun!"* (German Ingelbeck).

*"Selîmiye! If I didn't know that Turks built you, I'd assume God did it"* (Bulgarian General Aleksandr).

*"Launching a rocket to the moon is simpler than crafting this masterpiece"* (American High Council of Architects).

*"The Selîmiye's value is greater than its weight in gold."* (A German girl).



*“I would feel ashamed to educate the children of a nation that possesses a creation like the Selîmiye!”* (A German architect).

*“The Selîmiye is the monarch of all terrestrial constructions, and Mîmar Sinan is the king of all architects”* (Italian Fine Arts Gallery Director).

“Before embarking on campaigns, the armies would collectively pray and beseech Allah in the Selîmiye on Fridays” (Ghazi Osman Pasha, Hero of Plevne).

*“Just as the Selîmiye has been passed down to us from the past, we must similarly convey it to the future. For as long as it endures, so do we”* (General Vahit Güneri).

The substantial support that stemmed from Sultan Selîm Khan II’s deep connection with this noble mosque holds significant weight. Influenced by the dream he experienced, he engaged in every facet of the mosque’s construction, even down to the selection of its tile colors.

Thus empowered by this support, Sinan established the mosque’s foundation on the conceptual principle of *ebed-müddet-hizmet* (‘eternal service’) and brought forth that exceptional masterpiece. A poet likens this creation, born from substantial material and spiritual exertion, to a dove poised for flight and offers a warning to future generations:

*Convey to the travelers of the era;  
O pigeons and pairs of doves:  
Do not disturb the graceful swan  
Perched on that hill!*



Furthermore, an examination of the proportions within the two grand works of the eminent architect, the Sulaymâniye and Selîmiye mosques, inevitably reveals the profound symbolism of their foundational composition:

In the Sulaymâniye Mosque, the dome’s elevation from the ground is 45 cubits, and the height of its sphere is 66 cubits. In the Selîmiye Mosque, the diameter of the circle encompassing the centers of the eight supporting columns beneath the dome is 45 cubits. The dome’s perimeter is 45 cubits from the ground, and from there, the minaret’s sphere commences, extending to 66 cubits. According to the abjad calculation, 45 corresponds to the word





“**Adam**,” while 66 corresponds to the word “**Allah**.” In both mosques, the distances of the silhouettes visible in the minarets near the dome are also 92 cubits, symbolizing the name “**Muhammad**.”

Within these details lies the wellspring of the spiritual and serene ambience encapsulated in the edifices built by our forebears.



With his two monumental creations, the Sulaymâniye and the Selîmiye, Sinan’s talent and mastery were widely acknowledged even during his lifetime. Colleagues and craftsmen sought his guidance for their projects, and his influence extended over the Ottoman state’s construction endeavors on three continents.

In this vein, Sinan embarked on the meticulous restoration of the **Hagia Sophia**. He not only cleared its surroundings of encroaching structures but also fortified it with additional buttresses, effectively rejuvenating it as if it were a new building. This intervention included the addition of two minarets, resulting in the mosque’s contemporary form both physically and spiritually. These discerning interventions are what continue to support the monument today.

Furthermore, Sinan erected a tomb for Sultan Selîm Khan II within the Hagia Sophia’s courtyard. His commitment to the Hagia Sophia stemmed from his desire to preserve its significance as a symbol of conquest.

Amid his endeavors in Istanbul’s water infrastructure, Sinan also extended his influence to the Hijaz, overseeing the restoration of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem as its chief architect.

Across the world, Sinan’s legacy extended through his apprentices. Fortresses in Delhi, Agra, Lahore, and Kashmir, India, were built under the guidance of **Mîmar Yusuf**’s apprentice. The renowned **Taj Mahal** in Agra, one of the Seven Wonders of the World, was erected by **Mehmed ‘Îsâ Chelebi** of Istanbul, a student of Sinan. Hence, Sinan’s legacy led generations beyond his time to construct a succession of marvels, including the Sultan Ahmad Mosque and the Vâlide Sultan Mosque in Uskudar.

Throughout his life, Sinan constructed diverse structures across the nation, with the intent of providing believers with tranquility, cleanliness, and ease. These structures, catering to both the affluent and the underprivileged,



embodied the essence and aura of Islam. His pursuit of creating enduring original works accessible to all was driven by his dynamism and the inspiration of the Prophetic tradition that states:

*“When a person dies, their deeds come to an end except for three: ongoing charity, beneficial knowledge, and a righteous child who prays for them”* (Muslim, Waṣīyyah, 14).

Hence, Sinan, aiming to earn Allah’s favor, was responsible for 84 mosques, 51 maṣjids, 57 madrasahs, 22 tombs, 7 Quranic schools, 17 almshouses, 3 hospitals, 7 aqueducts, 18 inns, 35 palaces, 8 storehouses, 8 bridges, and 46 baths.

Regrettably, Sinan’s legacy and the preservation of his invaluable works have not received adequate attention in contemporary times. It is a bitter reality that we continue to witness the exploitation and neglect of Ottoman heritage, causing distress to the revered spirits of our ancestors, particularly Sinan. The losses incurred due to our failure to safeguard this heritage are undeniable. It is essential to recognize that some damages are irreplaceable even if we realize our mistakes and express remorse.

The late **Mehmed Âkif** expresses this truth beautifully:

*Does tearing down hold the same worth as constructing?  
Know this, even the unskilled can triumph in demolition.  
Simply point, “Here stands the dome!”  
Now, two laborers could level the Sulaymâniye Mosque...  
Yet, when it comes to rebuilding, alas, then  
We’d need another Sulaymân, and yet another Sinan!..*



In addition to his architectural accomplishments and devotion to the path of Allah, Sinan also stood out as a compassionate individual who placed significant emphasis on social collaboration. It is even said that he passed away in debt due to his excessive generosity in this aspect. In an era when people of all ages were eager to contribute their wealth for the sake of Allah, Sinan set a splendid example by establishing charitable endowments that served various purposes.

Among his charitable endeavors, it is worth highlighting that Sinan designated a spacious area near the fountain he built in his hometown, Ağırnas, as



a resting spot for animals to come and drink water. This illustrates that Sinan's philanthropic initiatives, marked by kindness and compassion, extended even to the welfare of animals.

Furthermore, the presence of two schools within Sinan's charitable endeavors, along with the stipulation that orphaned students must also be provided with clothing, reflects the importance he attributed to education.

Moreover, Sinan undertook efforts to facilitate the conversion of some of his Christian relatives in his hometown to Islam. He also allocated financial support from his endowment for newly converted individuals, sustaining them as long as they lived.

Additionally, Sinan established various public service funds, categorizing them into the following five groups, in consideration of the social context of that era:

- a. Sacred pilgrimage fund,*
- b. Sidewalk construction fund,*
- c. Emergency fund (for disasters and calamities, particularly during war time),*
- d. Repair fund,*
- e. Clothing fund for underprivileged students.*

Through these philanthropic deeds and services, the esteemed Mîmar Sinan led a life of sincerity and devout faith, preparing for the eternal realm within the transient domain of this world. He peacefully passed away at the age of 99 in 1588. As per his wishes, he was interred in a humble tomb close to the Sulaymâniye Mosque complex.

**May Allah's mercy be upon him!**

**O Allah! Bless and reward Mîmar Sinan for his remarkable contributions to the world of architecture and his unwavering dedication to serving Islam and believers. May his soul rest in peace, and may he be granted the highest ranks of Paradise, where he can enjoy the beauty and grace of Allah's presence. Grant us a generation of able, determined, and faithful individuals who will uphold his works and carry his legacy to even greater heights!..**

**Âmîn!..**





## OTTOMAN CALLIGRAPHIC ART

The progression of conveying emotions and thoughts through the written word stands as a significant milestone in human advancement. The earliest known form of written documentation in the ideographic phase of history is the cuneiform script, originating in Mesopotamia. However, religious beliefs suggest that writing existed even during the time of Prophet Adam عليه السلام and subsequent generations. According to the narration of ‘Umar رضي الله عنه, Prophet Adam عليه السلام implored Allah for forgiveness for his expulsion from Paradise and invoked the intercession of Prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم by saying:

*“O my Lord! I beseech You to grant me forgiveness for the sake of Muhammad!”*

In response, Allah questioned Prophet Adam عليه السلام:

*“O Adam! How did you come to know of Muhammad when I had not yet created him?”*

Prophet Adam عليه السلام replied:

“O my Lord! When You brought me into existence through Your divine power and instilled me with Your spirit, I lifted my gaze and, upon the pillars of the Throne, beheld the inscription:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ

I knew then that You only attach the name of the most beloved among Your creatures to it!”

Upon this, Allah responded:

*“You have spoken the truth, O Adam! Indeed, he is the most beloved among my creations. Pray to me for his sake! I have forgiven you due to the prayer you made for him at this moment. Know that if it were not for Muḥammad, I would not have created you”* (Hākim, Mustadrak, II, 672; Bayḥaqī, Dalā’il, V, 488-489).

This account underscores the recognition of Prophet Adam عليه السلام who perceived and read the *kalimah al-tawḥīd* (the ‘testament of faith in Allah’s Oneness’) in written form. Moreover, his designation as a prophet and the **“ten scrolls”** he received signify that the practice of writing began with the inception of humanity.

Another religious truth of significance is as follows:

Prophet Muḥammad صلى الله عليه وسلم instructed the scribes of revelation to consistently include the *basmalah* (the phrase ‘In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful’) at the start of Quranic passages and to melodiously elongate the Arabic letter «*sīn*» during its recitation. On a certain day, one of the scribes of revelation inquired of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم:

*“O Messenger of Allah! Why do you command us to recite the letter «sīn» in the basmalah with melodious intonation?”*

The Prophet of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم responded:

*“I see the basmalah in the Preserved Tablet (Lawḥ al-Maḥfūz) in that manner.”*

The above statements unmistakably affirm the divine origin of the Islamic script, a fact that must be acknowledged.



The Islamic script developed over several phases, beginning with the Hiyarite alphabet and progressing through various stages that influenced its form and aesthetic elegance. Analogous to architecture and music, this process reached its pinnacle during the Ottoman era. The art of beautifully inscribing Quranic letters eventually evolved into an autonomous art form, known as *ḥusn al-khaṭ* ('beautiful writing').

***Ḥusn al-khaṭ* signifies the meticulous and artistic rendering of Quranic letters, adhering to aesthetic principles. It not only represents an artistic endeavor but also embodies the careful dedication required to honor the beauty inherent in Quranic letters.**

The initial copies of the Quran were penned by the scribes of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. These earliest Quranic scripts, initially referred to as *ma'qilī*, underwent a swift transformation into the Kufic script. The scriptural works attributed to 'Alī ؑ provide an apt illustration of this change.

**Yâqût al-Musta'şimî**, a slave under the rule of the final 'Abbâsid caliph **Musta'şim Billâh**, introduced a distinctive innovation by shaping the tip of his pen into a curved form. This marked a pivotal shift, defining his role as a *khaṭṭâṭ* (calligrapher). His mastery of beautiful writing endowed him with the ability to perfect the calligraphic style known as *aqlâm al-sittah* (six pens).



The calligraphic tradition established by Yâqût al-Musta'şimî continued to ascend to greater heights during the Ottoman period, captivating the admiration of all who practiced the art. The Ottomans, carrying the mantle of the Islamic cause and elevating the divine trust to new heights, cultivated the art of calligraphy to remarkable levels. This sentiment has resonated throughout the entire Islamic world in the famous saying:

***"The Quran was revealed in the Hijaz, recited in Egypt, and written in Istanbul..."***

The initial substantial effort to attain this esteemed stature coincided with the reign of **Fâtih Sultan Mehmed Khan II**. Yet, a significant leap occurred during the reign of **Sultan Bâyezîd II**, closely collaborated with **Shaykh Hamdullâh Efendi**.

Though Sultan Bâyezîd II may not have been renowned for remarkable outward traits, he was highly esteemed for his contributions to civilization in



general and to the pinnacle of Islamic arts in particular. His establishment of spiritual foundations laid the groundwork for subsequent advancements across numerous fields. In parallel with his architectural achievements, Sultan Bâ-yazîd II initiated his involvement in the realm of calligraphy even before ascending the throne, demonstrating exceptional care and foresight in this artistic domain. Upon becoming Sultan, he summoned Shaykh Hamdullâh Efendi, a skilled calligrapher, to Istanbul, allocating a study room for him within the harem of the Topkapi Palace. He expressed:

“–Your Highness! I wonder if a distinct style and beauty similar to Yâqût al-Musta‘şimî’s script can be created. Can a unique calligraphic style be fashioned for the Ottomans?”

Simultaneously, Hamdullâh Efendi, the shaykh of **Okcular Tekke**, pondered this suggestive offer in silence. Eventually, he affirmed his capability and, having been shown the seven tablets belonging to Yâqût al-Musta‘şimî, retired to his abode.

With unwavering dedication, he embarked on his mission. This intensive endeavor continued relentlessly for a span of forty days. Ultimately, Hamdullâh Efendi triumphed in devising an astonishingly perfect and entirely novel calligraphic style, leaving those who beheld it in awe. Mustakîmzâde describes this accomplishment:

*“While Shaykh Hamdullâh Efendi diligently pursued the creation of a new and more comprehensive calligraphic style, **Khidr** ﷺ appeared before him, offering guidance regarding the script he was to create. Following this encounter, Hamdullâh Efendi exhibited the divine beauty of his calligraphy with unparalleled perfection.”*

This divine favor bestowed upon Shaykh Hamdullâh Efendi elevated him to the pinnacle of mastery in Ottoman calligraphy.

Sultan Bâ-yazîd II, a driving force behind his pursuit, frequently visited Shaykh Hamdullâh, expressing profound contentment with the outcomes. During these visits, the Sultan sometimes assisted Shaykh Hamdullâh by adjusting his cushion as he practiced, and even held his inkwell with deep spiritual delight.

However, the attention and favor shown by the Sultan aroused envy among some scholars. Recognizing this and feeling disheartened, Sultan Bâ-





azîd II summoned all the scholars to the palace on a certain day. Holding a Quran transcribed by Shaykh Hamdullâh Efendi along with a stack of diverse books, the Sultan addressed them in hushed tones:

“–I will place this Quran in my hand under the stack of books before me. What are your thoughts?”

Without hesitation, those gathered expressed their strong objection:

“Allah forbid, Your Majesty! Placing the Noble Quran beneath those books would be a grave disrespect!”

To this, the Sultan responded:

*“–You are absolutely right! Yet, do you not consider that relegating the calligrapher, who has skillfully penned this Quran with the excellence and beauty befitting its magnificence, to a lesser status would also constitute a form of disrespect?”*

The subtle warning embedded in the Sultan’s question prompted those addressed to grasp the implication and feel remorseful for their envy.

Shaykh Hamdullâh Efendi not only attained significant accomplishments in the realm of calligraphy but also progressed remarkably in spirituality. He embodied humility and modesty commensurate with his elevated status. His selflessness was such that he preferred his name not even be inscribed on his own tombstone. The calligraphy school he established, infused with the splendor of his writing and the blessings of Islamic ethics, continued to captivate the entire Muslim world with unwavering vitality for over five centuries.

**May Allah’s mercy be upon him!**



The inception of calligraphic art in the Ottoman state was underpinned by spiritual fortification and continued to flourish through a spiritual trajectory. This art, which found its practical genesis through the sincerity of Shaykh Hamdullâh, unfolded a legacy of centuries, taught to his followers without any monetary exchange. Devoid of material interests, every calligrapher who imparted knowledge to others viewed their teaching as a charitable contribution to their craft. While it was deemed acceptable for calligraphers designated by the state or pious institutions to receive a stipend to sustain their livelihood and artistic output, any remuneration sought for endeavors beyond this sphere was





seen as sinful. Beyond providing lessons at no cost, the transformation of calligraphy masters' abodes into quasi-*meşkhane* (venues for spiritual and artistic gatherings) beautifully exemplified calligraphers' reverence for the principle of "earning the pleasure of Allah."

Conversely, the distinct attributes enumerated as prerequisites for becoming a calligrapher offer insights into both the outward and intrinsic dimensions of calligraphy:

1. Possessing inherent talent and skill.
2. Receiving formal education and comprehensive training.
3. Exhibiting unparalleled persistence.
4. Nurturing a proper understanding of the craft.
5. Embodying humility and modesty.
6. Employing quality and ample materials.
7. Engaging in prolific writing.
8. Attaining formal authorization.

These conditions reflect the multifaceted nature of calligraphy, encompassing technical prowess, spiritual integrity, and a commitment to honing both craft and character.

Undoubtedly, spiritual fortification has consistently served as a robust cornerstone for nurturing master calligraphers. This truth is exemplified by **Ahmad Shamsuddîn Karahisârî**, the esteemed calligrapher of the Sulaymâniye Mosque, who embarked upon his journey alongside his disciple under the auspices of such a motivating force.

According to tradition, the monumental task of inscribing the dome of the Sulaymâniye Mosque was entrusted to Karahisârî and his disciple, **Hasan Chelebi**. With unwavering dedication, Karahisârî expended all his energy day and night to ensure that the inscriptions adorning the grandeur of the Sulaymâniye Mosque resonated with its splendor. To this extent, after meticulously revising the final piece, his eyesight faltered, and the world's window was forever sealed shut, leaving him blind. Ultimately, Karahisârî offered his eyes to the radiant magnificence of this resplendent mosque.

As mentioned earlier regarding Mîmar Sinan, upon the completion of the Sulaymâniye Mosque and its readiness for worship, Sultan Sulaymân declared:



“–The privilege of inaugurating this mosque for worship belongs to our Chief Architect Sinan, who has erected it with magnificence and splendor.”

Rooted in the virtue of humility within his artistic craft, Sinan, reflecting on Karahisârî’s sacrifice, graciously responded to the Sultan’s proclamation by revealing the depths of his soul:

“–Your Majesty! Karahisârî dedicated his eyes to the embellishment of this mosque through his calligraphy. I implore you to bestow this honor upon him!..”

In response, Kânûnî Sultan Sulaymân commanded Karahisârî to lead the mosque’s inauguration, an event marked by the tears of those present.

Karahisârî excelled in the *jalî* script, characterized by its sizable letters and intricate arrangement, following the style of Yâqût al-Musta‘şimî. Despite adhering to this convention, he created unique masterpieces that bore his distinctive signature. His compositions, known as *Basmalah al-Sharîfah*, were held in such high esteem that poems were composed to honor them, and their elevated status endures.

Karahisârî, leaving behind an enduring legacy, passed away at the age of ninety, having etched immortal works into the annals of calligraphic art.

**May Allah’s mercy be upon him!**



Following the era of these esteemed calligraphers, the art of calligraphy in the Ottoman state continued its evolution through successive centuries, embellished and perfected by a multitude of new artistic geniuses. This ongoing journey resulted in a diverse and intricate tapestry, encompassing various styles including *ma‘qilî*, *kûfî*, *thuluth*, *naskh*, *muḥaqqaq*, *rayḥânî*, *tawqî‘*, *dîwânî*, *jalî dîwânî*, *ruq‘ah* and *ta‘lîq*.

In the seventeenth century, a luminous figure emerged within this vibrant milieu – calligrapher **Hâfiz Osman** – ushering in a new era for the six principal calligraphic styles.

Osman, having committed the Quran to memory at a young age, embarked on his journey into calligraphy driven by his reverence and devotion to the Quran. Even during snow-covered winter days, he traversed from Hasaki



to the Eyup Sultan district for his classes and remained undeterred despite once having his shoe torn and walking barefoot.

His sincere and unwavering dedication culminated in Hâfiz Osman obtaining his calligraphy license. He then founded a new school of grace and refinement within the *thuluth* and *naskh* scripts, adding a distinctive layer to the legacy of his teacher, Shaykh Hamdullâh. Renowned calligraphy masters, including Ismail Efendi, would later say:

**“We taught calligraphy, but Hâfiz Osman wrote it!”**

Hâfiz Osman imparted his wisdom to the sultans, embodying the humility of Shaykh Hamdullâh. Even within the palace, he dressed modestly and shunned any trappings of pride or arrogance.

Once, Sultan Mustafa II held Hâfiz Osman’s pen in a gesture of admiration. Gazing upon the remarkable writings of Hâfiz Osman, the Sultan remarked:

“–Master! It may be a challenge for another Hâfiz Osman to arise! Perhaps such a talent may never surface again!”

Blushing and responding with the innocence of a child upon the Sultan’s praise, Hâfiz Osman uttered these poignant words:

“–Your Majesty! As long as sultans like you honor their teachers, more Hâfiz Osmans will undoubtedly emerge!..”

Despite the attention lavished upon him by the sultans, Hâfiz Osman never succumbed to conceit or sought elevated positions. His humility was a reflection of his spiritual upbringing under the guidance of the era’s scholars. He evolved into an exceptional prodigy, ascending to unprecedented heights and earning the moniker of “Second Shaykh” following Hamdullâh. His mastery deepened over time, surpassing the works of Hamdullâh and reaching an apex in calligraphy that no one had previously attained.

It is recounted that during his Hajj pilgrimage, Hâfiz Osman inscribed a page or two of calligraphy at every pause to maintain his skill. Through this tireless dedication, he became the embodiment of the “**Hâfiz Osman Calligraphy**” tradition, etching an enduring legacy through his ceaseless commitment to the craft.





An anecdote succinctly captures the influence Hâfiz Osman wielded in the realm of calligraphy:

Hâfiz Osman once boarded a passenger boat from Beşiktaş to Uskudar. As they approached the shore, the boatman began to collect the fare. In that moment, Hâfiz Osman realized he had no money on hand. Feeling embarrassed, he addressed the boatman:

“–O boatman! I’ve just realized that I haven’t brought any money with me. Could I write a «*waw*» instead of paying you?”

Unacquainted with Hâfiz Osman’s identity, the boatman grew agitated and queried:

“–Blessed soul! If you didn’t have money, why did you board the boat? What use is a letter «*waw*» to me? How can I benefit from it?”

Hâfiz Osman responded:

“–You can sell it! Otherwise, I cannot settle my debt right now.”

Reluctantly, the boatman agreed. Hâfiz Osman promptly inscribed the Arabic letter «*waw*» and handed it over.

At a later date, while visiting the bazaar, the boatman noticed calligraphy pieces for sale. Recalling Hâfiz Osman’s “*waw*” in his pocket, he presented it to a seller. The seller exclaimed:

“Hâfiz Osman’s *waw*!” A crowd swiftly gathered, and the letter fetched an unexpectedly substantial sum. This price exceeded that of even extensive collections of calligraphy.

Subsequently, when **Hâfiz Osman** crossed to Uskudar once again, he boarded the same boat helmed by the boatman. Recognizing the master, the boatman quipped before Hâfiz Osman could offer the fare:

“Sir! Instead of payment, how about penning another *waw*?”

Hâfiz Osman chuckled and responded:

“–My dear, that *waw* cannot be written all the time. Please accept your payment!” And he handed over the money.

Having achieved exceptional mastery in calligraphy, Hâfiz Osman, like his contemporaries, generously instructed students without seeking financial compensation. Many calligraphers received their licenses from him, a testament to his dedication to the art and its practitioners.



One day, encountering a student who had missed class, Hâfiz Osman approached him with gentleness:

“–My child, why weren’t you in class?”

The student, visibly embarrassed by his teacher’s presence, explained his absence. Recognizing the validity of the explanation, Hâfiz Osman promptly dismounted his mount and commenced teaching the student on the roadside. This gesture ensured the student would not fall behind his peers or lose enthusiasm for the subject.

The *hilyah al-sa’âdah*, the portrait of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ depicted in calligraphy, was initially transcribed by Hâfiz Osman. He attested that he wrote it in a dream at the request of the Prophet ﷺ. Furthermore, Hâfiz Osman was the skilled calligrapher behind the renowned work *Dalâ’il al-Khayrat*.

Among his many accomplishments, Hâfiz Osman penned twenty-five copies of the Quran. In his later years, he experienced a stroke; however, divine grace and medical care miraculously preserved the beauty of his calligraphy despite his ailment. This condition persisted for three years, after which he departed from this world, as if heeding the divine command:

**“Return to your Lord!”** embarking on his journey to the eternal realm.

Following his burial, during the imam’s recitation of prayers for Hâfiz Osman, a man named Sipâhî Dede, known for his eccentricity, interjected:

“–O Imam, there’s no need to go through the trouble! The departed has fulfilled his purpose. You should understand that he attained the rank he deserved long before this. Now, may Allah grant us his intercession!”

**May Allah’s mercy be upon him!**



It is essential to recognize that calligraphy has uniquely manifested itself as an art form within Islam and among Muslims, showcasing its subtlety and beauty. This art has captivated the attention and fascination of both Muslims and non-Muslims over centuries. Despite non-Muslim efforts, no calligrapher has arisen to match the excellence of the Islamic tradition. This disparity underscores the distinctiveness of Islamic calligraphy, a facet that has remained exclusive to Islam and its adherents throughout history. Centuries ago, ‘Alî ؑ encapsulated this reality as follows:





*“Calligraphy is concealed within the master’s instruction. Its mastery necessitates extensive practice. Its continuity hinges on adherence to the Islamic faith.”*

In accordance with this perspective, the three fundamental prerequisites for calligraphy’s aesthetic allure are:

1. Apprenticeship under a master
2. Rigorous practice
3. Embracing a life in accordance with the Islamic faith – being a Muslim.
4. This reality represents a divine bestowal from Allah, contingent upon the acceptance of Islam as a way of life.

Similarly, it was this divine bestowal that led to **Mustafa Râkim Efendi**, the renowned calligrapher of the eighteenth century, receiving his calligraphy certification at the tender age of twelve. Recognizing the exceptional nature of this gift, Râkim Efendi rapidly advanced his artistic prowess. Ultimately, he reached a level that exceeded his predecessors’ achievements. Among his many masterpieces, he also created the final and most impeccable seal for the Ottoman sultan’s *tughra* (a calligraphic signature).

Conversely, it is commonly acknowledged that in calligraphy, aside from the inherent divine talent, an individual’s effort and determination play a pivotal role. In this context, an insightful incident involving Râkim Efendi and Mahmûd II sheds light:

Mahmûd II commenced his calligraphy lessons with Râkim Efendi while he was still a prince, continuing his studies even after ascending to the throne. One day, the Sultan paid an unannounced visit to Râkim Efendi’s place of work. Deeply engrossed in his writing, Râkim Efendi remained unaware of the Sultan’s presence. Observing his teacher’s concentration, Mahmûd II silently observed without disruption. He was surprised to notice numerous copies of the same writing scattered around the room. Involuntarily, he exclaimed:

“Sir!”

Upon hearing this address, Râkim Efendi finally noticed the Sultan’s presence. As he lifted his head from his work, he quickly regained his composure and invited the Sultan in, saying:

“Your Majesty, please come in!”



Curious, the Sultan inquired:

“My esteemed teacher! Have you exerted such effort for a single piece of writing?”

Râkim replied:

“Yes, Your Majesty!”

The Sultan probed further:

“Do you consistently approach these remarkable works in the same manner?”

Responding as if providing a fresh lesson to his student, Sultan Mahmûd II, Râkim Efendi explained:

“–Yes, Your Majesty! As you can see, I use numerous pieces of paper for a single composition. I create countless drafts of the same writing. Then, from among these drafts, I select the best one and meticulously strive to attain perfection...”



In the Ottoman era, calligraphy flourished through the efforts of remarkable talents, reaching a level that continually amazed and captivated people. Numerous examples of this refined art can be found adorning various locations, most notably mosques, offering a unique form of beauty and pleasure to the human spirit across centuries.

The characteristics and significance of calligraphy can be concisely outlined as follows:

#### **a. From a Medical Perspective:**

The art of calligraphy has a medical advantage over other forms of writing:

1. When an inexperienced child is asked to draw a line, they instinctively draw it from right to left. This natural movement avoids straining the arm. Therefore, experienced calligraphers rarely experience arm fatigue.

2. Repetitive movements generally lead to limb fatigue, regardless of which limb is involved. However, calligraphy’s reliance on curves and flowing lines minimizes fatigue. Instead, it provides relaxation and eye comfort.





A telling sign displayed in a Greek doctor's office during the 1950s reads:

**“Those seeking to improve their eyesight should engage in calligraphy!”**

This demonstrates that calligraphy's soft curves, which do not strain the eyes, have healing potential even for visual impairments. Notably, this endorsement comes from a Greek doctor.

Observing elderly individuals who consistently read the Quran in modern times reveals that they rarely require eyeglasses. Medical evidence suggests that reading the Quran is as beneficial for the eyes as it is for the soul.

3. When an anxious individual scribbles, their lines appear rigid and jagged, resembling saw blades. Western culture's spiritual unease is linked to their difficulty in consciously grasping the proper perception of Allah. This psychological suffering manifests in Western artistic expressions. Comparing the architecture of churches (sharp-edged) and Islamic structures (rounded) reflects the soul of their respective religious traditions.

In the Muslim world, the melodious music accompanying Quranic recitation, along with the religious sentiment it elicits, produces a gradual and harmonious rise and fall. Similarly, the meticulous performance of ritual prayer ensures the desired state of serenity and presence during worship.

Through these examples, calligraphy can be likened to the wave-like patterns on a heart monitor, offering an elegant and graceful experience that transports individuals to a realm of unique pleasure. Sometimes, a single letter in calligraphy is sufficient to fill the heart and soul with spiritual joy. For instance, a slanted *waw* (the sixth letter of the Arabic alphabet) can evoke an image of believers bowing in prayer.

### **b. From a Psychological Perspective**

In terms of human psychology, calligraphy's significance lies in its ability to prevent hand and eye fatigue during writing, thereby contributing to a sense of inner peace. It is a well-known fact that nearly everyone who received an education in the Ottoman state was involved to some extent in calligraphy. Even the sultans recognized the value of its practice amidst their demanding responsibilities. Some sultans advanced their skills to the point of obtaining





calligraphy licenses. Calligraphy does not strain the intellect or the brain. **Sultan Abdulhamîd Khan**, for instance, turned to calligraphy to ease his mind when fatigued by state affairs. **Hamdi Efendi** is also said to have engaged in calligraphy to find mental solace during his studies of exegesis.

Calligraphy engages the intellect rather than memory. Overloading memory leads to sluggishness, while focusing on the intellect fosters cognitive development. Arranging calligraphy meticulously requires mental exertion, contributing to intellectual growth and agility.

### c. From an Aesthetic Perspective:

Appreciating beauty is not solely based on the content of something but also on its form. Even if the content is beautiful, it loses much of its appeal if presented in an unpleasant form. For instance, if the petals of a rose were sharp and thorny instead of having their natural oval shape, the flower would not invoke the same sense of tenderness and tranquility. Shapes are closely tied to the emotional impact they create in the soul. A serene individual prefers warm, muted colors, while someone feeling unsettled might gravitate toward bright and sharp hues and shapes. Colors like black hold formal significance, pink communicates playfulness, white symbolizes purity, and red evokes intensity. People accept or reject colors and shapes based on the emotions these visuals evoke, forming the core foundation of preferences.

Consequently, “harmony” is an encompassing term that fulfills human aesthetic emotions. The minarets designed by Mimar Sinan exemplify harmonious proportionality. If their bodies were slightly thicker while maintaining their height, they might appear crude. Conversely, elongating their bodies while keeping their width constant would create a weak impression. The equilibrium between the minaret’s width and height, coupled with the dome that tops it, resembles the harmony found in the human body.

In light of this, examining the elements that constitute the adornments of life, both natural and artificial, from a harmony perspective yields various principles of balance and proportion.

Therefore, it can be argued that calligraphers are the most refined artists in understanding the fundamental laws and principles of harmony. They establish proportions in calligraphy that even the most creative imaginations strug-





gle to match. The Ottoman calligraphers' remarkable achievements prompted the renowned painter **Picasso** to study calligraphy during his later years. He honestly admitted:

*“–Your calligraphers have exhausted the usage of harmony, principles, and the realm of possibilities and left nothing for future generations to discover.”*

However, what he had seen were the limited works brought to the Islamic world by Napoleon and displayed at the Louvre Museum.

Even among those unfamiliar with reading Arabic script, the art of calligraphy invokes deep admiration and appreciation due to its captivating aesthetics. A Hungarian painter, fascinated by the *al-Kâsib* **Ḥabîbullâh** plaque created by **Ali Haydar** in the Sultan Ahmad Mosque, could not help but express to his companion:

*“My friend! There is a distinct aura in these writings, which you call *ḥusn al-khaṭ*. Initially, you perceive a simple color and geometric stillness, yet as you gaze, they begin to stir, come alive, and enchant. They start by caressing the viewer's soul in a fleeting glance, and then a resounding flow gradually permeates. This otherworldly musical experience captivates the soul with its serene harmony. However, this music isn't heard by the ears but by the hearts; as you listen, you're transported to a different realm. I cannot quite fathom what happens when I look at these writings! They possess an enthralling appearance, a sea of beauty, and a delightful atmosphere that draws me in and soothes my heart with gentle vibrations. Do you feel the same way?..”*

Due to this intrinsic attribute of calligraphy, which predates its current stature, we find **‘Ali** ﷺ, the fourth Caliph in Islam, stating:

*“Teach your children calligraphy! Indeed, calligraphy is one of the most significant endeavors and greatest delights.”*

This facet of calligraphy, which infuses hearts with joy, also captivates anyone with even a modest sense of beauty. Describing the spiritual elation derived from its sacred realm is a near-impossible feat.

In brief, calligraphers have endeavored to translate the beauty that Allah, the Creator (*al-Khâliq*) and Designer (*al-Ṣâni‘*) of the universe, reveals in this world into their works through profound understanding (*wuqûf*) and insight (*mushâhadah*). By borrowing balance and proportion from nature and com-



binning them in innovative ways within their own imaginations, they elevated calligraphy to astonishing heights.

It is essential to emphasize that no form of writing, except calligraphy, has ever achieved the status of a true work of art. The following anecdote illustrates this point:

While **Hâmid Aytaç** was inscribing calligraphy onto plates for an order at the Paşabahçe glass factory, a worker approached him. After admiring and appreciating his work, he inquired with curiosity:

“Sir!... We don’t encounter this level of artistry in other writings! How did this magnificent art attain such heights?”

Hâmid Aytaç responds:

*“–This script possesses three key characteristics:*

- 1. It has evolved over a thousand years,*
- 2. The softness and curves in its structure embody a hidden creative talent that resonates with the human soul,*
- 3. Consistent religious devotion and effort have elevated it to an exceptional art form. Its lines captivate souls with their serene yet remarkably flowing lyrical style.*

*Of these, the third factor is the most crucial. Calligraphy specialists gained renown by meticulously reproducing the Quran in the most exquisite script. Hence, the beauty of this calligraphy stems from the endeavor to transcribe the Quran.”*

Indeed, the elegance of Islamic calligraphic works has served a significant purpose through both their form and content. The lofty aspiration of achieving this goal has contributed to the advancement of this art. When observing the panels adorning walls, one will notice that each bears a passage from the Quran, a Prophetic narration, or a saying from a distinguished scholar. These serve as reminders and lessons for those who take notice. Furthermore, calligraphic representations of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, known as the *hilyah al-sharîf*, stand as beautiful expressions of love for him in people’s hearts; even calligraphy certifications have often been arranged in this manner. Particularly, the privilege of transcribing the Quran has been considered a blessing and honor for every calligrapher, especially during the Ottoman era when



special emphasis was placed on this practice. Few calligraphers, if any, can be found who have not transcribed the Quran. Some have written multiple copies, regarding them as a form of spiritual wealth for the afterlife.

**Emin Saraç** conveys the blessings of this service rendered to the Noble Quran and shares an insightful story narrated by ‘**Abd al-Qâdir Baqlî**, which was also documented in the Shariah Court Registers of Medina:

During the Hajj pilgrimage season in Medina, a beautifully written Quran was put up for auction. Pilgrims from various countries, captivated by its exquisite calligraphy, participated in the bidding. At this time, a curious Turkish visitor approached the Quran and upon witnessing the handwriting, exclaimed:

“This is the Noble Quran my late father wrote!”

He added:

“But we had placed it in his grave according to his will!”

He then attempted to unravel the mystery. As a result of the investigation, the following was unveiled:

Due to a shortage of space in the *Jannah al-Bâqî* cemetery in Medina, new bodies were buried in designated areas after a certain period. On one occasion, when an old grave was opened, a Quran lay atop a remarkably preserved corpse. Everyone was astonished. Authorities took this perfectly written Quran and, after consulting, decided to auction it and donate the proceeds to Muslims worldwide.

The Turkish pilgrim, with tears welling in his eyes upon hearing this account, concludes the rest of the story as follows:

“—My father was an Ottoman calligrapher. Every year, he would transcribe a Quran and make a livelihood from it. However, in addition to his routine work, he had a Quran that he meticulously inscribed with great care and attention to detail. Its beauty was so captivating that one could not tire of gazing upon it. My father crafted it with incredible skill and enthusiasm, dedicating ample time and avoiding haste. After a long period of patient labor, a magnificent masterpiece emerged. He gathered us, filled with immense gratitude and joy, and said:

«—O, my children! I wrote this *Quran* for myself as an intercessor in the hereafter. I request that after I pass away, you wrap it beautifully and place it on my chest!»

Thus, we honored his final request upon his passing.

The true enigma that astonished and delighted me equally was that, although my father was interred with this *Quran* in Istanbul, he was later discovered in the sacred lands, resting in a blessed graveyard!”

As those who are familiar with the matter understand, the bodies of believers who have departed sometimes do not remain where they were initially buried; rather, they are divinely transported to their rightful resting places. This phenomenon is known as *naql al-qubûr*. The pious inhabitants of Medina have been aware of this reality for a long time, as such occurrences are more frequent in those blessed lands. Some have even witnessed it firsthand. Hence, it stands as one of the living truths that individuals who passed away in that sacred region but were unworthy of it, and those who did not die there but deserved it, are moved by angels.

Certainly, this is an extraordinary blessing. The calligrapher we spoke of was favored with the grace of intercession due to his service, reverence, and dedication to the *Quran*.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

الْقُرْآنُ شَافِعٌ مُشَفَّعٌ

“*The Quran is an intercessor, and its intercession is accepted [by Allah]*” (Hakim, *al-Mustadrak*, I, 757/2087).

It is because of this Prophetic saying that calligraphers have made their service to the *Quran* the most noble goal in hopes of being worthy of its intercession.



Here, another crucial point arises, emphasizing that the appreciation of calligraphy’s beauty should be accompanied by respect and reverence for the content, particularly for *Quranic* and *Hadith* texts. Scholars summarize the Islamic legal principles concerning this matter as follows:



Respect must be extended to writing itself and to the pages it appears on. They should not be walked on, sat upon, or treated with disrespect. They should not be discarded on the ground or used in inappropriate or impure places. The religious rulings on this topic differ based on the nature of the writings. Disrespect or insults shown in this context can sometimes even amount to being sinful and disbelief. This is because showing disrespect to a work is akin to showing disrespect to its creator. Consequently, those guided by Islamic ethics attribute significant value to the tools used for writing, such as the pen, ink, and paper. Muslims have even been known to preserve the small fragments of reed pens used to transcribe the Quran and Hadith, considering them symbolic of depth and significance. This notion has been grasped by carefully considering the underlying meaning of what Allah says in the Quran:

ن وَالْقَلَمِ وَمَا يَسْطُرُونَ

“**Nûn. By the pen and that which they write (therewith)...**” (Şûrah al-Qalam, 1).

وَكِتَابٍ مَّسْطُورٍ فِي رَقٍّ مَّنْشُورٍ

“**By a Scripture inscribed. On fine parchment spread open**” (Şûrah al-Tûr, 2-3).

Truly, Allah has honored the pen, the written word, the medium of writing, and the Quran itself by taking oaths by them. The profound awareness of this manifestation in past generations is remarkable:

The renowned commentator **Hamdi Yazır** arrived in Istanbul at the age of thirteen to study at the Küçükayasofya madrasah, where he also served the esteemed **Kâmil Efendi**. However, young Hamdi was bothered by the slightly elevated threshold of a door, making it difficult for his elderly teacher to pass through. He devised a solution by placing the lid of an oil can with Romanian writing on it in front of the threshold. The next morning, upon seeing this, Kâmil Efendi asked:

“Who placed this lid here?”

Upon learning that Hamdi was responsible, he called him over and said:

“My son! You have placed me in a precarious situation. Even if we had no other sins, this action alone would be enough!”



Just as Hamdi was about to explain, “Sir! This is not Islamic writing,” Kâmil Efendi continued:

*“–Both Muslims and non-Muslims have their own scripts, but a script itself cannot be labeled as Muslim or non-Muslim. What can be conveyed with one script can also be done with another. Provided it hasn’t been used in a disrespectful or inappropriate manner, any script that serves goodness and Allah deserves respect. Allah did not swear by writings and writers in vain in the Quran. Be cautious, my child!”* He then removed the lid from the ground.

People of the past who displayed such sensitivity toward other scripts certainly held even greater reverence for Islamic script and works written in it. Numerous acts of respect were observed, from kissing an Islamic writing that accidentally fell to the ground three times and touching it to one’s forehead, to not holding it below the waist and always placing it in elevated positions, and even burning and burying the pen shavings used for writing. This code of conduct was applied with even greater care to the Quran in particular. According to the passage:

لَا يَمَسُّهُ إِلَّا الْمُطَهَّرُونَ

**“None toucheth [the Quran] save the purified”** (Şûrah al-Wâqi’ah, 79), the book of Allah has never been touched without ritual ablution.

Respect for the Quran extends beyond these examples, yet the core element that elevated them to become leaders of the world was their sincere dedication to serving the Quran.

Indeed, the pinnacle of these services was undoubtedly the extraordinary achievement in the art of calligraphy, particularly in writing the Quran in a manner befitting its sanctity. Calligraphy can be considered one of the most remarkable forms of art produced by the Ottomans. Their mastery in this domain was so exceptional that even in the Arab world, their level of expertise was unmatched. **Sultan Abdulaziz Khan** dispatched the calligrapher **Şevkid Efendi** to Egypt, resulting in the emergence of calligraphers who could write elegantly, albeit not at the same level. The saying, **“The Quran was revealed in the Hijaz, read in Egypt, and written in Istanbul...”** continues to be upheld today with the same fervor by skilled hands.





In essence, as previously mentioned, this art has exclusively manifested itself within the domain of Islam. Despite many non-Muslims attempting to make progress in this field, they have never achieved a flawless outcome. This reality affirms that calligraphy has remained and will continue to remain a distinctive realm of Islam and Muslims.

**O Allah! As a manifestation of the divine love concealed in the hearts of calligraphers, whose names we have discussed and cannot possibly mention here, bestow upon our hearts the elegance, the exquisite manners, and the spiritual profundity that calligraphy so beautifully reflects.**

Âmîn!..







## THE MORAL VIRTUES

*Of the Ottoman State that Fascinated Europe*

**Ibn Khaldûn** (d. 1406), a Muslim sociologist and historian, extensively delved into the myriad factors, including geographical influences, that contribute to the rise and fall of states in his monumental work, the *Muqaddimah*.

In this regard, his *Muqaddimah* stands as a seminal Islamic work that deeply explores the spiritual underpinnings of a nation, encompassing its moral principles, beliefs, alongside its physical and material prowess. It astutely recognizes, even for its time, that the duration of a state's existence between its inception and decline predominantly hinges on spiritual elements.

Upon objective examination, it becomes apparent how spiritual conditions significantly shape the lifespan and dissolution of nations.

Hence, it is crucial to delve into the faith, morality, and societal framework that sustained the Ottoman state for a remarkable six centuries. A comprehensive analysis of the spiritual reservoir that fueled the Ottoman state's vast conquests and enduring dominance, rendering it a global powerhouse,





is essential. External witnesses, impartial and unbiased, will serve as sources rather than local accounts – acknowledging that true virtue is recognized even by adversaries. Additionally, to evade potential allegations of bias and subjectivity, the insights of foreign observers will be presented.

Herein, we present the reflections of objective Western individuals concerning the attributes that earned the Ottomans high regard in their estimation:

### **Good Works and Charitable Acts**

The Ottoman state exhibited a profound commitment to benevolent deeds and charitable endeavors that transcended distinctions of race or religion across their extensive dominions. They established institutions devoted to acts of goodness and charity, termed *hayrât ve hasenât*, which served as platforms for both Muslims and non-Muslims to benefit as servants of the Creator.

The forthcoming section, “**Pious Endowments in the Ottoman State,**” will provide more comprehensive insight into the meticulous management of mosques, madrasahs, hospitals, mental asylums, inns, caravansaries, reservoirs, fountains, water troughs, wells, bridges, roads, sidewalks, and almshouses. These endeavors were undertaken with the ultimate purpose of seeking Allah’s pleasure.

In this regard:

- a. Providing cool water through fountains and water troughs during the scorching summer heat.
- b. Offering three days of complimentary lodging for travelers at inns and caravansaries.
- c. Distributing meals to the underprivileged through soup kitchens.
- d. Clearing the debts of incarcerated individuals burdened by debt to secure their release.
- e. Settling the debts of deceased individuals who passed away in destitution.
- f. Discreetly aiding the impoverished who might be too ashamed to voice their needs openly, preserving their dignity.
- g. Liberating slaves, a form of worship commonly practiced within the Ottoman state.



h. Reconstructing the homes of indigent individuals whose dwellings were devastated by fires, at no cost.

A remarkable accomplishment, exemplifying the Ottoman state's exceptional standards, is evident in Istanbul alone, where 417 traveler's lodges, 5,935 fountains, and 515 public schools were established through charitable initiatives. Furthermore, the reach of charitable actions extended not solely to human beings but encompassed animals and plants as well. Notably, street dogs and cats received sustenance, as meat and liver were distributed to them in designated areas, reflecting the depth of compassion embedded in Ottoman society.

The reputation of the Ottoman state's moral virtues and their profound commitment to charitable actions has captivated the entire world. Even Western travelers and researchers, who held various reasons for not harboring positive sentiments toward the Ottomans, were consistently astonished by the moral and benevolent practices observed within Ottoman society. The sentiments expressed in **Jacques de Villamont**'s work, specifically regarding caravansaries, clearly highlight this reality:

*"...I visited a caravanserai where Christians are welcomed and provided food for three days just like Muslims. This is because these good deeds encompass all people, regardless of their religion, in the Ottoman state... These guesthouses are decorated with many fountains established for pouring waters brought from faraway places. There are also large stables for guests' horses.*

*In addition to these institutions, there are guesthouses called caravansaries in cities and along the roads, where their doors are always open to everyone. I was amazed to see that some Ottomans were building fountains for thirsty travelers along the roads and others were building drinking fountains for those passing through the streets in the cities. Paid officials, like those in government offices, are also appointed to these fountains to serve those who need water.*

*Moreover, this spirit of goodness and charity encourages some to build bridges over rivers, and others to voluntarily and lovingly repair, clean, and pave roads. The most impressive and commendable thing about all of this is that none of these buildings belong to any individual, which shows the absence of selfishness and greed."*





*“The charity offered by ordinary individuals is also considered an act of pioussness in the same proportion. The wealthy would also visit prisons and assist the unfortunate and distraught prisoners incarcerated for unpaid debts...”*

**Luigi Ferdinando Marsigli**, in his own observations, similarly describes the good works and charitable acts he encountered in the Ottoman state:

*“When the Turks have financial means, they tend to build mosques, fountains, bridges, and guesthouses called «han». They establish endowments to cover the expenses of these facilities. Furthermore, they build madrasahs and schools in major cities for the education of the younger generation. Education in various fields, especially religious disciplines, are provided at these institutions.”*

### **Nobility of Character, Faithful in Speech, Loyal to Covenants**

Ottoman society placed a high value on moral virtues, encompassing qualities like chivalry, perseverance, and integrity. These virtues were seen as noble attributes that enriched the hearts of individuals. This sentiment was so pervasive that in Europe, the terms “Turk” and “Muslim” were often used interchangeably. It was commonly stated that to be Turkish was to be a trustworthy individual who upheld their commitments. It was even asserted that Ottomans were markedly distinct from non-Muslims in that they refrained from falsehoods while taking oaths.

**Claude Alexandre Comte de Bonneval** articulates his observation on this matter in the following manner:

*“The Turks demonstrate a religious devotion in their loyalty to covenants.”*

Swedish ambassador **Ignatius Mouradega d’Ohsson** also affirms:

*“The Muslim Turks are incredibly faithful to their oaths and agreements. Considering their efforts to mention the name of Allah, they find no need for any other words than invoking the presence of God as a witness to their words.”*

**Henri Mathieu** concurs:



*“It would be a great injustice not to acknowledge the unparalleled honor and ethical understanding among the Turks. They consider honesty as the foundation of virtue and regard their promises as sacred.”*

### **A Land Without Beggars**

Through its extensive pious foundations and charitable initiatives, the Ottoman state cultivated an environment of love and compassion, effectively creating a society without beggars. The prevalence of charitable services was such that wealthy Muslims occasionally struggled to find impoverished individuals to whom they could extend their alms.

As a result, begging was virtually non-existent during these periods. In Istanbul, a city with a population of up to two million, as well as in regions like Turkey and Crimea, the presence of Turkish beggars was incredibly rare. The few beggars encountered were often individuals from other lands. An established tradition among the Ottomans was to set aside funds for their burial shrouds while still alive, so as not to rely on others after their passing.

The charitable ethos within Ottoman society had a profound impact, leading to a dearth of beggars, except for those suffering from spiritual afflictions. The strong cooperation between the affluent and the impoverished effectively eliminated the need for begging. Charity boxes, conveniently placed near mosques, facilitated this process. People could contribute their donations to these boxes, from which those in need could take only what was required. Remarkably, there was no greed among the needy; they took only what they genuinely needed.

These actions, seen as the virtuous outcomes of Islamic ethics, warrant special recognition. **Corneille Le Bruyn** writes:

*“...There is no denying that the Turks are keen on good works and bring about much more charity than Christians do. One of the main reasons for the scarcity of beggars in Ottoman lands is the presence of pious and charitable endowments.”*

**Claude Alexandre Comte de Bonneval** observes:

*“Istanbul, along with its surrounding areas, has a population of approximately two million, which should be considered one of the largest cities in Eu-*



*rope. Yet, despite this sizable population, not a single beggar is encountered! There are only mendicants who rely solely on charity for their livelihood! However, they have no recognition.”*

### **Propriety, Decency, and Ethical Cultivation**

The Ottomans were known for their unparalleled decorum, civility, and discipline. Their social etiquette was marked by excellence and refinement, forming a spiritual and moral code that extended to all individuals, regardless of their ethnicity or religious beliefs. Being Ottoman was synonymous with embodying admirable manners and kindness.

These qualities were evident in various aspects of their lives. Rooted in their deep devotion to Islam, which prohibited animosity and spite, the Ottomans dedicated every Friday and all religious holidays as occasions to mend relationships, reconcile differences, and forgive past grievances. As a result, they consistently chose the path of forgiveness and refrained from seeking revenge in their personal interactions as an expression of compassion.

**Villamont’s** account highlights the following:

*“... Whoever has an enemy must go and seek forgiveness from them. The other person is obliged to declare their forgiveness before shaking hands and exchanging greetings. Otherwise, their holidays cannot be considered blessed. Those who do not adhere to this principle are practically deemed immoral.”*

In Ottoman culture, numerous displays of propriety, decency, and ethical cultivation were present, making it a rich tapestry of customs and manners. Some notable examples included:

**a.** Streets were remarkably calm and secure, without impertinence, civil unrest, or unruliness, which were more prevalent in European societies. Even spitting on the ground was uncommon.

**b.** Conversations were conducted with exceptional grace and politeness. Speakers were not interrupted and maintained a composed and dignified demeanor. **Charles MacFarlane** noted that:

*“The speech of this nation is so exquisite and impeccable! It can serve as a model example to all civilized nations.”*

c. Actions such as sitting, rising, and walking were carried out with grace and dignity.

d. Respect for the elderly was deeply ingrained and held in high regard.

e. Women were treated with respect and reverence, seen as mothers, sisters, daughters, and aunts.

European authors who observed Ottoman society made numerous observations and admissions about these customs, including:

**Jean Antoine Guer:**

*“The Turks have highly refined social customs and adhere to all their rules. When they meet one another, they bow their heads and place their right hands on their chests as a gesture of greeting. They address their interlocutors with titles such as pasha, elder brother, and sultan according to their ranks and positions.”*

**Lady Elizabeth Craven:**

*“The treatment of women by the Turks should serve as an example to all nations. For instance, a man may be legally executed, his documents searched, and his belongings confiscated, but his wife is treated very well, and her jewelry is left to her.”*

**Albert Brayer:**

*“Observe their society, which is generally not very crowded: how impeccably clean are the appearances of the people! How great the nobility, and how sweet the tranquility and elegance in their disposition and demeanor! Their language, too, is pleasant and harmonious.”*

**Pierre-François Viguier:**

*“...Those engaged in conversation speak concisely and have clear pronunciation. Their smiles have a delicate poise and simplicity in their hand gestures. What surprises foreigners the most is that only one person speaks while the others remain silent. The speaker generally keeps their words brief. The listeners remain attentive until the end. They show respect toward each other when defending their views. There are no evils such as malice, gossip, slander, or indecent chatter in their words. Regard for the elderly and honoring their rights is carried out with inconceivable delicacy.*





*The moral qualities of the Ottomans can truly enamor a person. Their manner of walking is graceful and majestic; their welcoming of guests is full of smiles; and the elegance in their salutation is admirable.”*

**Edmondo De Amicis:**

*“...According to my observations and findings, the Turkish people of Istanbul are the most refined and courteous community in Europe. Even in the most deserted streets of this enormous city, there is no danger of insult or harm for a foreigner. It is even possible to visit the mosques during prayer times! In these visits, a foreigner can be sure to receive more respect and reverence than a Turk visiting our churches. There is never a hint of insolent looks or overly inquisitive gazes among the people. Laughter is extremely rare. Street brawls are also uncommon. Not a single female voice can be heard from doors, windows, or shops.”*

**Avoidance of Vices**

The Ottomans were known for their diligent efforts to avoid and protect themselves from a wide range of vices, such as gossip, slander, deception, blasphemy, hatred, malice, gambling, suicide, duels, and murder. So much so that observers from the outside concluded that they were virtually unaware of these.

**Clausier Du Loir** says:

*“The Turks are extremely reluctant to harbor any feelings of revenge: According to a provision of their religion, they must forgive their enemies before starting the Friday prayer. Otherwise, they believe their ritual prayers will not be accepted. In addition, the first day of every holiday is a day of collective reconciliation. When they meet each other, they shake hands and, after kissing the hand of the elder if there is an age difference, they put their hands to their heads and say, «Bayramın mübârek olsun!» (“May your holiday be filled with blessings!”).*

**Clausier Du Loir** again writes:

*“Profanity, anger, and the desire for revenge are common outcomes, just as gambling is a natural consequence. This is widespread in Christian countries. However, no profane words are heard in the streets or homes of the*





*Ottomans. What is even more embarrassing and astonishing for us is that not only do they refrain from using profanity in their speech, but such words do not even exist in their language. They only swear by saying «Wallâhi» (“By Allah”) as an oath to Allah.”*

Indeed, the language and expressions used by individuals during the Ottoman era reflected a culture of patience, wisdom, and spiritual resilience. Instead of responding to anger or frustration with harsh words, the Ottoman people often chose expressions that were rooted in goodness, faith, and humility. These phrases not only conveyed a sense of inner strength but also contributed to a more harmonious and respectful society. Some of these expressions included:

“*Lâ hawla wa lâ quwwah illâ billâh*” (‘There is no power or strength save in Allah’): This phrase is a reminder of one’s dependence on Allah’s help and signifies seeking refuge in Him during challenging times.

“May Allah put an end to your troubles!”: This expression reflects a sincere desire for the well-being and relief of the other person.

“*Subhân Allâh!*” (Glory be to Allah): This phrase is an acknowledgment of the greatness and perfection of Allah, which helps shift one’s focus away from negative emotions.

“*Hasbunâllah wa ni‘mah al-Wakîl!*” (‘Allah is sufficient for us, and He is the best Disposer of affairs!’): This phrase conveys trust in Allah’s control over all matters and serves as a source of comfort and reliance.

“*Yâ Şabr*” (‘O Allah, give me patience!’): This plea for patience demonstrates the recognition of challenges and the request for strength to endure them.

Expressions like these were not only used in everyday conversations but were also displayed in Sufi lodges, reminding individuals of the importance of patience, forgiveness, and surrender to Allah’s will. The famous phrases hung on the walls of these lodges, such as

“*Bu da geçer yâ hû!*” (This too shall pass, do not worry).

“*Vazgeç yâ hû!*” (Give up the needless things).

“*Hoş gör yâ hû!*” (Forgive and tolerate the one who made a mistake).



### Islamic Character

The Ottomans were deeply dedicated to living their lives in accordance with the principles of Islam. They represented a distinguished generation that embodied the Islamic character, particularly during the initial three and a half centuries following the time of the Companions.

Consequently, their obedience and adherence to the commands and prohibitions of their religion were exceptionally strong. For instance, while instances of suicide were prevalent in European countries and other nations, such occurrences were virtually unheard of within the Ottoman state. Similarly, vices like drinking and gambling were notably rare. In the event that someone developed a gambling addiction, their testimony held no validity. This principle was upheld even in cases involving figures as prominent as **Sultan Yildirim Bâyezîd**, whose testimony was rejected by **Qadi Molla Fanârî** due to his failure to perform ritual prayers with the congregation.

Through the embodiment of Islamic values from ordinary individuals to the sultan himself, the Ottomans fostered a robust and unswerving sense of unity and spirituality. This transformation rendered them an indomitable force, enabling them to rule the world with dignity and honor for centuries. Their ability to unite the entire Islamic world under their influence facilitated the nurturing of a sense of brotherhood and fraternity among diverse communities.

**Monsieur de Thevenot**, who was mesmerized by this honor and glory, describes some of his observations as follows:

*“They (i.e. the Ottomans) are very devout and charitable; very zealous for their religion, which they labour to propagate all over the world; and when they love or esteem a Christian, they pray him to turn Turk (i.e. to convert to Islam)”*

*They are loyal to their Prince (i.e. the Sultan), whom they highly reverence, and blindly obey. Turks are not seen to betray their Prince, and turn to the side of the Christians. They never quarrel, nor carry swords in the city... They seldom fight with each other, and they never knew what duels were; which proceeds chiefly from the wise policy of Mahomet, who kept from them two great causes of quarrels, wine and gaming; for the good Turks drink not a drop of wine, and those who drink are not esteemed...”*

### **Belief and Trust in Divine Destiny and Submission to His Will**

The Ottomans' ineradicable belief in divine decree (*qadâ'*) and pre-destination (*qadar*), integral components of Islam's core principles, played a vital role in bolstering their spiritual fortitude. Rooted in this theological conviction, the Ottomans neither succumbed to hubris and complacency in times of victory, nor yielded to despair and dejection amidst occasional setbacks. Instead, they embraced the blessings bestowed by their unwavering faith in the Will of Allah. They entrusted themselves completely to their Lord's plan, recognizing His sovereign control over all events.

In the face of triumph, their hearts resonated with gratitude and praise for Allah, while in times of defeat, they exhibited patience, perseverance, and accountability for their actions. They lived resolutely, aspiring for victory and even martyrdom, viewing both as noble outcomes. Even when circumstances seemed dire, their valor and determination remained unswayed.

This profound state of submission to Allah not only defined their character but also significantly contributed to their remarkable string of victories. Their unshakable belief allowed them to navigate the ebb and flow of fortune with equanimity, inspiring them to pursue excellence even in the most challenging circumstances.

**Jean-Baptiste Tavernier**, a prominent Western observer and researcher of his time, remarked:

*"The Turks exhibit a remarkable sense of calmness and composure when confronted with death, owing to their unwavering faith in the immutable nature of destiny and the futility of evading it."*

**Demetrius Cantemir** further emphasized:

*"The Turks, deeply entrenched in their profound faith in destiny, hold the conviction that no individual, regardless of their strength or invincibility, can elude the decree of fate. Each among them believes that Allah has already inscribed their destiny, rendering it unalterable."*

**Antoine-Laurent Castellan** stated:

*"The doctrine of fate and destiny has firmly taken root in the Ottoman psyche. This belief system supplants fear with valor, augmenting their endurance and determination. It even enables them to meet death with resignation."*





*As a consequence, even overt perils fail to instill fear in them. Even after enduring fiery trials and confronting enemy bayonets that leave their bodies punctured with wounds, their optimism persists, contingent upon their belief that their appointed time has not yet arrived.”*

These reflections vividly illustrate the profound impacts of their faith and submission to the Will of Allah.

### **An All-Encompassing Compassion and Mercy**

The Ottoman state exhibited a remarkable display of compassion and mercy that extended not only to fellow human beings but also to animals and the natural world. Their acts of goodness and charitable deeds reflected an extraordinary ethos of care and empathy, reminiscent of an imaginary institution devoted to this noble cause.

Outlined below are key aspects of this ethos:

a. Stricter regulations were enacted to prevent the excessive overloading of animals. Law enforcement diligently pursued those who violated these regulations, requiring both rest for the animals and an equivalent load to be placed upon the owner as a penalty. The directives issued by Kânûnî Sultan Sulaymân concerning animals carrying loads during the construction of the Sulaymâniye Mosque underscore this considerate stance.

b. The sensitivity toward animals extended even to slaughterhouses. To spare animals from witnessing the slaughtering process, their eyes were covered. Moreover, utmost care was taken to ensure that the knives used for slaughter were impeccably sharp, minimizing the animals' suffering.

c. A compassionate tradition arose where caged birds were purchased from markets and then released into the wild.

d. When erecting substantial structures, ornate nests were meticulously crafted for birds. The exquisite and artistic bird nests adorning the walls of the Yeni Valide Mosque in Uskudar stand as vivid testaments to the refined sensibilities of Ottoman philanthropists.

Hunting was not a widely accepted practice in Ottoman society, except in cases of necessity. The enthusiasm for hunting displayed by Sultan Mehmed IV and his son Sultan Mustafa II, known as “the hunters,” reportedly garnered resentment from the populace. The admonitions of **Bursevî Mehmed Efendi**



to Sultan Mehmed IV concerning his hunting inclinations are also widely acknowledged.

**Jean-Antoine Guer**, despite his known adversarial stance toward the Turks, documents the following observations:

*“...The compassion of the Muslim Turk extends even to animals. There are dedicated foundations and individuals responsible for this purpose. These individuals distribute liver to dogs and cats on the streets. The animals, familiar with these gestures of kindness, readily respond to the feeders’ gentle voices, rushing to them as soon as they hear their approach.*

*Butchers, as part of their customary practice, also provide food for a specific number of cats and dogs every day.*

*Moreover, in Damascus, there exists a specialized hospital for the treatment of ill cats and dogs.”*

**Clausier Du Loir** comments:

*“Is there anyone who would not be astonished upon witnessing the shelters erected for cats and the foundations established for their sustenance in various cities within the Ottoman state? Equally astounding is the presence of shelters in the streets to provide refuge for dogs and their puppies, with great care taken to supply their nourishment.*

*Those who undertake these acts believe that they accumulate abundant rewards destined to open the gates of Heaven for them.”*

**Corneille Le Bruyn** highlights:

*“Quick slaughter of animals whose meat is consumed is customary. This practice is motivated by their desire not to inflict unnecessary suffering upon these creatures.”*

Claude Alexandre Comte de Bonneval contributes the following remarks in one of his works:

*“The Turks establish foundations even for stray animals like cats and dogs. Butchers also uphold a moral obligation to feed a designated number of these animals each day.”*

These accounts underscore the profound compassion and empathetic treatment of animals that pervaded Ottoman society, even observed by indi-





viduals with differing perspectives. Such practices showcase the depth of the Ottoman state's values and the tangible impact of their commitment to kindness and mercy.

### **Goodwill and Humanity**

The Ottomans embraced a life guided by the refinement of their hearts through Islamic ethics. This ethos set them apart, allowing them to extend peace and comfort even to non-Muslims within their territories, in stark contrast to the treatment of people in Europe who often faced captivity and harsh conditions under their rulers.

Indeed, numerous nations and urban populations, witnessing the harmonious environment within Ottoman domains, extended invitations to the Ottomans, expressing sentiments like, "Come and govern us too!"

During that era, prominent Western figures like **Galileo** faced death sentences for merely stating that "the world revolves around the sun," a truth drawn from Islamic sources. Similarly, labeling psychiatric patients as "possessed by demons" and subjecting them to fires was a crime driven by profound ignorance in the Western world.

These instances collectively underscore that, during that time, the Muslim Turks exhibited goodwill and humanity toward all, guided by their religious morals. This kindness often surpassed the treatment non-Muslims extended to their fellow co-religionists. The Ottoman state's commitment to benevolence and humanity reflected the depth of their commitment to their beliefs and the elevated values they upheld.

**Louis H. Delamarre** observes:

*"During my walks through Istanbul, I have consistently encountered the people's generosity and warm hospitality. Every Turk I've approached for directions readily guides me and spares no effort in extending offers of food and drink. Their conduct embodies a profound sense of humanity and courtesy in every aspect."*

**Albert Brayer** notes:

*"The Ottomans exude a noble spirit that considers every visitor as a divine blessing. The host reserves the finest quarters of their abode for the guest and tends to their every need with utmost sincerity. Even when a guest falls*



*ill, the host takes it upon themselves to cover the doctor's expenses. They view it as inappropriate to burden the guest with financial obligations. Upon the guest's departure, the host offers gifts as tokens of gratitude and recognition for the kindness extended by the guest during their stay."*

### **Cleanliness and Hygiene**

The Ottomans not only inscribed the Prophetic saying, "*Cleanliness is half of faith*" (Muslim, Ṭahârah, 1), in exquisite calligraphy but also embraced it as a guiding principle, displaying it on the walls of their homes and places of worship. This maxim became intrinsic to their identity, reflecting both a spiritual and material commitment to cleanliness.

The pursuit of cleanliness encompassed both physical and spiritual dimensions, closely intertwined with religious obligations. Through the ritual ablution performed for the five daily prayers, they maintained constant cleansing of faces, hands, feet, and mouths. Additionally, the practice of washing hands before and after meals was diligently followed, while overindulgence in food was avoided by leaving the table before becoming overly satiated.

Their dedication to impeccable cleanliness extended to the construction of bathhouses, even in villages, as well as their own homes. A notable practice was the prohibition of wearing shoes indoors. Every corner of their dwellings gleamed with cleanliness, facilitating the act of prayer within their living spaces. There was a distinct absence of animals within homes, including birds.

This emphasis on hygiene had a direct impact on the Ottomans' physical well-being. According to Western sources, the Ottoman domain featured a higher proportion of robust individuals compared to Europe, which, at that time, suffered from a dearth of cleanliness and subsequently had more physically impaired and disfigured individuals concentrated in a single city than in the entire Ottoman realm.

The state of hygiene within the renowned Louvre Palace serves as an illustrative example of the prevailing sanitary conditions in Europe during that era. Rumors even suggest that in France, umbrellas were employed as safeguards against unsanitary water and urine tossed from balconies and windows. These historical accounts highlight the stark disparity in cleanliness between the Ottoman state and Europe, underscoring the Ottomans' exceptional commitment to cleanliness and hygiene.





**Monsieur de Thevenot** observes:

*“The Turks exhibit longevity, with a reduced susceptibility to diseases that frequently afflict us. Conditions like kidney disease are relatively unknown among them. This robust health is likely due, in part, to their frequent bathing and their moderate eating and drinking habits. They consume meals in moderation and do not indulge in as wide a variety of foods as Christians do.”*

**Ricaut** notes:

*“The practice of washing hands before and after meals has become an integral and indispensable custom among the Turks.”*

**Jean-Baptiste Tavernier** describes:

*“The Turks display a sense of tidiness and cleanliness during their meals. If there is ever a need to wipe their hands or mouths, they employ a small handkerchief. During meals, they use only their right hand. Upon finishing, a basin of warm water and soap is provided for hand washing. Each individual retrieves his handkerchief from under his sash or girdle to wipe his hands and mouth.”*

**René-Jean Durdent** observes:

*“The Turks are bound by their religious obligation to perform five daily prayers, often requiring multiple ablutions. They believe that through this practice, they attain spiritual purification as well.”*

**Albert Brayer** remarks:

*“The Ottomans consistently uphold the practice of washing and maintaining personal cleanliness. Even if they are unwell, their children, servants, or spouses assist in their bathing. When they pass away, their bodies are never placed in a coffin without undergoing a thorough cleansing in accordance with religious dictates. In contrast, Europeans frequently neglect hygiene when they are sick or weakened. Upon their demise, they are enshrouded in the simplest available fabric and interred in a coffin. The thought of cleansing the body is often overlooked by their families.”*

### **A Land without Crime**

In the regions under the exclusive domain of the Ottoman state, such as Anatolia and the environs of Istanbul, instances of criminal activity were rare.





The few occurrences that did take place were often attributed to Christian elements, particularly Greeks. This reality serves as ample evidence of the advanced moral standards held by the Ottoman populace.

Indeed, crimes like pickpocketing, fraud, theft, embezzlement, and forgery were virtually unheard of within the Ottoman state. Houses could be left unlocked, secured only by a simple wooden latch, a practice mirrored in the state of shops. This sense of security also extended to villages and Turkoman tribal communities.

As a result, the traditional Turkish law enforcement entities found themselves with minimal responsibilities.

It is self-evident that the primary source of this elevated moral code, which has astonished European authors for centuries, is the Noble Quran. This level of morality is not typically observed among adherents of other religions. This observation has led to articles in publications like the Daily News urging Western Christianity to reflect and draw lessons from these standards.

**Clausier Du Loir** remarks regarding the security and public order within the Ottoman state:

*“There are scarcely any criminal incidents in this country! On the rare occasions when one or two extraordinary incidents occur, they are usually the result of sudden eruptions or the work of banditry.”*

**Aubry de La Motraye**, a renowned traveler who spent a considerable time within the Ottoman military camp during **Baltaci Mehmed Pasha**’s Prut Campaign, recounts:

*“I stayed in the Ottoman state for about fourteen years. I witnessed that theft, like all other audacities, was extremely rare. Especially in Istanbul, there were no incidents of theft at all.*

*The punishment for highway robbery was impalement. During my fourteen years there, six robbers were subjected to this punishment. And they were all of Greek descent. There was no mention of a pickpocket among the Turks. That is why people had no fear of quick fingers in their pockets...”*

**Sir James Porter**, who served as the British ambassador to Istanbul says the following:



*“Whether the Turks look on stealing with disdain, as a baseness unworthy human nature, or whether they do indeed fear the laws, which, however, are not very severe, housebreaking, or pilfering by Turks, scarcely ever happens at Constantinople. In that city the Bulgarians are most to be apprehended; they are generally the thieves; yet you may live there with security, and your doors remain constantly open.”*

**Claude Alexandre Comte de Bonneval**, a French general, attests:

*“Crimes like injustice, usury, monopolies, and theft are virtually non-existent among the Turks. Their conscientious convictions and the fear of punishment contribute to their remarkable honesty, a virtue that commands admiration.”*

**Jean Henri Abdolonyme Ubicini** offers his observations:

*“In this splendid capital city, shopkeepers confidently leave their establishments open to attend prayers at their appointed times. During the night, houses are secured with nothing more than a simple latch. Astonishingly, not even three or four cases of theft arise in a year. However, in Galata and Beyoğlu, areas predominantly inhabited by Christians, incidents of theft or murder occur almost daily.”*

Even in the provincial regions, propriety and integrity reached the same high level. An anecdote recounted by a British traveler in a recently published letter in the **Daily News** highlights this aspect:

*“Today, I arranged to rent a cart from a villager to transport my belongings as well as those of an elderly Hungarian officer who is a friend of mine. Trunks, portmanteaus, saddles, coats, furs, and scarves were all left out in the open. Since the concept of a bed was non-existent here, I intended to purchase some dry grass to use for bedding at night. At that very moment, a courteous Turk kindly offered to accompany me. He even unharnessed his oxen and left them in the middle of the street with our belongings.*

*When I noticed him walking away, I called out to him:*

*“–Someone should stay here!”*

*The Turkish man besides me asked, surprised:*

*“–Why?”*

*I replied:*

*“–To watch over our belongings.”*

*The Muslim Turk responded:*

*“–What’s the use? Don’t worry; even if your belongings stay here day and night for a week, no one will lay a hand on them.”*

*Hearing his assurance, I chose not to insist and departed the spot. Upon my return, I was astonished to find everything exactly where I had left it. Moreover, during that time, Ottoman soldiers frequently passed by on that road.*

***This astonishing truth deserves to be proclaimed from the pulpits of churches in London. Some may consider it a dream, but it’s time for them to awaken from their slumber!***

Ottoman religious life played a pivotal role in nurturing the enhancement of faith and morality, thereby upholding social equilibrium. Simultaneously, the avenues that might lead to theft and robbery were deflected through the presence of philanthropic institutions. The bedrock of both material and spiritual triumphs lay in the acquisition of lawful earnings. The renowned words of **Yavuz Sultan Selim** encapsulate this guiding principle:

*“If I were to discover fruits taken from another’s vineyard within the possessions of my soldiers, I would halt the campaign to Egypt. Victory cannot be attained through illicit means!”*

### **Truthfulness and Moral Rectitude**

The Ottomans set an unparalleled standard for honesty and an unwavering commitment to honor. These qualities reflected their exceptional virtue and manifested in their dedication to the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah.

Moreover, the Ottoman understanding of truthfulness and rectitude extended universally, devoid of racial or religious bias. Numerous instances exemplify this stance. In the era of Fâtih Sultan Mehmed, when priests dispatched their daughters to an Ottoman madrasah to learn, the accounts of Turkish people’s honor and moral rectitude left such an indelible impression that these priests eventually embraced Islam. This sensitivity, evident in both royal decrees and the conduct of the populace and military, was acknowledged even by their adversaries.



As a natural consequence of this high moral standard, many commercial and economic dealings were transacted without written contracts within Ottoman territories. The fact that, despite gold being transported for years from the mountains, no instances of theft or robbery occurred serves as a testament to an integrity and honesty seldom found elsewhere. Outsiders openly admitted that deceitfulness, fraud, and injustice were more prevalent among non-Muslims than among Muslims within the Ottoman state.

**Aubry de La Motraye** states:

*“Whilst I’m upon this head, I can’t help doing justice to the Turks for their honesty, of which I have known so many instances. It has been my fortune, as well as several of my acquaintance’s, thro’ a want of thought, which is but too natural to me, to leave at a shop where I have been buying something, either my purse, which I had taken out to pay for it; or my watch, after looking what a clock it was; or else to pay twice as much as I ought to have done; and then being in haste, I have gone away without giving the shop keeper time to fold up his goods, which hid what I had left, or perceive the error I had committed to my own disadvantage. But I never lost a farthing among the Turks by this absence of mind; for the merchants have sent after me as far as Pera, where I lived, to restore what belonged to me, if I have not returned myself, after having found my mistake.”*

**Ignatius Mouradgea d’Ohsson**, who served as the Swedish ambassador to Istanbul and authored a comprehensive seven-volume work on Ottoman institutions and organizations based on his observations, writes:

*“The Ottoman Turks deserve commendation for their virtues, rooted in the Quran’s most precious commandments of honor, righteousness, and truthfulness, among others. A notable trait among them is their commitment to their word. They harbor a profound sense of conscience and remorse when it comes to deceiving others or exploiting the trust and innocence of individuals. This quality, embedded deeply within their interactions among themselves, extends to foreigners of all creeds and denominations. They make no distinction between Muslims and non-Muslims in this regard. They deem all forms of ill-gotten wealth as prohibited in Islam and firmly believe that unlawfully acquired wealth holds no benefit, neither in this world nor in the hereafter.”*

The following incident narrated by **Antoine-Laurent Castellan** regarding the truthfulness, fairness, and righteousness of the Ottomans is quite instructive:

*“One of my friends told me the following story:*

*I was returning from Istanbul to Pera with a bag containing **a thousand kurus**. As I was climbing up to the Tophane Pier, my bag tore open. All the coins spilled out and scattered on the dock, with some of them rolling into the sea. Before I could even say «oh dear», the people nearby rushed to pick up the coins. Everyone was collecting as much as they could. I was frozen in astonishment, not knowing what to do, and I could only watch their actions with great concern. But to my surprise, everyone was putting the coins they found into my bag, which was left by the sea. This brought some relief to me. Even the boatmen dived into the water and retrieved the coins that had fallen to the bottom of the sea. Although I wanted to show my generosity in return, they all stepped aside, stating that they had fulfilled their duty. Besides, they were so numerous that it would be impossible to give each of them a tip. After all the collected coins were placed in the bag, a porter shouldered it and carried it all the way to my home. Once inside the house, I eagerly started counting my money. I thought I had suffered some loss, but when I saw that all my thousand kurus were still in the bag, I was left in disbelief. I couldn't believe my eyes; I counted them again. Indeed, not a single kurus was missing.”*

**Charles MacFarlane** is an enemy of the Turks. Nevertheless, he cannot refrain from making the following admission:

*“My friend M.W. used to employ a poor peasant named **Bucali Mustafa** as a courier during the fruit season between Çeşme and Izmir. This poor man would load his bags of gold and set off from Izmir predominantly in the evenings. He would walk throughout the night and, traversing steep mountains, cover a distance of thirty leagues to arrive in Çeşme the next morning with his valuable cargo. Sometimes he would travel part of the way on a mule. However, as he approached the mountains, he would dismount to move faster. He feared no one except the people of Samos. But since Mustafa never encountered them, he believed he would never come across them. The truly astonishing aspect was that everyone along the way knew him and no one was unaware of the nature of the goods he carried. Nevertheless, among the merchants of Izmir, there was no hesitation in sending their money along such a perilous route...”*





The French poet **Alphonse Lamartine**, in his travelogue, recounts his departure from Istanbul as he set off from a coffeehouse in Eyup Sultan:

*“...The people had gathered around to watch us set off, but we suffered no insult, and nothing was lost from our belongings. In the Ottoman state, honesty was a virtue even on the streets. Those sitting under the trees in front of the coffeehouse and the children passing by helped us load our belongings onto our horses and carriages. They picked up the things we dropped and brought them to us with their own hands.”*

### **Modesty and Humility**

Modesty and the humility that naturally emanates from it, as integral components of religious faith, stand out as prominent virtues within the Ottoman state. The Ottomans held a deep sensitivity toward practicing temperance and moral uprightness in their lives, which contributed significantly to the maintenance of social harmony. Rooted in their adherence to Islam, the source of modesty, humility, and decency, they steadfastly upheld these principles without compromise. They took this commitment to the extent that they deemed it provocative for an unbeliever to even attempt to touch a woman’s hair. Their adherence to principles of modesty distinguished them uniquely in history, positioning them as an exemplar of what we might today characterize as a “virtuous society.”

**Ignatius Mouradgea d’Ohsson** states:

*“The principles of modesty prohibit every Muslim, both men and women, from exposing certain parts of their bodies or looking at them, except in cases of absolute necessity...”*

*This permission in cases of necessity is exclusive to physicians, surgeons, midwives, and circumcision specialists. However, even they are only allowed to look at the parts of the body required for their service.*

*Except for the parts covered by the thick veil of modesty, men can look at each other, and women can look at each other. However, if there is any situation that may lead their imaginations astray, they are obliged to immediately close their eyes to protect their hearts from all kinds of temptation.”*

**Albert Brayer** says the following:



*“Due to modesty among the Muslim Turks, arrogance and pride have practically disappeared. For these are undesirable qualities strongly prohibited in Islam. The following are enjoined:*

*“Do not walk on the earth arrogantly and look at people with haughty disdain!”*

*“Allah dislikes the arrogant and boastful!”*

*“Be humble in your actions; speak with a gentle voice!”*

*“Self-importance comes from ignorance; a scholar is never haughty.”*

*“Humility gives nobility to a person.”*

*As a result, the Ottomans tread with dignity and grandeur, with no trace of arrogance or haughtiness. They always speak in a mild tone. In their hand and arm movements, one never senses any domineering attitude. Their services are characterized by kindness and ease.”*

**Equanimity, Solemnity, and Composure**

The Ottoman people excelled not only in their practice of humility and acceptance but also in displaying equanimity, solemnity, and composure. Their dignified demeanor led them to perceive loud laughter as inappropriate, while a serene smile became an inherent aspect of their disposition.

These individuals of poise did not indulge in idle talk, choosing instead to express their thoughts succinctly and meaningfully. Their temperament prevented them from succumbing to excessive excitement in the face of events, and they exhibited a preference for tranquility over noise and shouting.

This distinguished manner extended beyond adults to encompass even children, adapted to their level of understanding. Children did not disrupt their surroundings with unnecessary noise. In the presence of adults, they spoke softly and engaged in games that were considerate of others’ peace.

**Thomas Henry Thornton** describes his observations as follows:

*“They [the Turks] affect a grave and sedate exterior: their amusements are all of the tranquil kind: they confound with folly the noisy expression of gayety: their utterance is slow and deliberate; they even feel satisfaction in silence: they attach the idea of majesty to slowness of motion: they pass in repose all the moments of life which are not occupied with serious business: they retire to rest; and they rise before the sun.”*



**Jean Henri Abdolonyme Ubcini** writes:

*“...They are generally handsome, robust, well-proportioned, and extremely clean. Their food may not be abundant but it is healthy. Their sole drink is water. Their education is superficial regarding general knowledge but excellent in their own professions. Above all, they acquire the qualities of Islam. Thus, they possess that astonishingly delicate refinement and that graceful composure. There is a mountainous difference between their sophistication and the crass behavior and carelessness of the tradesmen in our big cities.”*

### **Family Upbringing**

Undoubtedly, the strong foundation of family structures played a primary and influential role in shaping the exceptional moral character of the Ottomans. While occasional instabilities might have appeared in the state’s structure, they were rarely witnessed within the family domain. Even during the most trying circumstances, the people possessed the ability to rise above challenges and stand resolute on their feet.

The solidity of Ottoman families was predominantly anchored in the teachings of the Quran and the Sunnah. According to these principles, men and women found their roles in society based on their abilities and competencies. Men undertook work outside the home to provide for their families, while women embraced the responsibility of nurturing the household and raising children. This balanced division of roles led to the emergence of ethical values such as **“Respect and obedience to elders, and kindness and affection toward the young.”**

Within a family, the roles of the father as the household’s head, the mother as his companion, and the children as the joy of their lives were distinctly defined. Children bore the duty of displaying respect and obedience, as well as providing necessary assistance to their parents. Even if children lived apart from their parents or in different cities, younger family members were obligated to fulfill the Islamic duty of *«silah al-rahm,»* which encompasses maintaining contact, visiting parents, and bringing happiness to their hearts. This practice reinforced the bond between generations and exemplified the importance placed on family cohesion and respect for elders.

**Albert Brayer**, deeply moved by the virtues he observed within Ottoman society, aptly states:



*“In the Ottoman state, children take pride in being with their parents when they grow up and reach adulthood. Just as their parents showed them affection when they were young, children are happy to reciprocate in the same way. However, in other countries, children often separate from their parents as soon as they reach adulthood. They quarrel and argue with them over their financial interests. Sometimes, despite living in prosperity themselves, they leave their parents in near destitution. In this critical period when their parents need them the most, they almost become estranged from them.”*

**Jean Henri Abdolonyme Ubicini** also states:

*“...On Fridays or holidays, a father takes his son outside, holding his hand. He adjusts his steps to match the child’s steps. If he sees his child getting tired, he carries him on his shoulders or sits him down to rest beside him on a coffee shop bench. He speaks to him with deep affection, observing the child’s every movement. The young and old people around the child even put down their cigarettes, smile at the child, and express their wishes and encouragement for him to become a benefactor for the community and nation in the future.”*

### **Pierre Loti’s Observations**

Pierre Loti, the renowned French literary figure, found himself drawn to the Turkish people residing in Istanbul and deeply impressed by their Islamic ethics and conduct, even though he hailed from a distinct religion, culture, and race. He consistently expressed these sentiments through his writings. In his own words:

*“The lives of Muslim Turks are indeed from another world. Nowhere else can a man be so respectful of his wife! The secret behind this reality lies in the way a Turkish home is prepared by the woman. I dare say that even the rooms in a Muslim Turkish home are arranged with a special color harmony and furnishing style.*

*The way the home’s mistress dresses, from the headscarf to the beautifully embroidered slippers on her feet, is harmonious. The woman is so attached to her quarters, so eager for cleanliness, and possesses such intelligence and education to satisfy her husband’s longing for home that he enters the door in the evening with great expectancy. Her cleanliness is as pure as a flower on a material level. This material cleanliness stems from the purity of her soul. That woman knows nothing of alcohol, gambling, or the outside world.”*





This assessment indicates that:

**a.** Women of that era demonstrated a sense of refinement and grace in their pursuit of fashion. They possessed discerning tastes that recognized the diversity of Allah's creation. They understood that each individual is unique, with differences in height, build, complexion, and features. This diversity meant that what suited one person might not be suitable for another, and individual preferences varied infinitely. To abandon this richness of tastes in favor of peculiar fashions is illogical. Such a choice would signify ignorance, a lack of understanding, and a deficiency in character.

**b.** Genuine cleanliness emanates from the purity of the soul. External cleanliness holds no significance without an underlying inner purity. Consequently, spiritual and material orderliness should complement each other, creating a harmonious balance.

**c.** A woman who remains disconnected from the outside world safeguards herself from the pitfalls of curiosity. She leads a contented life within her household, dedicating herself to Allah, her spouse, and her children. She finds solace and tranquility by guarding her mind against trivial matters. As a result, she attains virtue, becoming a valuable and esteemed pillar of her home, deserving of utmost respect.



The portrayal provided thus far encapsulates the various phases spanning the rise, zenith, decline, and ultimate downfall of the Ottoman state. Notably, it is truly remarkable that the Ottomans upheld these admirable qualities and moral standards even during their final moments. Considering the ethical principles they continued to espouse even when they were no longer at the forefront of history serves as a point of contemplation and introspection. This reflection enables a deeper understanding and a heightened appreciation for the remarkable legacy they cultivated, one that soared to such impressive heights.

### **The Last Ottoman Society**

**Mûsâ Topbaş Efendi** vividly depicts the virtues, structure, and essence of the final years of the Ottoman society he bore witness to during his formative years:



In the realm of my earliest memories, a time I spent in Erenköy, I reflect upon the individuals who inhabited that space and the authenticity, affection, and respect that bound them together. A poignant sense of melancholy and nostalgia overtakes me when I contrast that era with our contemporary world.

In those days, kinship transcended bloodlines, as each person regarded their neighbor as kin, fostering a genuine atmosphere of love and concern. The joys and sorrows of one were collectively borne by all, a communal sentiment that ran deep. The celebrations of weddings and social affairs were communal merriments, marked by eloquent conversations and shared grace. The sick were not alone; their rooms would be graced by well-wishers who alleviated their pain with tokens of compassion, soothing words, and warm smiles. Strangers, the destitute, and orphaned were recipients of unwavering kindness, a benevolent effort undertaken solely for Allah's pleasure.

Generosity flowed unreservedly from the prosperous to the underprivileged, while empathetic physicians were in abundance. These healers attended to patients with paternal care, often declining payment from those in need and occasionally covering the costs of medicines from their own coffers. When flames erupted, valiant firefighters and volunteers would surge to the scene, transcending geographical boundaries to battle the inferno.

In this paradigm, malevolent intentions were alien, and the notion of theft or causing harm was unfathomable. Acts of support and service were not only virtuous but also considered *fard al-'ayn* (an individual duty within the framework of Islamic law). Whenever death cast its shadow, the community rallied around the mourning family, extending solace and sustenance for days on end.

Respect was a fundamental value that permeated every aspect of society. Politeness, courtesy, and decency were natural traits exhibited by all individuals. Unlike the current trend of educated individuals and teachers displaying arrogance and condescension, those times were characterized by unlettered yet knowledgeable, cultured, and considerate people. There existed a genuine sense of brotherhood and sisterhood between the elderly and the young, the affluent and the indigent. Even those who possessed wealth were marked by their humility.

The welfare of widows and orphans in the community was a collective responsibility, embraced by all. Boasting about personal luxuries was unheard of, as gratitude for sustenance from Allah prevailed. The community shunned



extravagance, channeling their savings toward supporting the less fortunate, particularly widows, orphans, and the financially disadvantaged. It brought them immense joy to provide both material and spiritual aid to young individuals who were unable to marry.

Envy, jealousy, and gossip found no place among them. Anyone tempted by such negativity knew that the community would respond with disapproval, potentially tarnishing their reputation. They held a profound understanding that beyond fulfilling religious duties, the art of “winning the hearts of believers” stood as a paramount act of worship. Their conversations were adorned with kindness, and they frequently shared stories of virtuous individuals, uplifting spirits.

Discord and conflict were absent from their interactions. Disdain and condescension toward others were alien concepts. The youth held deep respect for their elders, who, in turn, treated them with benevolence. Filial duty toward parents was a sacred obligation, executed unwaveringly.

Elders took a proactive role in mentoring the youth, ensuring they grew into well-rounded individuals, marked by solemnity, dignity, and humility. This extended to the treatment of household servants, who were accorded kindness and courtesy. The servants dined at the same table and enjoyed separate, clean quarters. In response, they embraced their role as integral members of the household, diligently serving without a trace of indolence. The thought of abandoning their service in favor of another was inconceivable, as it was deemed disrespectful and ungrateful.

If a servant happened to be young, they would be married off, embracing a new phase of life. On the other hand, if they were elderly, their departure from the household would only occur upon their passing.

The upbringing of children held paramount importance. They were instilled with a deep love and reverence for Allah, as well as a genuine affection for the Prophet ﷺ and the principles of the faith. Acts of worship and charitable deeds were encouraged through the lens of love. While their needs were met, their desires were not always indulged to prevent spoiling. Instead, a focus on instilling good manners and discipline prevailed. Religious, ethical, and social guidance was a constant in their lives, nurturing their modesty and moral integrity.



Family members shared meals in an atmosphere of warmth and togetherness, adhering to specified times. The practice of eating separately was alien to them; the mother, father, and children dined in unison. Evenings were usually spent within the home, with occasional visits to relatives or friends, and the arrival of guests was met with genuine hospitality. Conversations were tailored to be comprehensible to children during these times.

Children were granted permission to venture outside only with consent, and they dutifully adhered to agreed-upon return times.

The streets bore signs that championed local products with the message, “**Citizens, buy domestic!**” Even though domestic industries had not yet reached their zenith, the community predominantly supported local goods. The quality of those goods might not have equaled today’s standards, especially fabrics woven from native wool, which were often coarse. Yet, people took immense pride in donning these garments. Using and wearing domestically produced items was a source of pride. The minority who opted for foreign products faced criticism and were sometimes perceived as betraying their country.

While contemporary domestic products often excel in quality, regrettably, they often do not garner the demand they deserve, influenced by external propaganda and a weakening of spiritual, religious, and ethical values. Curiously, consumers readily embrace subpar items from abroad without hesitation and are willing to pay a premium for them.

In those times, the concept of wastefulness or extravagance was virtually non-existent. Budgets were meticulously managed based on income. Civil servants tailored their purchases of clothing, oil, soap, and other goods to their financial standing and societal class. A lower-paid employee might have a different consumption pattern compared to someone with higher earnings, yet both felt content and at ease.

Stubbornness, irritability, and relentless competition – hallmarks of today’s society – were rare in that era. The people of that time, if exposed to today’s self-centeredness and lack of civility, would likely be rendered speechless, incapable of uttering a response.

Free from the grip of materialism, they found themselves largely untouched by mental afflictions, resulting in a scarcity of psychiatric patients. Even those relegated to lower societal rungs, such as street vendors, trouble-





makers, fishermen, and cabmen, exuded an indescribable refinement in their demeanor. If only they could return to witness the brash, aggressive, and inconsiderate behavior of contemporary times, they might offer invaluable lessons in courtesy, etiquette, and social decorum. Even the gardeners tending to villas and waterfront estates embodied dignity, solemnity, and dependability, adorning the landscapes with elegance while acting as stewards of the earth.

Shopkeepers who operated by selling goods daily did not harbor resentment if a customer chose to patronize other merchants. Their lives were devoid of jealousy, allowing them to experience inner peace.

Genuine and sincere love for one another permeated their interactions, unlike today's often artificial connections.

Mansion owners were largely esteemed and reputable individuals. Their opulent residences benefited everyone, regardless of financial status. The household head occupied the men's section (*selamlık*), while the lady of the house managed the harem area, catering to guests. Financial differences did not dictate these arrangements.

In stark contrast to today's disregard for the distinction between the permissible and the forbidden, people of the past were content, prioritizing their neighbors' and relatives' well-being over personal gain. Family units operated cohesively, with husbands addressing their families affectionately, upholding kindness and compassion. United by a shared sense of devotion, they meticulously followed Allah's commandments.

The wife of the household displayed deep obedience to her husband, offering her support without undue objection and refraining from insisting on unrealistic desires. Their lives were characterized by happiness and contentment, as they exercised financial prudence. Clothing and household items were not replaced simply due to age, but used diligently. True happiness was derived from spiritual fulfillment, not wealth, status, or rank.

The adage, "**The female bird is the one that makes the nest a paradise!**" held sway. Mothers eschewed extravagance, imparting this wisdom to their children. These children grew up with money in their pockets, taught by their parents to avoid squandering, borrowing, and to assist the less fortunate.

Fear of infringing on others' rights, borrowing, and accruing debt was deeply ingrained. Those in debt would endure hunger rather than fail to honor their commitments on time. Their integrity allowed them to borrow as needed.



Women bore the responsibility of managing household chores and raising children, while men worked outside the home to provide sustenance.

Youth raised with strong religious values were not rebellious, earning the admiration and affection of all, becoming valuable members of society.

Teachers offering Quranic and religious education were held in the highest regard, surpassing the reverence given to others.

Food was a simpler affair, not the preoccupation it is today. Gratitude was expressed for whatever was presented before them, even plain bread. The **“supplication of thanks to Allah for the food”** was a post-meal ritual. Despite wealth, there were days without meat, yet never a sense of deprivation. Overindulgence was foreign; a craving for meat was not excessive. Stomach, heart, bladder, and psychological ailments were rare. One neighborhood doctor sufficed for all, as everyone’s balanced lifestyle – involving prayer, moderate eating, and regular walks – upheld health and kept conditions like arthritis at bay.

Friday held the status of a revered day off in the weekly schedule. Government offices, schools, and both private and public institutions would close their doors. While some chose rest, others ventured to vineyards, gardens, and wooded areas, or engaged in home maintenance. Many would don new attire for Friday prayers. Notably, the Eyup Sultan Mosque experienced a surge in visitors. The Friday sermon was succinct, avoiding prolongation. The extra ten units of prayer following obligatory prayers were performed unhurriedly, with imams displaying careful and respectful conduct, fully understanding the purpose and essence of ritual prayer.

A genuine fondness for flowers abounded. People dedicated themselves to nurturing these plants, even in the face of poverty that hindered the availability of traditional flower pots; repurposed items like tin cans found use. Individuals cherished the flowers they cultivated, finding solace in their symmetry, beauty, and fragrance.

Distinguished and cultured women of that era favored rose water over today’s extravagant yet often deceptive creams and ointments. Even elderly mothers at seventy or eighty boasted luminous, radiant skin. Modern times have seen women lose touch with the spiritual light of worship, resulting in premature skin aging due to cosmetic products.





The advent of the blessed month of Ramadan was greatly anticipated, embraced with pleasure as fasting took precedence. Mosques overflowed during *tarawih* prayers, and even non-Muslims displayed respect by discreetly consuming their meals.

Minority communities displayed considerate and friendly dispositions. Contrary to present times, they did not eagerly fell tens of thousands of pine trees for the New Year, adhering to the Christian tradition of adorning rooms with these trees and indulging in lavish feasts.

Humor was characterized by subtlety and emotional nuance, steering clear of crass and hurtful jests. Gatherings featured tea, coffee, rose sherbet, and natural spring water, accompanied by historical anecdotes, instructive tales, and poetry narrated by skilled orators.

Gloom, disrespect, and folly were notably absent. Joy and cheer were pervasive, alongside profound respect for holidays and sacred nights. These auspicious periods saw people visit one another, recite the Quran and celebrate the noble birth of the Prophet ﷺ. Homes became imbued with this spiritual fervor.

Gift exchanges were customary, guests received honorable treatment, and speaking loudly in the presence of elders was considered impolite and lacking in decorum unless necessary. Children were well-versed in not occupying prominent seats at the table due to the values instilled by their families.

Trying to convey the flavor of honey to someone who has never tasted it remains a challenge, much like capturing the full beauty of those times in words. Suffice it to say that those eras were splendid beyond modern imagination.

### **An Overview of the Disparities between the Ottoman and Current Generations**

It is important to begin by acknowledging the longstanding animosity that the Christian West held toward the Ottoman state throughout their historical interactions. The two powers often found themselves engaged in continuous warfare, a pattern that remains consistent even today. However, amid this hostility, there were individuals within Western circles – travelers, diplomats, and sometimes even government officials – who aimed to caution and enlighten their people. These individuals also held a genuine sense of respect and ad-





miration for the ethics, traditions, and justice observed by the Ottomans, recognizing the superiority of their political system. This historical perspective offers us valuable insights, particularly as we find ourselves spiritually lacking amidst our own societal decline. Within the context of these observations, the virtues we have lost can be more clearly delineated.

Building upon the preceding discussion, we can reflect on the following assertion made by **Edmondo De Amicis**:

*“...In general, the whole world agrees on this point. The current Turks are not of the same caliber as their ancestors. Today’s Turks have embraced our textiles, bodily comforts, obscenities, evil deeds, and frivolities instead of our technology and progress. However, since they have not fully assimilated our attitudes and ideas, they are in a half-hearted state of development. In the meantime, it is also true that they have lost all the good qualities of the Ottoman Turkish character. What they have acquired from the West has only resulted in a group of young people who are lazy, incompetent, faithless, money-driven, imitators of the West, enemies of all religious and cultural traditions, servile-minded, ill-mannered, shameless, and immoral to the extent that they cannot even fill the shoes of their ancestors...”*



Upon internalizing the insights presented in the preceding observations, representing only a fraction of the numerous instances available, it becomes imperative to fathom our journey from yesteryears to the present day. We must delve deep into the underlying causes that have led to the fragmentation of a vast homeland spanning twenty-four million square kilometers. Only by comprehending these factors can we undertake a concerted effort to reclaim the remarkable qualities exhibited by our ancestors, qualities that even managed to garner admiration from their adversaries. This endeavor calls for a reinvigorated determination.

**May we beseech, O Almighty, for a portion of the moral virtues bestowed upon our revered forebears through their connection to the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ.**

**Âmîn!**





## THE PIOUS ENDOWMENT



*A Pillar of Order and Peace in Ottoman Society*

**The pious endowment**, known as “*vakıf*” in Turkish and “*waqf*” in Arabic, embodies a formal manifestation of compassion, benevolence, and devotion to the Creator through the service of creation. In essence, it signifies dedicating wealth to Allah, removing it from personal possession and ownership.



Initially, pious endowments emerged as places of communal worship and gradually expanded to encompass various segments of society. Legend recounts that the **Prophet Ibrâhîm** ﷺ was deeply moved when the Angel Gabriel’s ﷺ name was mentioned thrice. In response, he presented his flock of sheep as a gift to Gabriel, who declined, acknowledging his angelic nature. Undeterred, Ibrâhîm ﷺ sold his sheep and acquired a substantial parcel of land, dedicating it for the use of Muslims. Thus, the foundation of the pious endowment was established in the time of Ibrâhîm ﷺ.

**Prophet Muḥammad** ﷺ himself offered a practical precedent for pious endowments. Known for his exemplary conduct, he initially contributed seven

distinct date palm groves he owned in Medina, and later, his share of date palm groves in Fadak and Khaybar, all for the sake of Allah's cause.

Inspired by this, the noble Companions  of the Prophet generously contributed their valuable earnings and properties to pious endowments. To such an extent that **Jâbir**  noted:


*"I do not know of a single person among the Muhâjirûn and Anşâr who had the means and did not establish a pious endowment"* (Ibn Qudâmah, al-Mughnî, V, 598).


'Umar  acquired a splendid date palm grove as war spoils in Khaybar. In a recurring dream over three nights, he was instructed to donate this land. Accordingly, he approached the Prophet Muḥammad  and conveyed:

*"—O Messenger of Allah! I possess a valuable date palm grove, unknown to me until now. I am ready to comply with your guidance."*

The Messenger of Allah  responded:

*"—If you wish, dedicate the original land as a pious endowment for the sake of Allah! Allocate its income to charitable endeavors! Hereafter, it cannot be sold, inherited, or utilized for personal gain. The yield should solely be directed toward acts of charity and nourishing those in need."*

Upon hearing this, 'Umar  dedicated the date palm grove as a pious endowment. From that point onward, it benefited needy individuals engaged in *jihâd*, those who strove in the path of Allah, emancipated slaves, and travelers (see Bukhârî, Waşâyâ, 22, 28).

The Ottomans, inspired by the philanthropic spirit of the Companions , made substantial contributions to the establishment of pious endowments. The zenith of these institutions was reached during the Ottoman era. Within the Ottoman state, pious endowments channeled the accumulated wealth of the state back into societal service and well-being. These foundations stemmed from a mindset that prioritized compassion and humanity over mere pragmatic accumulation of wealth.

Echoing the Prophetic tradition that asserts, *"The best of people are those who are most beneficial to people,"* the Ottomans created numerous enduring and monumental works through their pious endowments.



The services provided by Ottoman pious endowments encompassed a diverse array of offerings that evolved over time, adapting to the varying needs of different places and regions. This dynamic structure was intentionally designed to cater to society's welfare. Among their extensive services were mosques, masjids, *tekkes* (dervish lodges), schools, libraries, hospitals, caravansaries, almshouses, nurseries for child care, water systems, aqueducts, fountains, roads, walkways, soup kitchens, facilities for the care and nourishment of children, shops, guesthouses, wells, laundries, baths, bazaars, tombs, piers, lighthouses, archery and wrestling arenas, liberating captives and slaves, providing fuel for the impoverished, replacing damaged belongings of servants to prevent their chastisement, breeding horses for the military, planting trees, settling debts for incarcerated individuals, endowing dowries for orphaned girls, offering financial aid to the indebted, assisting widows and the destitute, organizing outings for children, provisioning food and necessities for school children, arranging the burial of the poor and orphaned, bringing joy to children and the neglected during holidays, supporting the construction of fortresses, defensive structures, and the navy, feeding birds in winter, and tending to sick and isolated storks unable to migrate, and countless other charitable causes initiated through diverse endowments.

Additionally, thousands of pious endowments were established, dedicated to the sacred cities of Mecca and Medina, collectively known as the **Ḥaramayn Foundation**. These charitable establishments aimed to uphold social order, peace, and prosperity in these blessed lands, without relying on the wealth of today's petroleum industry. Separate administrations were established for these foundations, extending from Central Europe to Yemen. Besides the revenue generated by these institutions, nearly every sultan contributed gifts and donations to both the Ḥaramayn and the local inhabitants during the ceremonial sending of the **Surre Regiment**. The ceremonial cloth woven in Istanbul would be sent to the Kaaba. This tradition endured until the fall of the Ottoman state.

In this manner, the comprehensive network of services provided by these foundations laid the groundwork for the transformation of **Constantinople** into Islâmbol, fulfilling the prophecy of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. Consequently, the old name faded into history, and this **blessed city** continued to be recognized through alternate monikers like **Islâmbol**, **Dersaâdet**, **Pâyitaht**, and **Âsitâne**.

Thanks to the pious endowments dedicated to those sacred places by Ottoman sultans, statesmen, and philanthropists of wealth, the services provided garnered the gratitude and acknowledgment of all Muslims.

In Islam, which views this world as a preparatory realm for the hereafter and considers the hereafter as a continuation of this world, a harmonious equilibrium between these two domains is impeccably established, taking into account the body-soul and material-immaterial dualities. This harmonious balance formed a sturdy foundation for a prosperous and harmonious society.

Pious endowments encompass a vast spectrum of services and exemplify institutions that give selflessly for the sake of Allah. These foundations embody a duty imposed by Islam on Muslims toward all creations, a place where love, compassion, and mercy toward the creation are manifested as an offering for the Creator.

In the Quran, numerous reasons are behind the directive to spend from what one cherishes in order to attain Allah's pleasure as devout believers. Among these, the most crucial can be illuminated as follows:

For humanity, there exist two precious treasures within this world: life and material resources. With these divine trusts, individuals strive for Allah's contentment and conduct transactions for the attainment of Paradise. Hence, those dedicated to Allah's cause, through their benevolence and philanthropy, endeavor to dedicate these two resources to benefit the needy, seeking Allah's contentment.

The tranquility and harmony within a society can only be perpetuated through such altruistic figures. Likewise, the dignity and eminence of communities are closely intertwined with the presence of these philanthropic individuals. Today, we must rekindle this structure by enriching our souls with the luminosity of spiritual truths.

Leading the way among those who dedicate themselves to the people for the sake of Allah are the prophets, saints, and believers who attain perfection under their guidance. Fueled by the fervor of faith, they have carried this zeal to every corner of the world, etching their names onto the most treasured pages of history.

Within the Ottoman state, the spiritual guidance and influence of the perfected guide (*murshid al-kâmil*) provided a compass for righteous action. Spir-





itual development centers known as *tekkes*, also products of charity, flourished and facilitated inner growth for individuals. This achievement was made possible through state-supported endowments and individual pious efforts. Traits such as empathy, sensitivity, tenderness of the heart, and refinement were inherent within the people. Those who transcended their ego through guidance and spiritual services bestowed blessings like abundant rain upon the land.

Our society continues to reap the benefits of these benevolent institutions bequeathed by our ancestors. Mosques, fountains, military barracks, hospitals, even the water we drink – these countless charitable services are now cherished legacies and memories they have left behind.

The Ottomans, who governed a substantial portion of the world and guided historical currents in various directions, upheld the order and peace of their societies through pious endowments, nurturing a spiritual brotherhood among the poor and rich, the infirm and the healthy. Thanks to the rich culture of pious endowments, Ottoman society reached the zenith of social justice. As a result, the concept of the “novel” did not find a place in Ottoman literature until the decline of the Ottoman state. **Cemil Meriç** eloquently justified the absence of novels in the Ottoman context with the statement, “There was no drama in Ottoman life, so there would be no novel!” Contrary to the Middle Ages’ claims of mercy within the Christian world, there were no pious endowments. Accounts of foreign ambassadors serving in the Ottoman government reveal that today’s Christian charities were established at the behest of foreign ambassadors who had served in the Ottoman capital. The memoirs of the renowned French ambassador **Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq** are a vivid example of such admissions.

*“One of the most noteworthy spiritual sensitivities observed in Ottoman practices regarding pious endowments was that the giver and the recipient did not know each other. This way, they could avoid hypocrisy and strive to have others supplicate for them in their absence. Furthermore, as these aids were delivered through mosques, they contributed to strengthening people’s religious faith.”*

In the Ottoman state, the reverence for endowments reached such heights that, after reaching the pinnacle in aiding humans, a new realm of service was extended to animals. Healing centers were established for wounded birds and ailing creatures.



**The precise count of endowments established in the Ottoman state remains unknown, but it is estimated to be around 26,000. Even this figure alone is indicative of the depth of their altruism.**

The role fulfilled by endowments persisted even when states faced external and internal crises, becoming an effective means to alleviate the suffering experienced by people. Thus, even in the most intricate and sensitive circumstances, a compassionate embrace was always extended to the suffering, saddened, and tormented souls within society.

One example is the pious endowment of **Fâtih Sultan Mehmed Khan**, whose deed of trust reads as follows:

*“I, the humble servant Fâtih Sultan Mehmed Khan, the Conqueror of Istanbul, hereby establish an authenticated endowment for the 136 shops that I have purchased with the money earned through my own hard work in the Taşlık area of Istanbul, whose boundaries are well-known. Its conditions are as follows:*

*With the revenues obtained from these properties, I have appointed two people for each street in Istanbul.*

*They shall roam these streets at specified hours, carrying a container with lime powder and charcoal ash. They shall sprinkle this powder on the spittle of those who spit on the streets and receive a daily payment of 20 akçes.*

*I have also appointed ten surgeons, ten physicians, and 3 wound dressers. They shall go to Istanbul on certain days of the month, knock on every door without exception, and inquire if any sick person is in the house. If there is, they shall provide them with treatment and healing. If not, they will take them to Dâr al-‘Ajazah and ensure their well-being without expecting anything in return.*

*There may also be a food shortage, Allah forbid. In such a situation, the 100 weapons I have left behind should be given to the hunters who shall go hunting in the Balkans when there are no young animals left in the wild to lay eggs or give birth so that our patients are never left without food.*

*Furthermore, in the complex where I have constructed buildings, the families of martyrs and the poor of Istanbul shall have their meals. However, they shall not come to eat or receive food themselves, but rather the food shall be*





*delivered to their homes in closed containers, in the dim light of the sun, and without anyone seeing them!...*”

As evident, Fâtih Mehmed II established regulations with the utmost regard and propriety for the vulnerable members of society in need of safeguarding. He took measures against inappropriate behavior, such as “spitting on the ground,” which was rare during that era. While instructing patients to be nourished with game meat for their recuperation, he also prohibited hunting, egg-laying, and breeding during certain seasons to maintain the “ecological balance” in nature. Therefore, in addition to his compassion and mercy toward the Ummah, he also upheld the rights of animals.

Over five hundred years ago, people took measures to combat “environmental pollution” and prevent the “disruption of ecological balance,” issues that continue to cast a shadow over the modern world. This serves as a crucial historical precedent for present-day individuals.

Similarly, the act of providing meals to the families of martyrs in sealed containers and darkness stands as a remarkable demonstration of loyalty, dedicated to upholding their honor and dignity. This gesture also imparts valuable lessons in courtesy and etiquette to future generations.



All pious endowments that envelop society like a web of compassion are profound manifestations of peace and joy, bestowed upon humanity through the exemplary endeavors of the Muslim community.

The details shared by Evliyâ Chelebi about the guesthouse within **Sokulu Mehmed Pasha**’s endowment are captivating:

*“...If a traveler arrives from the countryside at the stroke of midnight, the doors will swing open to welcome them inside. Food will be offered from the available provisions. However, even if the world were to witness utter collapse, the doors would remain firmly shut during the night, preventing anyone from leaving.”*

And as dawn breaks and it is time to depart, the hosts would call out:

*«—O the Ummah of Muḥammad! Are your belongings, lives, steeds, and garments all in proper order? Are there any needs you still carry?» The guests would respond in unison:*





*«—Everything is in order. May Allah’s blessings be upon the doers of good!» Upon hearing this, the gatekeepers would swing the doors open, saying:*

*«—Depart with vigilance! Take heed not to lose your provisions! Be cautious of unfamiliar company! Go forth, and may Allah ensure your safe return!» They part ways with heartfelt prayers and wise counsel.*

The endowment deed of **Naqîb al-Ashraf Es’ad Efendi** stands out as a testament to the spiritual depth of a believer:

*“...Provide firewood, coal, and other essentials to the frail elderly and destitute residing in remote areas, overlooked by esteemed and philanthropic statesmen, as well as those incapacitated by illness or infirmity! Additionally, arrange dowries for impoverished and orphaned girls of marriageable age!”*

The following excerpts from a letter written by the Western traveler **Hunke** to the father of a young man recuperating in a Muslim hospital beautifully mirror the sensitivity displayed by benevolent endowments in their services:

*“My beloved father! You inquire if I require money. Upon my discharge, they shall provide me with new attire and five gold coins, sparing me the immediate need for employment. Hence, there’s no urgency for you to sell any livestock. Yet, if you wish to visit me here, make haste! I’m reluctant to depart this haven. The beds are plush, the linens pure as snow, and the blankets soft as velvet. Every chamber boasts a fountain, and warmth embraces every room during cold nights. The caregivers are truly kind and compassionate. Almost daily, those with robust digestion relish poultry and lamb dishes. Come before my last chicken is prepared; let us feast together!”*

It is worthy of note, and arguably a point of exceptional significance, that among the roughly twenty-six thousand benevolent endowments established within the Ottoman state, approximately one thousand four hundred were founded by women.

**Nûr Bânû Vâlide Sultan**, for instance, commissioned the construction of numerous structures on both the Anatolian and Rumelian sides of Istanbul. Among her charitable works were the Atik Vâlide Mosque in Uskudar Toptaşı, complete with an almshouse, madrasah, hospital, and a double bathhouse catering to both men and women.



**Mâhpeyker Kösem Vâlide Sultan** laid the foundation for the Yeni (“New”) Mosque and funded the creation of the Uskudar Chinili (“Painted Tiles”) Mosque, a school, a fountain, a *dâr al-hadîth*, a double bath, and a public drinking fountain. She also established a foundation to support orphaned girls and facilitate their marriages. Kösem Sultan, recognized for her assertiveness, displayed a compassionate and merciful nature as well.

**Hatice Turhan Sultan** continued the construction of the Yeni Mosque and added a school, madrasah, almshouse, library, and fountain to her charitable endeavors. An intriguing aspect of the Yeni Mosque’s endowment was the provision of honey sherbet served to the congregation after ritual prayers during the nights of Ramadan and other sacred occasions. The quality of honey, sourced from Athens (formerly known as Pazar in Rize), was specified in the endowment document, ensuring that only the finest honey was used.

Hatice Turhan Sultan also ensured the sustained operation of her benevolent establishments by allocating substantial resources. She appointed 116 individuals to oversee the effective functioning of her foundations.

**Pertevniyâl Vâlide Sultan** contributed to Istanbul’s landscape by constructing the Vâlide Mosque in Aksaray and the Yâ Vedûd Mosque. Additionally, she established a library, fountain, and school as acts of piety.

**Mihrimâh Sultan**, notable for her grand mosques in Edirnekapi and Uskudar, took inspiration from history, particularly **Zubayda**, the wife of Hârûn al-Rashîd, who had built waterways from Baghdad to ‘Arafah. These waterways deteriorated over time, leading to water scarcity during pilgrimages. Mihrimâh Sultan secretly used her jewelry to finance the restoration of these waterways, which were aptly called “Ayn-i Zubayda” after her endeavor.

Among the most renowned Vâlide Sultans in terms of charitable activities is **Bezmiâlem Vâlide Sultan**, whose enduring legacy spans centuries. Notably, she oversaw the construction of the Vâlide Mosque opposite Dolmabahçe Palace and played a pivotal role in the establishment of the famous Galata Bridge. Initially free, the bridge later began charging fees for some crossings to cover maintenance costs.

One notable pious endowment established by Vâlide Sultan that deserves mention is located in Damascus. Its stipulations were outlined as follows:

- a. Supplying fresh water to pilgrims in Damascus.

b. Rectifying or replacing damaged items caused by servants, safeguarding their honor and reputation.

Among the remarkable contributions of Vâlide Sultan, whose charitable endeavors spanned distant lands, is the **Gurabâ' al-Muslimîn Hospital**. Erected through her personal wealth, this impressive institution, complete with a mosque and fountain, was inaugurated in 1843. It extended medical care to the less privileged members of the Ummah, a service that continued over time.

The sincere pious endowments initiated by the Ottomans were designed to endure indefinitely. These establishments, such as mosques, schools, hospitals, and lodges, address current and future needs. Each represents an ongoing act of charity, attesting to faith and nobility that continue to bring joy to the souls of generations past.

Spending in the path of Allah, parting with cherished possessions, and giving from the heart hold paramount significance. The following Quranic passage guides believers:

لَنْ تَنَالُوا الْبِرَّ حَتَّى تُنْفِقُوا مِمَّا تُحِبُّونَ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا  
مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ

**“You will not attain piety until you expend of what you love; and whatever thing you expend, Allah knows of it”** (Şûrah Âli ‘Imrân, 92).

When this passage was revealed, the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ promptly offered their most cherished possessions to him. Some gave in charity, some liberated slaves, and others established pious endowments.

Certain rivers and springs have flowed melodiously with crystalline water since time immemorial. They offer vitality to thirsty spirits, solace and optimism to troubled hearts, and inspiration to affectionate souls. They murmur gently, imparting a cool and sweet serenity that persists until the end of time. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ likened certain good deeds done in the name of Allah to these flowing waters. However, the stream the Prophet ﷺ referred to is distinct; it is a spring that flows not just until the end of time, but for eternity. It is the spring of virtuous deeds that continues unceasingly, invoking Allah’s blessings on the behalf of its benefactor. It consistently fills one’s record of deeds and treasury of righteous actions, submerging them in everlasting light.



This is the flowing stream of perpetual charity, known as *sadaqah al-jâriyah*. In a tradition, it is narrated:

*“When a person dies, his deeds come to an end except for three things: ongoing charity, knowledge from which others benefit, and a righteous child who supplicates for him”* (Muslim, Waṣiyyah, 14).

Scholars generally explain that ongoing charity in this context refers to pious endowments. It signifies leaving behind something with the intention of earning Allah’s pleasure. This may take the form of establishing centers of learning and spiritual growth, constructing roads, bridges, and libraries, creating institutions for scholarships and student opportunities, and raising and nurturing a righteous child, involving all the sacrifices that accompany it.



The blessings derived from good deeds undertaken for the sake of Allah, along with the pursuit of His pleasure, are directly linked to the purity of intentions. What truly matters is that the heart remains sincere and inclined toward piety and righteousness. Allah showers immense blessings even upon the smallest acts of goodness performed in His name. As the Noble Quran affirms:

**“The likeness of those who expend their wealth in the way of Allah is as the likeness of a grain of corn that sprouts seven ears, in every ear a hundred grains. So Allah multiplies unto whom He wills; Allah is All-embracing, All-knowing”** (Ṣūrah al-Baqarah, 261).

The Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ also conveyed:

*“Whoever builds a mosque for the sake of Allah, even to the size of a bird’s nest, Allah will build for him a house in Paradise”* (Ibrahim Canan, Kutub al-Sittah, 15/314-316).

Numerous profound acts of wisdom, charity, and service would have remained beyond conception without the concept of pious endowments, and the foundation of a global civilization might never have taken root.

One of the most noteworthy advantages of pious endowments lies in curbing the extravagance and indulgence of wealthy benefactors.

However, the ultimate aim of these benevolent institutions is to attain Allah’s pleasure and secure salvation in the hereafter. Since their inception, pious endowments have been founded and sustained with this objective in



mind. This pursuit has been succinctly defined as «*taqarrub ilâ Allâh*» (‘seeking closeness to Allah’) and is acknowledged as one of the prerequisites for the validity of an endowment.

Hence, it becomes essential to approach pious endowments with profound reverence and a heightened sense of responsibility, more so than any other sacred duty.

Vigilance and preservation of endowment properties carry exceptional significance. A case in point is the narrative of the Prophet Şâlih عليه السلام and the miraculous camel he was granted. The camel was categorized as an endowment property, not owned by any individual. Its milk was a bountiful resource for the people, and its owner was none other than Allah. Regrettably, the disobedient people violated the sanctity of the endowment by killing the camel, consequently facing utter destruction.

Another illustrative tale often recounted for its moral implications involves Prophet Sulaymân عليه السلام and a sparrow. On one occasion, Prophet Sulaymân عليه السلام reprimanded a sparrow, prompting the bird to issue a threat:

*“–I can topple your kingdom!”*

In response, Prophet Sulaymân عليه السلام questioned:

*“–What power do you possess to bring down my kingdom?”*

The little bird retorted:

*“–I will moisten my wings and rub them on an endowment land. Then, I will carry soil from there on my wings and deposit it on the roof of your palace. The soil I transport will be sufficient to cause your palace to crumble!”*

This anecdote serves as a poignant reminder, emphasizing the critical importance of endowment properties and their safeguarding.

It is crucial to interpret the meaning of this statement accurately. Failing to engage with these endowment services when one has the means and capacity constitutes a breach of Allah’s directives. The apprehension mentioned earlier pertains to conscientiously upholding the rights of those benefitting from these institutions and ensuring the effective safeguarding of the endowed properties. These properties, whether movable or immovable, are separated from ownership and possession. Their ownership belongs to Allah, while their benefits are meant for the community. Essentially, endowment properties are





taken out of the control of their owners and cannot be sold, gifted, or inherited. To consistently remember the gravity of their intended use, the deed of trust often incorporates blessings and admonitions, typically at the beginning or end. Blessings are for those who faithfully serve the endowment, while admonitions are directed toward those who neglect the specified duties, causing harm or damage to the endowment. In most instances, the following phrase is employed to denounce such individuals:

**“May the curse of Allah, the prophets, the angels, the people, and all creatures be upon whoever violates or alters the conditions of this pious endowment!..”**

Indeed, in the deed of trust for the Hagia Sophia, **Fâtih Sultan Mehmed Khan** mentioned the above verbatim.

This curse serves as a spiritual warning. Truly devout individuals possessing discernment and foresight consistently act with the necessary consciousness to avoid falling under such a curse, being mindful of the repercussions of punishment in the hereafter.

**O Allah! Bestow upon us the capability to honor the responsibilities of the trusts You have bestowed upon us with competence and to be among those who have wholeheartedly dedicated themselves to serving humanity with compassion, for the sake of both the Creator and His creation!**

**Âmîn!**





## THE ENSUING CRISIS AFTER THE FALL OF THE OTTOMAN STATE

From its inception, the Ottoman state pursued the path of **‘elevating and spreading the Word of Allah’**, refraining from pursuing military conquests aimlessly across the vast lands it expanded into. Thus, the Ottomans evolved into a society marked by unprecedented justice and civility, embracing both Muslim and non-Muslim subjects, and establishing their rule firmly in the hearts of the people.

Historical evidence attests that the Ottomans did not view their conquered territories as exploitative colonies. They expended far more resources than the taxes they collected to provide exceptional services throughout their dominion. The taxes gathered from non-Muslims were allocated to public services and the welfare and safety of these communities. In instances to the contrary, taxes were often refunded. For instance, after their defeat at the Battle of Ankara, when Thessaloniki was no longer under Ottoman control, the taxes previously collected from the non-Muslim population were returned. Similarly, despite





collecting 7 million *akçes* from Hungary, an investment of 21 million *akçes* was made in the same year, showcasing an unprecedented level of humanity.

Furthermore, within the Ottoman state, oppressive measures like religious coercion, ethnic cleansing, or cultural imperialism were never directed toward non-Muslims residing within Ottoman-ruled territories. This stands as the reason why the saying in Poland goes:

**“Until Ottoman horses drink from the Vistula River, this country cannot attain freedom and independence,”** has become a widely used proverb.

The just authority of the Ottomans acted as a continuous deterrent against the atrocities that Christians often committed against each other whenever the opportunity arose, as well as the encroachments committed by the Russians.

A well-known statement by Christian **Grand Duke Notaras**, a Byzantine nobleman, during negotiations at the Hagia Sophia while Fâtiḥ Sultan Mehmed was besieging the city’s military walls, refusing the suggestion to seek assistance from the Pope, is also noteworthy:

**“I would rather see the turban of the Turks than the cardinal’s hat [worn by Christians] in Istanbul!..”**

**Martin Luther**, the German reformer who founded the Protestant movement by challenging the irrationality, tyranny, and misconceptions of Christianity, also remarked:

**“O Lord! Hasten the rise of the Great Turks so we may partake in Your divine justice through them!”**

Furthermore, Martin Luther cautioned the rulers who were exploiting their subjects relentlessly:

**“–We prefer Ottoman rule over living under the dominion of insatiable princes like you, landlords, and the bourgeoisie. They show more compassion toward the poor than you do.”**

Stefan, the prince of Moldavia in the sixteenth century, renowned for his intense resistance against the Ottomans and bestowed the title “Christian Knight,” was acutely aware of the fairness exhibited by the Ottomans. On his deathbed, he imparted the following counsel to his sons:





**“–Perhaps you will require protection in the future! If such a situation arises, never seek refuge with the Russians; they are deceitful and will bring ruin upon you! Instead, place your trust in the Ottomans; they are equitable and benevolent!..”**

These anecdotes are just a fraction of the extensive evidence showcasing the peace and harmony that the Ottoman state fostered within the Christian world. Consequently, there exists no historical record in the Ottoman annals of any assistance rendered by the Christian subjects of the state to the Crusaders during the numerous conflicts waged against them. Despite the tumult arising from the **“Jalâfî uprisings,”** spearheaded by a certain Alawite named Jalâl in Anatolia, instances of civil unrest and rebellions were virtually non-existent among the Christian populace in Anatolia and Rumelia.

However, after the eruption of the French Revolution in 1789, particularly the adversaries of the Ottoman state such as the Russians, fomented the Christian inhabitants residing within Ottoman territories, and these provocations eventually bore fruit. Moreover, the global rise of nationalist movements also gave way to regrettable circumstances among the Muslim subjects of the Ottomans, hailing from diverse ethnic backgrounds.

Ultimately, the Ottoman state, spanning across three continents, faded from the historical tapestry, bequeathing behind several fragmented political entities. The world encountered a profound **crisis** in the aftermath. From that era to the present, this tragedy endures, with no clear resolution in sight, particularly in regions like the Middle East and the Balkans. The anguished cries of the oppressed echo across the globe, innocent lives whimper, young children’s fates are tragically cut short, women give birth on muddy paths, and the feeble elderly cry out. The agonizing scenes of oppression and savagery, of heinous acts and horrors, continue to escalate with each passing day. The Middle East and the Balkans are especially besieged by an inferno that ravages both physically and spiritually.

In the nineteenth century, the ambitions of imperialist powers, particularly the British, to dismantle the Ottoman state were fundamentally driven by their aspirations concerning a Jewish state. This necessitated the division of the Ottoman legacy, with its territories arbitrarily partitioned into small fragments on the global map.



To achieve this objective, the British incited Sharif H̄usayn Pasha to rebel against the Ottomans, promising him a grand Islamic empire and caliphate. Eventually, they granted him a diminutive “Kingdom of the Hejaz,” centered in Mecca. One of his sons was established as the king of Jordan, a region delineated with borders primarily encompassing the ancient Roman ruins in the village of Amman. Meanwhile, another son was crowned king of Iraq.

The partition of these three nations, sharing the same language, religion, and ethnicity despite their geographical proximity, within a single family - father and two sons - was intended to facilitate the realization of Jewish aspirations for a homeland in Palestine. The present-day acts of Jewish transgression witnessed in the occupied land of Palestine are a direct consequence of this ethnic and geographical division, compounded by the neglect that ensued after the Ottoman era. All these events were orchestrated outcomes of a meticulously devised plan.

Certainly, **Sultan Abdulhamîd II** was among the foremost champions of the oppressed in Palestine. He demonstrated profound concern for the Palestinian issue and exhibited remarkable wisdom and foresight in response to the seemingly innocuous desires and ambitions of the Jewish community. When **Theodor Herzl** approached him, proposing to purchase land in Palestine in exchange for alleviating the Ottoman state’s foreign debts, Sultan Abdulhamîd II responded with unwavering resolve:

**“I will not sell even an inch of land from Palestine! This land does not belong to me; it belongs to my people. The people have earned and cultivated these lands with their blood. A piece of land sanctified through martyrdom cannot be exchanged for money! Be aware that I will not permit the treacherous operation you intend to undertake on a living body!”** He took robust measures to counter this peril and safeguard Palestine.

Recognizing their incapacity to sway his determination and steadfastness, those who opposed his stance understood that they could not achieve their aims without removing this eminent sultan from power. Ultimately, they orchestrated a lamentable situation by colluding with certain misguided individuals within the country in 1908.

Sultan Abdulhamîd II’s strong attachment to Palestine left a profound impact on Muslim subjects. One remarkable instance that **Ilhan Bardakçı** encountered during a visit to al-Aqşâ Mosque stands out:

“As I entered al-Aqşâ Mosque, I encountered a tall man standing upright on the stairs. His height was nearly two meters, with a slender frame, and he wore distinctive attire. His countenance struck me with fear, resembling barren soil freshly harvested. Turning to the Director of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs accompanying me, I inquired:

«–Who is this man?»

He merely shrugged and said:

«–I don’t know, just a madman!»

Intrigued, I approached the man and greeted him:

«–Peace be upon you, sir!»

He replied in an affectionate Anatolian accent:

«–And peace be upon you, my son!»

His response left me astonished. I grasped his hands and repeatedly kissed them...

«–May I ask who you are, sir?» I inquired.

Meeting my gaze with an intense stare, he disclosed:

«–I am Private Hasan, Commander of the 11th Heavy Machine Gun Team, 8th Company, 36th Battalion, 20th Corps. I remained here since the day we lost Jerusalem!...»

Observing his countenance this time, his head atop his firm shoulders resembled a minaret’s finial, as kissable as a flag. Again, I reached for his hands. He whispered loudly:

«–I have a trust for you, my son! I’ve kept it for numerous years. Will you be the one to fulfill this trust?»

«–Certainly», I assured him.

He continued:

«–When you return to our homeland, if your path leads you to the Tokat guard post, seek out Captain Mustafa Efendi, my commanding officer who entrusted this to me. Greet him by kissing his hands on my behalf. Do not forget me. Convey these words to him: “Private Hasan from Iğdır, Commander of the 11th Heavy Machine Gun Team, remains on duty where you left him that day. Mission report completed, commander!” Relay this message!»



I diligently noted down his words. Private Hasan had remained on duty for an astonishing fifty-seven years...”

This individual was not merely a common madman; on the contrary, he was a loyal and self-sacrificing soul who strived to fulfill his duty diligently within his subconscious. Despite his mental instability, the noble sentiments harbored within his subconscious provide valuable lessons for us as a society. Truly, the tragic plight of Palestine, a land and a people forsaken in our times, remains painfully evident...

In a similar light, among the overlooked descendants of the Ottomans are the Palestinian women whose cries resonated during the tragic event of the killing of 10,000 Kurds in Halabja due to Saddam Hussein’s use of poison gas.

The world has come to painfully realize the significance of the peace and stability that the Ottomans once brought to the Middle East and the Balkans. The void left by the absence of the Ottoman state cannot be filled by the collective might of Europe, America, or any other force. An incident serves as a testament to this reality:

In 1992, Turkiye was invited to a meeting regarding Bosnia and Herzegovina, where figures like **Milosevic** and **Karadzic** were also present. The US Secretary of State, who had previously served as an ambassador to Yugoslavia for seven years, was struck by the tense atmosphere of the gathering. He turned to the Turkish Foreign Minister and exclaimed:

**“–How did you manage to remain in these crisis-stricken regions for 500 years?”**

However, he failed to grasp that it was their actions, along with the devastated Europe, that played a significant role in the calamities that ensued after the fall of the Ottoman state.

Those imperialist powers, in their pursuit of crafting new statelets from the remnants of the Ottoman state, deliberately sowed seeds of enduring conflict to prevent any single entity from attaining significant power. They not only instigated these conflicts but also perpetuated them even after relinquishing their control over these territories.

They backed the continuation of power by the Alawite minority, constituting merely five percent of the population, in Sunni-majority Syria, a situa-



tion that cannot be explained without considering the influence of this imperialist mindset.

Similarly, the transformation of Lebanon into a separate political entity was driven by their need for a predominantly Christian state that could serve as a hub in the Middle East. There is no other rational explanation for their decision to abandon the larger and more populous Bahrain and elevate it to a state-like status, overseeing the delicate balance between Iran, Iraq, and Kuwait.

However, these actions and others like them have fundamentally undermined the peace and stability that the Ottomans had ensured. This erosion has culminated in various tragedies in places such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Arabian Peninsula, and even in previously lost Ottoman territories like Crimea, the Caucasus, and Azerbaijan. These events have become an incurable affliction for the inhabitants of these regions and the superpowers that claim to work toward global order and security while advancing their own interests. Ultimately, the diverse nations, both large and small, scattered across this geographical expanse bear the brunt of these actions, paying the price with their lives, possessions, and well-being.

Greek writer **Michel de Greece**, a perceptive observer of the inner workings and root causes of global turmoil, conveyed the truth impartially as follows:

**“I am deeply saddened by the fall of the Ottoman state. The Ottomans upheld the world’s equilibrium, and regardless of whether they were loved or not, the turmoil in the Balkans and the Middle East has not ceased since their demise...”**

The dire consequences of the disappearance of the peace, tranquility, and authority established by the Ottoman state in the Balkans unfolded rapidly. The presence of various Muslim communities alongside Christian populations in these lands played a crucial role in this unfolding. Following the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878, the Russians, along with their allies, the Serbs and Bulgarians, spared no cruelty in their bid to eliminate Ottoman influence. This strategic movement, referred to as the “Eastern Question” in political discourse, aimed to eradicate Turkish and Muslim elements entirely from the European continent. To achieve this goal, whether in times of actual warfare or not, Christians sought to drive out Islamic elements through killing, looting, and forced migration.



After the Bosnian War of 1993, the unbearable oppression and violence experienced by **Râjî Efendi**, the Mufti of the former Ottoman city of Zagora, as chronicled in his work *Târihçe-i Vak'a-i Zağra* ("History of the Events of Zagora"), which was lost as a result of the Russo-Turkish War, have continued to recur. In his work, he wrote a verse that begins with the line:

**"We were once a respected people, but our enemies have humiliated us."**

This verse is not only a literary masterpiece but also a heart-wrenching account of the cruelties that have befallen a nation.

The ongoing atrocities in the Balkans today are largely rooted in religious fanaticism. There is no other rational explanation for the atrocities committed against Bosniaks, who are Slavic Muslims by conversion. The suffering in Kosovo is another clear example of this fanaticism. The Serbs aim to eliminate Islam from Kosovo using any means possible, including killings and abductions.

While many of the Serbian atrocities have remained hidden from public view, the need for moral introspection is evident when faced with the massacres and suffering that can be observed today through advanced technology. The Serbian animosity and the horrific massacres they have committed can be traced back to their defeat in the Battle of Kosovo in 1389. This animosity is fueled by a sense of inferiority that stemmed from centuries of living under Ottoman rule.

This ongoing massacre, which began with the Ottoman withdrawal from the Balkans, was initially carried out under the pretext of maintaining demographic balance in the region.

The ongoing events highlight the enduring need for the peace and tranquility that the Ottoman state once provided, particularly in regions like the Middle East and the Balkans. This need has persisted, and despite various developments, the world has not been able to escape this reality. Some have even come to recognize this truth, including among the Serbian population.

During the opposition party protests in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, in 1997, banners were displayed with phrases such as:

**"Longing for the days of Turkish (Ottoman) rule!"**

**“Where have you gone, oh splendid era under Turkish (Ottoman) administration?!”**

These expressions garnered significant interest and resonance.

Vuk Drasković, the leader of the Serbian opposition party, also acknowledged that Serbs who lived under Ottoman rule in the past experienced a better and more peaceful life than what they were facing at the time. He stated:

**“The Milosevic regime should learn from the justice of the Ottoman Turks!”**

The ongoing atrocities in the Balkans began after the fall of the Ottoman state, when the imperialist mindset divided its legacy into nearly forty pieces to prevent the emergence of a successor with the material and spiritual power to continue the Ottoman state’s legacy. **In other words, the West attempted to divide a lion’s skin into forty fox furs, but none of these furs could become a lion cub.**

Since the dethronement of **Sultan Abdulhamîd II**, many Turkish and Muslim elements have been left without protection and have struggled to find their place. This is particularly evident in the Balkans, where they have faced oppression and brutality. The destruction of architectural marvels like domes and minarets, along with the loss of innocent lives, has turned once-lush landscapes into scenes of tragedy. The whole world can see the devastation:

*Under the crimson horizons, everywhere is scorching...  
Look, the mountains have become inflamed, as have the valleys;  
The face of the world has reddened; so has the sky!..*

The tragic plight of the masses who arrived in wagons after the Russo-Turkish War continues. The Mufti of Kosovo, Recep Boya, who visited Istanbul, stated:

**“–After the Ottomans withdrew from Europe, we were left defenseless. We became the scapegoats for those who had power!..”**

Today, the disgraceful targeting of Muslims is taking place in the most severe form before the eyes of the world.

The state of the world that led a poet to express these sentiments in the past is repeating itself, perhaps even more painfully. The dramatic crisis that began after the fall of the Ottoman state still persists.



In these tragic days, which mark the 700th anniversary of the establishment of the Ottoman state, the Turkish people of today need to awaken and examine themselves and their history as the natural heirs of the Ottomans. Events like the tragedies in Bosnia and Kosovo compel us to uphold the trust of this legacy.

In today's world, it is of utmost importance to live with profound compassion toward all of Allah's creations, embodying the manifestations of Allah's Divine Names of *Rahmân and Rahîm* ('**The Most Merciful, the Especially Merciful**'). This state of heart is indeed one of the most effective ways to draw closer to Allah.

An exemplary believer's spiritual horizon can be illustrated by the following story:

Bâyazîd Bişâmî was once on a journey and stopped to have a meal beneath a tree. During his rest, he noticed an ant crawling on his bag and was filled with sorrow, saying:

"—I have taken this creature out of its habitat!"

Immediately, he returned the ant to its original location. This action demonstrated his profound view of creation through the lens of divine mercy and his awareness of respecting the rights of even the smallest creatures, such as an ant. This approach drove his deeds.

Since that day, the injustices endured by Muslims, who once held a position of rule and dominance in these lands, at the hands of their former subjects, can hardly be captured fully even if chronicled extensively in volumes.

One day, the scholar of Ḥadîth and righteous servant of Allah, **Sarî al-Saqatî**, was explaining to his students the meaning of the Prophetic saying:

*"Those who do not empathize with the afflictions of the believers are not of them."*

At that moment, one of his students came to him excitedly and said:

"—Master, the whole neighborhood burned down, but your house was saved!"

Sarî al-Saqatî, in response to this divine favor bestowed upon him, said:

"—*Alḥamdulillâh!*"



However, immediately afterward, he deeply contemplated the meaning of the Prophetic tradition he had just taught his students and sincerely repented with great remorse. In an instance of heedlessness, he had failed to consider the sorrows of his fellow believers whose houses had burned down and could not fulfill the Prophetic command of empathizing with their afflictions at that moment. He was so saddened and regretful about this incident that he could not forget it for years. Thirty years later, he expressed his profound remorse to a close friend, saying:

“–For thirty years, I have been repenting for the moment when I was unaware of the suffering of my fellow brothers in faith...” thus revealing the profound depth of his remorse in his heart.

In the present day, while the descendants of historical figures like Sultan Murâd face immense oppression and hardship in places like Kosovo, it is a reminder for us to reflect on our level of empathy. Do we genuinely share in their suffering, or do we merely offer fleeting interest in news stories? Are we awakened by the unfolding events and atrocities, or do we quickly forget them?

The Quranic passage, **“You will not attain piety until you expend of what you love; and whatever thing you expend, Allah knows of it”** (Sûrah Âli ‘Imrân, 92), encapsulates a hidden wisdom about selflessness and sacrifice. Indeed, those who can embody this wisdom are truly fortunate.

**May the oppressors and those who go against the principles of our faith find themselves dismayed, and may Allah honor Islam and bless the Muslim community with His help and grace. It is a reminder that our faith calls us to not only offer our prayers and supplications but also to actively engage in actions that alleviate the suffering of our fellow human beings.**

Âmîn!



## SYNOPSIS

**Ibn Khaldûn**'s theory on the rise and fall of nations and the concept of the natural lifespan of political entities is indeed an intriguing perspective that has found validation in the pages of history. The idea that civilizations evolve through distinct stages, from tribes to principalities and then to states, and that their decline can be traced back to the erosion of moral virtues and ethical principles among those in power, offers a thought-provoking lens through which to view the fate of every community throughout history.

Although the Ottomans, who referred to their state as *Devlet-i Ebed-Müddet* ('The Eternal State'), may not have explicitly embraced this theory, they nonetheless took heed of its underlying certainty.

The Ottomans considered their state as one that would abide until the end of time, which was expressed as a mere wish, albeit a reflection of profound faith and contemplation. It can be viewed analogously to the state founded by the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ in Medina, which was regarded as its continuation despite being a dynasty. This is why the Ottoman state was called 'The Exalted State' (*Devlet-i Aliyye*), and in order to maintain that spiritual essence, it was also referred to as the '**The Exalted Muḥammadan State**' (*Devlet-i Aliyye-i Muḥammadiyah*). The designation of the Ottoman state in this manner can be found in many official documents.



The concept that states endure as long as they fulfill their role as stewards of entrusted entities aligns with Islamic principles of accountability and justice. When rulers and leaders honor their obligations to protect the rights of the people and uphold justice, they maintain the divine trust placed upon them. Conversely, a departure from these principles can lead to a decline in the state's effectiveness and eventual demise.



The Ottoman state's remarkable longevity and its place as the longest-surviving Islamic polity can indeed be attributed to various factors, including its adherence to moral and ethical values, its just governance, and its emphasis on fulfilling the responsibilities of leadership. This historical perspective serves as a reminder that the principles of justice, virtue, and ethical behavior are integral to the success and continuity of any political entity.

These factors, which constituted the fundamental structure of the Ottoman state, can be summarized in the following five points:


### **1. Commitment and Competency in Adhering to the Commands of Allah**

Through the unwavering faith and genuine dedication of its founding community, coupled with their remarkable skills and commitment in embodying these religious principles through their lives and actions, the Ottoman state experienced an exceptional and rapid rise to prominence. Furthermore, the spiritual leaders of that era played a pivotal role by offering guidance to both rulers and the general populace, extending their support on both the outward and inward fronts.

According to divine revelation, those who wholeheartedly embrace the teachings of the Quran are promised honor in this world, with the responsibility of *khilâfah* entrusted to the **righteous servants** of Allah. The remarkable progress and magnificence attained by the Ottoman state stand as undeniable testament to this celestial decree.

Throughout the passage of centuries, from the highest echelons of state leadership to the common citizens, the Ottomans collectively embraced the sincerity and perfection advocated by Islam. The principles that underpinned this progress have been extensively discussed in the current work, rendering any further elaboration unnecessary at this point.

### **2. The Spirit of *Jihâd***

Throughout history, the Turkic people have distinguished themselves with their indomitable warrior spirit and a natural inclination toward martial endeavors. When they encountered the Muslim-led army, predominantly comprised of the righteous Companions  who had triumphed over Iran and



reached the borders of Turkistan, they swiftly recognized the alignment between Islam's universal ethics and the fundamental tenets of *jihâd* with their own ethos and disposition. Consequently, they wholeheartedly embraced Islam, doing so with great spiritual fervor, and fervently exclaimed, "**Here I am, O Messenger of Allah!**" (*Dahîlek yâ Rasûlâllah!*), without any form of coercion. In a short span of time, this newfound faith, imbued with the spirit of conquest, became the bedrock of their impassioned commitment and gave rise to a cadre of devoted warriors.

The historical significance of the Turks assuming leadership of the Islamic caliphate from the 'Umayyads, who pursued not only Islamization but also Arabization and displayed an unfavorable stance toward the **People of the Prophet's House** (*Ahl al-Bayt*), is undeniable. Following approximately ninety years of 'Umayyad rule, the 'Abbâsids ascended to power, exclusively enlisting Turks due to their strong affinity for Islam, to constitute their armies. With the decline of the 'Abbâsids, the mantle of Islamic leadership passed to the Seljukids, a formidable Turkic state both militarily and politically. Eventually, the Ottomans addressed the vacuum arising from the dissolution of the Seljukids and assumed the mantle of representing Islam.

Originating as a tribe with merely four hundred tents, the Ottoman state gradually evolved into a formidable global force, effectively shaping a territory spanning twenty-four million square kilometers into its homeland. Their military expeditions led to the construction of mosques wherever they ventured, creating a truly awe-inspiring spectacle. The Ottoman state ushered in one of the most magnificent civilizations to grace the world stage, serving as a guiding light for humanity over the centuries in the realms of religious faith, *jihâd*, knowledge, and the arts. The torch of *jihâd* was dutifully passed down through successive generations. Indeed, it was with this unwavering spirit that **Fâtih Sultan Mehmed Khan** fulfilled the prophecies of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. In addition to this momentous achievement, he took momentous strides toward the conquest of Rome, as foretold in Prophetic narratives, showcasing the embodiment of this principle through the capture of Otranto in a striking and grand manner.

Similarly, the sentiments expressed by **Yavuz Sultan Selîm Khan** following the conquest of Egypt, which reveal his unwavering zeal for *jihâd*, poignantly reflect the depth of his commitment:



**“My heart aspires to commence from the expanse of North Africa, traverse through Andalusia, and finally return to Istanbul by way of the Balkans!..”**

With this elevated spirit, the Ottoman state soared to remarkable heights. Yet, since Allah’s attribute of eternity (*baqâ’*) is not manifest in this worldly realm, the Ottomans gradually descended from their zenith, eventually fading from the annals of history during the early decades of the twentieth century. Consequently, the entirety of the Muslim world found itself bereft of a leader.

Therefore, when considering the factors that contributed to the ascent of the Ottoman state, it becomes imperative to underscore the paramount significance of *jihâd*, a concept second in importance only to the divine mandate of obligatory ritual prayer.

*Jihâd* transcends mere swordplay, encompassing a broad spectrum of endeavors and activities that collectively work toward the establishment of the divine order decreed by Allah.

The Ottomans, who held steadfast to their allegiance to divine commands as a foundational principle of their state, consistently demonstrated this commitment through a myriad of social undertakings across centuries, until this spirit began to wane. As Osman Ghazi breathed his last within a tent amidst the clash of swords on the fringes of Bursa, he conveyed his ultimate wish to his son, uttering:

**“My son, gratify my soul by never forsaking *jihâd*!..”** This testament, passed down through Orhan Ghazi, resonated through successive generations. It was embraced, comprehended, and translated into action. The Ottoman state flourished as a result of these pursuits. They unwaveringly adhered to the demands of this noble objective, never wavering in their dedication.

### **3. The Education of Statesmen**

Within the Ottoman state, members of the dynasty and other officials underwent exceptional education, cultivating the competence necessary for fulfilling their roles. It is important to emphasize that alongside external education, Allah endowed them with exceptional capabilities and qualities, while also providing divine support and assistance.





Indeed, irrespective of the education one receives, the absence of inherent attributes such as intellect, courage, and determination would hinder success. In the Ottoman state, these spiritual attributes were intertwined with divine ordination as much as apparent factors, creating a harmonious synergy. Consequently, a modest tribe rapidly ascended to become the central force of the Muslim world. This astonishing ascent becomes even more striking when one considers the approximately fifty years between their inception in Söğüt and their expansion into Rumelia, encircling Byzantium, and securing consecutive triumphs against the Crusaders while advancing into the heart of Europe. Such rapid progression and magnificence could not have been accomplished solely through surface-level causes.

The architects of world-changing conquests were mentored by the era's luminaries from an early age. Spiritual mentors guided them in nurturing their inner states. Starting with Osman Ghazi, the sultans were all adherents of the Edabali spiritual lineage, thereby belonging to the people of the heart. Consequently, in alignment with their internal maturity and spiritual insight, they abstained from worldly indulgence and selflessly devoted their lives and resources to the cause of **'uplifting and propagating the Word of Allah'**. Eminent scholars possessing both outer and inner knowledge consistently acted as unwavering beacons for the Ottomans. Under their guidance, the sultans did not perceive themselves as superior to their subjects, but rather as devoted soldiers on the path of Allah.

A telling anecdote serves as a vivid testament to the aforementioned truth:

Every week, the imperial council would lend an ear to the concerns and grievances of the people. On one such occasion, a peasant clad in sandals approached the council where the young Fâtih Sultan Mehmed Khan was present. Observing the men seated, he struggled to distinguish the sultan from the pashas. Finally, he placed his calloused hands on his hips and inquired:

“–Are you the esteemed and fortunate ruler?”

This incident underscores the difficulty in distinguishing between the conqueror of Istanbul and the pashas based solely on attire or seating arrangements.

The Sultan of conquests, Yavuz Sultan Selîm Khan, did not succumb to arrogance even in the wake of far-reaching victories. He consistently transcended his worldly desires, eloquently expressing this sentiment in the fol-



lowing verses, which highlight that true victory is found within the heart's domain under the guidance of an enlightened spiritual teacher:

***The pursuit of worldly power is a futile struggle,  
Being in the company of a saint surpasses it all...***

Nurtured under such spiritual tutelage, the Ottoman sultans exhibited profound veneration and love for the Quran right from the inception of their rule.

Illustrative of this profound veneration is the instance of Osman Ghazi, who refrained from extending his legs within a room containing the Quran, and Yavuz Selîm, who initiated the practice of reciting the Quran at the Topkapi Palace, where the sacred relics are preserved. In this realm, the Ottomans were indeed recipients of exceptional divine favor and support. This elevating facet that distinguished the Ottomans is succinctly encapsulated in the following Prophetic tradition:

*“Verily, Allah raises certain communities through this book (the Quran) and debases others (who distance themselves from its divine instruction)”*  
(Muslim, Musâfirîn, 269).

The safeguarding and meticulous transfer of the sacred relics to Istanbul, undertaken by Yavuz Sultan Selîm Khan, is believed to have bestowed spiritual blessings upon the Ottoman state.

Despite the multitude of blessings and victories they achieved, the Ottoman sultans remained impervious to vanity, hubris, or conceit, cognizant that all emanates from Allah. Kânûnî Sultan Sulaymân, who presided over an expansive realm, bared the depths of his innermost being in his verses:

*“O my beloved! Do not be deluded by your splendid sultanate, and glorious victories and never say heedlessly, «There is none like me!»”*

Following the Battle of Preveza, when Barbarossa sailed into the Golden Horn at the helm of his grand fleet, escorting captured enemy galleys, Kânûnî turned to his viziers in the midst of this awe-inspiring spectacle of triumph:

“—Let us not boast, but rather offer gratitude for these bounties!” Kânûnî's external magnificence was an apt reflection of his internal virtues.

Upon his father, Yavuz Sultan Selîm Khan's triumphant return to Istanbul after securing victory in Egypt, he exhibited remarkable humility, remarking:

**“May the applause, the victorious anthems, and human praise not inflate us as it disbands our egos, wreaking havoc upon our stance”**



#### 4. The Social and Spiritual Structure of the People

An essential cornerstone of Islam is the concept of *ihsân*, which entails worshipping Allah as if one beholds Him. Its practical manifestation is recognized as *taṣawwuf* or Sufism. One of the primary goals of Sufism is to elevate the individual to a state of proximity to Allah by nurturing the heart's disposition. Consequently, the ultimate objective of religion is the cultivation of the *insân al-kâmil* (the 'perfected human being'), in essence, fostering virtuous, refined, and discerning individuals.

The conducive conditions in Anatolia enabled the Turks to carry these virtues from their native Central Asia and to fully nurture them throughout the era of the Ottomans. Moreover, they wove this spiritual tapestry into the territories they conquered. Before entering new lands, they would first establish a *tekke* to prepare the spiritual groundwork, followed by military conquest. After the military triumph, the *tekke* would return to provide ongoing spiritual guidance, serving as a haven for the people and contributing to their spiritual elevation.

Contrary to limiting religion to a mere rational framework, the Ottomans embraced and promoted the growth of Islam within the profound realms of the heart. In this context, *tekkes* played a paramount role in their rise. Not solely the laypeople, but all facets of the military, from the sultan down to the foot soldiers, immersed themselves in this spiritual milieu. The Janissaries, the elite corps of the era, all adhered to the Baktâshî Sufi path, a tradition grounded in the Sunnah and characterized by positive attributes.

Upon ascending the throne, each sultan would be presented with a sword by contemporary spiritual leaders, and they would choose a spiritual guide as their mentor.

The Ottomans held a significant regard for pious endowments, which thrived due to their internal maturity, consequently fostering social and spiritual equilibrium.

Through these benevolent establishments, their care extended to the vulnerable, the isolated, and the destitute members of society. This compassion was not confined to humans but encompassed animals in need and injured birds. The heartfelt supplications of the populace further buttressed the endurance of the Ottoman state.



From the sultan to the common citizen, the affluent believers generously contributed to noble causes, such as constructing mosques, schools, caravansaries, public water fountains, and hospitals, often surpassing the stipulated amounts prescribed in the Quranic passage:

يَأْخُذُ الصَّدَقَاتِ

“...[know that it is Allah] **who takes their charity**” (Sûrah al-Tawbah, 104). Acts of righteousness that please Allah have been a source of divine mercy and support for the Ottoman state.

Thanks to this divine favor, a social balance between the affluent and the impoverished was established. The destitute, the marginalized, and the overlooked members of society found protection, with the spiritual atmosphere of society becoming a haven of solace for them. The social tapestry was woven with threads of brotherly love and compassion. The once downcast faces of orphans radiated with smiles. Pious endowments provided a haven of rest for the prosperous and a source of solace for the less fortunate. The act of sharing Allah’s blessings with those in need and willingly parting with cherished possessions became an intrinsic aspect of Ottoman society. Remarkably, modern Turkish society continues to uphold this social structure and cherish the blessings bequeathed by the Ottomans through the enduring institutions they established. Mosques, fountains, military installations, hospitals, and even the very water people drink, among numerous other charitable services, stand as invaluable legacies and cherished memories that the Ottomans left in their wake.

## 5. Judicial and Administrative Excellence

Justice stands unequivocally as one of the cornerstones upholding any state. In fact, it has become a widely accepted assertion that “material prosperity can coexist with disbelief but not with injustice.”

Hence, justice emerges as one of the foremost elements that raised and upheld the Ottoman state for numerous centuries.

The dictum “*Justice is the foundation of governance*” guided the Ottomans steadfastly, as they extended rights and justice to all humanity.



Indeed, the dictates of Allah were applied impartially, spanning from the sultan to the common man, with a determined commitment to upholding justice. A case in point is the striking and unparalleled manifestation of justice exemplified by Fâtih Sultan Mehmed and a Christian architect. This single illustration suffices to illuminate the prevalence of justice within the Ottoman state.

Of equal significance were the religious conscientiousness and sensitivity exhibited by the entire Ottoman military, including the sultans, toward consuming religiously permissible sustenance. They dutifully abided by the tenet that **“one who consumes the forbidden becomes sinful,”** and they exercised extraordinary care in safeguarding the rights of others.

During the Egypt campaign, Yavuz Sultan Selîm Khan, driven by a concern that weighed heavily on his soul, meticulously inspected the bags of his soldiers to ensure that no fruits had been taken from the gardens they had traversed. He declared famously:

**“–Had anything been discovered from the places we crossed in the bags of my soldiers, I would have abandoned the Egypt campaign!”**

In the Ottoman state, which produced such eminent conquerors, possessing merit and competence was a prerequisite for holding positions within the state administration. Those unable to demonstrate their proficiency were not granted access to the state apparatus, a measure aimed at safeguarding the collective welfare of society over individual interests.

Hence, until the culmination of Ottoman ascent, the prince exhibiting superior virtue, discernment, and both physical and spiritual prowess would assume the throne. Even prior to reaching adulthood, they would be entrusted with applying the theoretical knowledge they acquired while serving as governors. When a sultan passed away, it was generally the more virtuous son who succeeded him. However, this at times led to hardships for others. Therefore, certain practical errors should be pardoned, given that they were implemented for the unity of the state and the broader community.

On another note, the wisdom attributed to Shaykh Edebali encapsulates the sensibilities of the Ottoman past:

**“The land is not the ruler’s possession, to be divided among his sons and brothers. The territory belongs solely to the one who governs it. Upon**



**his passing, whoever follows him becomes the ruler. Our ancestors erred by dividing the state among their sons and brothers while they were alive and in good health. That is why they and others could not live.”**

This unwavering dedication was displayed for the continuity of the Ottoman state. Adherence to this principle arguably played a pivotal role in their existence spanning 623 years.

Operating within this framework, the Ottomans embraced a centralized administration, which, given the vast expanse of the state, prompted the development of a provincial system. In the governance of provinces, Ottoman justice rested on local administrators well-acquainted with the region, without meddling in the customs, religion, language, or attire of the communities under their jurisdiction.

Within the palace, a university called *Enderun* educated elite youth from diverse regions in administrative and political matters, subsequently appointing them to positions within their respective provinces. While a centralized administration was enforced, outlying regions within the Ottoman periphery were governed as semi-autonomous provinces.

Non-Muslim subjects were adjudicated based on their own legal systems, with reference to a Shariah court only if a dispute involved a Muslim.

Today, after the establishment of the **United Nations**, multiculturalism and the pursuit of a policy of tolerance toward diverse cultures are seen as signs of progress. The Ottoman state epitomized this ethos for over six and a half centuries, to the extent that, until its demise, separate courts operated in the Patriarchate for legal disputes among Greek Christians and in the French embassy for other Christian communities.

There is no need to venture far back in history. In the elderly residence constructed by the late Sultan Abdulhamîd Khan II in the 1880s within Istanbul, there not only existed a mosque but also a church and a synagogue. This serves as one of the most recent examples of a practice emblematic of religious freedom in the Ottoman state.

The **Ottoman model** outlined here might seem sought after and emulated in the contemporary globalizing world. However, a crucial distinction exists: whereas the Ottomans ventured forth to provide service and offer people both temporal and eternal happiness, today’s superpowers often engage in such en-





deavors to extract service, exploit individuals for their own gain, and foster unity along these lines.



The elements mentioned thus far elevated the Ottoman state to a position of worldwide prominence. Yet, as the focus gradually shifted from spiritual sensitivity to material pursuits, safeguarding borders and wealth grew progressively arduous. The decline of the spiritual vigor that elevated the state led to the rise of vanity and self-serving motives. The indulgences of Sâdâbâd in Istanbul took precedence, contributing to the waning of the spirit of conquest and the cessation of territorial expansion. There were instances when a tulip bulb fetched the price of a gold coin. Thus, the trajectory of a great state shifted. Excessive behavior gave way to increased opulence, sparking a race for grandeur with Western powers. Notably, almost all the palaces, excluding Topkapi Palace, were constructed in the closing stages of the Ottoman state.

All these dynamics underscore that, in addition to the covert maneuvers of adversaries, a pivotal factor in the decline of the Ottomans was a general decline in sincerity and spirituality.

Another contributing factor to the fall of the Ottoman state was the failure of those sent to the West to grasp and assimilate its technological advancements. Instead, they not only failed to achieve their primary objectives but also returned intellectually compromised, essentially becoming “Janissaries” of the West while bearing the outward trappings of Ottoman identity. They served Western thought, politics, social norms, and customs, eventually eroding Islamic culture over time. These individuals steadily ascended to high-ranking positions within the state, some even attaining the rank of Grand Vizier. Outwardly Ottoman, their allegiance was Western. This disposition weakened the Ottoman ethos and cultural heritage, dismantling the very foundations that had propelled the state and its people. A few instances of individuals from this cohort would illuminate the extent of the damage they inflicted:

### **Mustafa Rashid Pasha**

Mustafa Rashid Pasha was one of the Ottoman grand viziers. Despite a dearth of advanced formal education, he managed to ascend to the highest



echelons of the state, backed by foreign support. His deficiency in Islamic knowledge and native cultural sentiments rendered him susceptible to European influences, a vulnerability that even led him to delve into Freemasonry. His inclination became apparent when, returning from his post as ambassador to London, he negotiated the **Treaty of Balta Liman**, which came at the cost of significant British support. Regrettably, this treaty granted the British substantial economic privileges within the Ottoman state. Upon learning of this, Austrian Prime Minister **Metternich** famously remarked:

**“Now the Ottomans are finished!”**

Following the reign of Sultan Mahmûd, Sultan Abdulmajîd ascended to the throne at the age of sixteen. Under the influence of Mustafa Rashid Pasha, he endorsed the reforms formulated in England, culminating in the issuance of the Imperial Rescript of Gülhane, widely recognized as the Tanzîmat Edict. This enactment incited anger, distress, and rebellion among the populace.

Although the initial presentation of the Tanzîmat Edict indicated that the state’s divergence from Islamic legal principles was the root of its backwardness compared to the West, it seemed to promise a return to the Shariah through a novel arrangement. However, this would signal the onset of a departure from the Shariah. While prior deviations existed, the official materialization of these deviations occurred with the enactment of the Tanzîmat Edict.

Despite being dubbed the *Tanzîmat-ı Hayriyye* (“Auspicious Reforms”) as a strategic guise to shield the truth from public scrutiny, it was, in reality, a *Tanzîmat-ı Şerriyye* (“Malicious Reforms”). This truth is evident not just in the content of the Tanzîmat but also in the identities and actions of those instrumental in its creation.

Immediately following the reforms, Masonic lodges were established in Istanbul and Thessaloniki, fostering a favorable environment for Western European opportunists. Even Sultan Abdulmajîd, who had overseen some misguided progressive initiatives during this period, eventually grew disillusioned with unfolding circumstances. He found himself in the *Hırka-i Saâdet* (“The Sacred Mantle Chamber of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ,” housing esteemed relics from Islamic history) within Topkapi Palace, where he wept. Fueled by a sense of helplessness, he sought solace from the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, pleading:



**“O Messenger of Allah! Protect me from the clutches of this man!”**

The repercussions of Rashid Pasha’s actions extended beyond his lifetime, impacting the disciples he nurtured and ultimately contributing to the label of the Ottoman state as the “sick man.”

Rashid Pasha, who served European diplomacy’s interests over those of Turkiye, met his end due to a heart attack in a bathhouse in 1858.

**Âlî Pasha**

Âlî Pasha, a product of Rashid Pasha’s influence and a Tanzîmat grand vizier, was profoundly shaped by European ideas.

However, Âlî Pasha’s ambition for power eventually led him to become an adversary of his mentor Rashid Pasha, with whom he had initially joined the ranks of Freemasonry. Their rivalry spurred Âlî Pasha to grant even more extensive privileges to non-Muslim subjects and craft the Reform Edict of 1856, an initiative developed in collaboration with European ambassadors. Regrettably, this move hastened, rather than curbed, the momentum of non-Muslim independence movements that had commenced after the Tanzîmat, posing significant challenges to the Ottoman state.

Âlî Pasha’s audacious betrayals and concessions even astounded the French ambassador, who remarked in surprise:

**“–We did not expect the Ottoman state to make so many sacrifices!”**

The aftermath following the edict’s proclamation was genuinely harrowing. The events that transpired were so distressing that they deeply affected Âlî Pasha himself. An episode during Âlî Pasha’s funeral in 1871, following his demise due to the shock of these developments, epitomizes the ramifications of his numerous destructive and treacherous acts:

During the funeral, Shaykh Osman Efendi, the Mawlawî master of Yenikapi, inquired of the attendees in his customary manner:

**“–How do you know him?”**

No one responded. Typically, the congregation should have replied, “We know him as a good person.”

He posed the question again:

**“–What kind of person was he?”**

Still, there was no affirmative answer.

Finally, when he repeated the question for the third time:

**“–What kind of person was he?”** it remained unanswered. This singular incident suffices to illustrate Âlî Pasha’s standing in the collective consciousness of the people.

Âlî Pasha, living far removed from justice and truth, left behind no lasting work that future generations would remember with goodwill following his passing.

### **Kechejizâde Fuat Pasha**

Fuat Pasha emerged as another notable figure among the grand viziers of the Tanzîmat era.

Fuat Pasha’s entry into the realm of politics was facilitated by his connection to Mustafa Rashid Pasha. During the reign of Sultan Abdulmajîd, the French, under the patronage of the British affiliated with the Scottish Lodge, endeavored to establish a Masonic lodge in Istanbul. This initiative materialized in Beyoğlu, with Fuat Pasha counted among its members.

Fuat Pasha’s misguided political decisions resulted in the loss of numerous territories and a substantial toll of Muslim lives. In addition to these consequences, Fuat Pasha became embroiled in various corrupt activities. One instance among many involved his appointment by Âlî Pasha as a trusted individual to Syria, during which he accepted bribes and illicitly acquired approximately eight hundred thousand bags full of money. Furthermore, the successive deaths of Fuat Pasha’s two sons and the consecutive destruction of his two mansions raised suspicion among the public in Istanbul. Many believed these events were a result of his corruption and his complicity in the shedding of Muslim blood.

Fuat Pasha, removed from Islamic virtues, harbored a fondness for Voltairean ideas. He expressed the following sentiment to the French ambassador:

“–You guide us, but leave the stage and the execution of the roles to us. A state has two powers: one comes from above, the other from below. As there





is no power coming from below in our case, we need to take power from the side, which is the embassies.” This statement was documented in the *İbret* newspaper.

The record provided by Ibn **Amîn Mahmûd Kamâl Bey** concerning Fuat Pasha offers valuable insight:

During his time as grand vizier and commander-in-chief, Fuat Pasha attended the Bâyezîd Mosque to pray on a day during Ramadan. Given the crowd, he found space only in the courtyard. Reluctantly, he stood for prayer and instructed his aides to do the same. However, his aides conveyed that they lacked ritual ablution.

Upon hearing this, Fuat Pasha openly demonstrated his religious indifference and laxity by remarking:

**“Who needs ritual ablution anyway?”** and proceeded to pray in that state.

Fuat Pasha’s true intentions were evident in the following widely recognized anecdote:

During a diplomatic gathering where the power and influence of European states were being discussed, Fuat Pasha countered by stating:

**“–No, gentlemen! The strongest state is the Ottoman state. While you have attempted to destroy us externally, we have been working from within for a long time, yet we have not yet succeeded!”**

This characterization reflects the nature of Fuat Pasha, who passed away in Nice, France, in 1869. His death arrived unexpectedly, with his last moments marked by utterances in French and no fellow Muslim present. The articles in the periodical *Hurriyet* about his death are particularly distressing:

**“Fuat Pasha, on his way to Nice, stopped in Rome to meet the Pope and receive his blessings, as was his custom. Consequently, upon his death, the Nice church sought to bury him according to Catholic practices. Despite the Ottoman ambassador’s objection, the church persisted. Eventually, consent was granted to perform customary rituals on his bed according to Christian doctrine.”**





**Ahmad Cevdet Pasha** also conveyed Muslims' sorrow and discontent with his passing:

**“When Fuat Pasha’s funeral was brought to Istanbul and taken to his tomb, the procession appeared as a mockery of Western-style observances. Anyone who witnessed it was filled with bitterness and disdain.”**

There are numerous such instances. For example, during the “93 War” (1877-78 Russo-Turkish War) that led to significant territorial losses for the Ottoman state, Ali Pasha, who commanded the Ottoman armies, was actually a Polish Jew. He deliberately refrained from engaging in combat, allowing the Russians to advance from the west of the Danube River all the way to Yeşilköy in Istanbul.

Without delving into extensive detail, it is undeniable that from that time to today, numerous instances exist of individuals who, despite working against Islam’s interests, deceived people, portraying themselves as heroes. These lives and deaths serve as instructive and horrifying examples.

Regrettably, due to such individuals, Islam, once central to the Ottoman state, lost its strength, replaced by recklessness and submission to desires. This led to embracing inferior passions that served the enemy’s ambitions. These inclinations enslaved us to mimicry, narrowing our spiritual horizons and trapping us in limited thinking. Our cultural and spiritual tradition, vital for the new generation, withered. Our ability to be an independent state eroded, let alone globally dominant. A generation pursued brute force, surrendering identity. The historical outcome is disheartening.

Once, we established justice, sowing civilization worldwide as custodians of the Islamic spirit. What are we today?

The main cause of Ottoman decline was arguably spiritual breakdown. External issues could have been surmountable. Ottoman success was fueled by remarkable individuals. Consider the Austrian ambassador’s words about Ali Pasha, the grand vizier of Kânûnî Sultan Sulaymân:

**“–I feel the need to starve myself in order to keep my mind as active and alert as possible when conversing with such a brilliant man as Ali Pasha...”** This is in stark contrast with the pashas of the Tanzîmat era, whom the Westerners manipulated at will!..



External factors included shifting trade, the discovery of America, resource depletion, and military expenses on four fronts, hindering industrialization.

Western powers used Ottoman flags to exploit Africa and elsewhere, establishing colonies. Preventing spiritual decline could have better addressed external causes. Western nations aimed to undermine Ottoman spirituality, confining them to materialism, allowing Western advancement. Today's state is a continuation of these plans.

In short, diverse reasons led to collapse. Due to the lack of a thorough understanding of these reasons, the Ottoman state, as a result of covert enemy activities, was condemned more by its own people than by its adversaries. So much so that the destruction of the language separated the people of modern-day Turkiye from their Ottoman forebears. Thus, the generations who had been denied learning about the essence of the Ottoman state were readily persuaded to become hostile to their own history, which they were kept ignorant of.

Nevertheless, these activities have not yielded sufficient results. Indeed, the love for the Ottoman state has not been completely eradicated from the hearts of the people, except for a certain minority. Although the language's destruction has narrowed the opportunities for comprehension and expression, and thus deprived them the richness enjoyed by their ancestors, the upheavals that have led to the remembrance of the Ottomans with great loyalty, from Palestine to Bosnia, indicate a renewed interest in that majestic state. As mentioned already, during the protests of the opposition party in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, in 1997, some of the Serbian perpetrators held banners that read:

“Longing for Turkish (Ottoman) rule!”

“Where are you, oh beautiful days under Turkish (Ottoman) administration?!”

These statements are worth noting.

Furthermore, for years, Palestinians have remembered and revered the Ottoman state in the face of Jewish oppression and even revealed their sentiments with poignant expressions such as:

“—We are the orphans of Sultan Abdulhamîd Khan.” Such statements serve to remind one of the Ottoman state with a sense of gratitude.



These facts also show that the end of the Ottoman state was disastrous for the world. With its demise, the world incurred significant losses. However, the departure of the Ottoman state from the historical arena was not a quiet and peaceful event; it happened like the death of a mighty lion that left everything in a state of disarray. The Ottoman state, however, would put on a brilliant display in its final moments at the Battle of Dardanelles. Despite facing four tremendous powers like Russia, England, France, and Italy, the Ottomans heroically defended their homeland from the deserts of Palestine to the Caucasus, from the Dardanelles to Galicia. Despite their bravery on four fronts against nine armies, Ottoman collapse occurred due to the conditions imposed not by outsiders but by the activities of traitors and enemies from within. Notwithstanding, the intention here is not to repeat events of the past, and so we find it sufficient to conclude by saying:

“Even in its demise, the Ottoman state was grand in substance and spirit. The world has suffered considerably since it relinquished its place in the continuum of history.”

Indeed, immediately after the Ottoman state, order and balance across the world were disrupted, with its geography becoming like a vacant expanse that began to experience great turmoil.

However, these efforts have yet to yield satisfactory results. The deep-seated affection for the Ottoman state remains resilient within the hearts of many, save for a certain minority. Despite the erosion of the language, which has restricted opportunities for comprehension and self-expression, depriving descendants of the cultural richness enjoyed by their forebears, the recent upheavals that have rekindled fervent loyalty to the Ottoman legacy – from Palestine to Bosnia – underscore a renewed interest in this majestic state.

I recall an encounter from three decades ago during my inaugural pilgrimage to Mecca. I crossed paths with an elderly African gentleman who inquired about my origin. Upon learning that I was Turkish, he shook his head with a tinge of sorrow and uttered:

**“Oh, the glorious Ottoman state!”**

This proclamation conveyed the reminiscence and yearning that an African individual held for the splendor of the Ottoman state.



Likewise, during the same year, while in ‘Arafah, I engaged with an Indonesian counterpart. Upon discovering my Turkish heritage, he revealed:

**“In Indonesia, we used to incorporate the names of Ottoman sultans into our Friday sermons!”**

Despite the Ottoman state never reaching Indonesia’s shores, its ethos of benevolence, compassion, and humanity had indeed traversed vast distances.

In contemporary times, various ideological groups and sects in the Caucasus and Central Asia are fervently vying for influence through propaganda endeavors. Notably, even the Wahhabi faction is deeply involved in this pursuit. However, what stands out is the resounding rejection of Wahhabism by the people of Central Asia, who, driven by a positive sentiment, proclaim:

**“We are Ottoman Muslims!”**

Interestingly, as the Wahhabi movement recognizes the populace’s affinity with Ottoman principles, they have started to incorporate images of Ottoman mosques in the materials they disseminate. Such instances hold particular significance in this discourse.

This anecdote serves as an apt reminder that not everything concluded with the downfall of the Ottoman state. An illustrative incident underscores this notion effectively:

During the period when Istanbul was under foreign occupation, an event occurred that captures this sentiment. British soldiers, using bayonets and rifle butts, were displacing Turkish soldiers while replacing the Ottoman flag on the balcony of the Military Academy (Harbiye) with the British flag. Across the street, a woman from Anatolia, disguised as a laborer, wept openly. **Müftüoğlu Ahmed Hikmet Bey**, passing by, attempted to console her, saying:

“Don’t weep, sister! One day, the sons of this nation will grow up, lower their flag, and raise ours once more.”

The woman gazed at Müftüoğlu Ahmed Hikmet Bey like a wounded lioness, and with tear-filled eyes and a trembling voice, she responded:

*“—O my son! Did you think I was weeping for that reason? Indeed, our children will one day come of age, remove that British flag, and replace it*

*with our own. That is not a matter of great concern. But did you not hear the wounded and disarmed Turkish soldiers who just passed by us, lamenting:*

*«–Alas! Islam is finished! Muhammad’s religion is done for!»?*

*My tears are shed because the aspirations of those children have been shattered. **Should not a Muslim child inherently know that this faith will endure until the end of time?** What kind of statement is that? If this conviction wanes, the significance of altering that flag becomes immaterial. As long as this belief endures, bringing down that flag means nothing.”*

These were the individuals who existed even during the era of the Ottoman decline...

Such examples abound.

**However, it must be noted that relatively limited research has delved into the Ottoman archives.** What revelations might emerge if a comprehensive investigation were conducted? With around **150 million documents** that remain insufficiently categorized, comprehending the profound essence of the Ottoman state under such circumstances is indeed a monumental task. This present study, anchored in Islamic principles and utilizing available sources from a Muslim perspective, seeks to dissect the spiritual facets, among other influential factors, that molded and defined the Ottoman state. The intention behind this book was to convey to the younger generation the essence of the Ottoman’s spiritual environment and the benevolence radiating from its accomplishments. Understandably, this endeavor alone is far from exhaustive. Yet, it would suffice if this work managed to equip even a handful of capable young individuals with an awareness of our historical heritage and instilled an appreciation for their revered ancestors. Likewise, it would be deemed a triumph if the devout youth were roused to action, no longer content with merely admiring tombstones, fountain inscriptions, and the exquisite calligraphy adorning the façades of historical edifices.



Over its illustrious 623-year history, the Ottoman state extended its dominion over approximately 60 countries, governing them with justice for the durations indicated below:



<u>Country</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Country</u>	<u>Year</u>
Bulgaria	545	Gambia	400
Aegean Islands	541	Saudi Arabia	399
Yugoslavia	539	Sudan	397
Romania	490	Egypt	397
Albania	435	Libya	394
Israel	402	Kuwait	381
Jordan	402	Abyssinia	350
Iraq	402	Djibouti	350
Lebanon	402	Somalia	350
Syria	402	Algeria	313
Yemen	401	Tunisia	308
Kenya	400	Cyprus	293
Bornu	400	European Russia	291
UAE	400	Crete	267
Guinea	400	Hungary	160
Mozambique	400	India	100
Tanzania	400	Pakistan	100
Uganda	400	Azerbaijan	85
Oman	400	Morocco	50
Georgia	400	Mauritania	50
Niger	400	Poland	25
Zanzibar	400	Western Russia	25
Chad	400	Malaya	25
Nigeria	400	Singapore	25
Bahrain	400	Czechoslovakia	20
Cameroon	400	Armenia	20
Greece	400	East Turkestan	15

Furthermore, the Ottoman state also exercised authority over numerous coastal cities and islands within the territories of the following countries:

Italy, England, Norway, Iceland, Mechlenstein, France, Monaco, Germany, Ireland, Gibraltar, Spain, Netherlands, Portugal, Iran, and Denmark.

*In the contemporary context, the yearning to relive the cherished legacy of our esteemed ancestors on these inherited lands would entail acquiring visas from the respective consulates of all sixty states. The magnificent state founded by the Ottomans initially sprung forth from a spiritual resurgence, despite its modest material strength embodied by merely four hundred horsemen. Given our lamentable circumstances in the present day, a thorough examination of our course of action becomes imperative.*

*We must not postpone any longer the realization that imitating our former subjects will yield no fruitful destination. Our ongoing tragic plight is evident, with crises of material destitution and spiritual disillusionment attaining alarming levels.*

*Permitting materialism to ascend while sidelining spirituality ushers us back into an era of profound ignorance. This sobering fact necessitates self-reflection and a recalibration of our priorities.*

**O Allah! Elevate the bowed heads of believers once more to the celestial heights of triumph, infused with the strength and magnificence of Islam! Liberate the Muslim world from its current state of neglect and desolation! Grant us all a dignified standing, both materially and spiritually, deserving of Your boundless blessings, akin to the esteemed achievements of our forebears!**

**Bestow Your divine contentment upon the honorable souls of the Ed-abali lineage, the revered shaykhs who guided and nurtured the sultans instrumental in shaping the destiny of the world. Shower blessings upon the resolute leaders whose noble spirits were adorned with the spiritual legacy of bygone masters. Likewise, bless the patrons of knowledge, wisdom, and artistic expression, as well as those who champion similar endeavors in the way of Islam.**

**Âmîn!..**









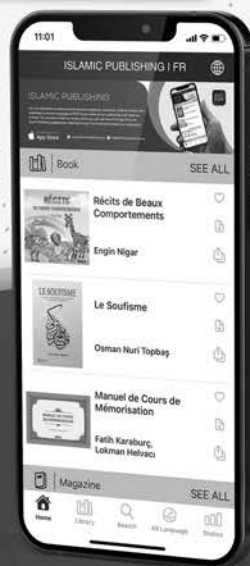
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