



FROM ISTANBUL TO ISLAMBUL

Turkey, a glimpse of an Islamic awakening.



**Abu Muhammad
(MI) Ridhwan ibn Dawood**

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To contact, one may email: abumuhammad1808@gmail.com.

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باسمه تعالى
نحمده و نصلي و نسلم على رسوله الكريم
و على آله و اصحابه أجمعين

PREFACE

By the Grace and Mercy of Almighty Allâh, this servant was blessed with the opportunity of a short tour of Istanbul, in the year 1437 (2015). Upon return, on the request of friends to pen down some of the inspirations and lessons derived during this trip, the following pages were compiled.

May Almighty Allâh accept it through His Divine Mercy and make it a means of inspiring man and jinn till the end of times. Aameen!

First impressions last

As I walked through the markets of Istanbul on the first day after my arrival I could smell the fragrance of an 'Islamic Awakening' drifting through the air. The scenes of religious destruction brought about by Mustafa Kamal Pasha upon this unique city of Islâm just ninety years ago were still fresh in my mind, but the scenario which I was now witnessing made me smile and left me wonder-struck at the Divine Power of Almighty Allâh in bringing life back to (spiritually) dead lands.

To adequately grasp and understand the thoughts that crossed my mind during the few days of my stay it is necessary that one first gains some insight into the Glorious History of Istanbul, during the days of the Mighty Ottoman Caliphate; followed by its fall into the pits of ruin at the hands of hypocrites/jewish conspirators; and finally its reawakening at a time when the lands of Shâm is in desperate search for a shoulder of Muslim support.

A city brought back to life – a message that Islam shall never die.

Whilst witnessing the amazing, beautiful changes that the city of Istanbul is presently undergoing, one verse of Qurân that repeatedly flashed in my mind was the verse regarding the city of Al-Aqsâ (Jerusalem), after it was uprooted and laid to ruins by the barbaric forces of Bukht-e-Nasr (Nabachadnazzâr).

Before the arrival of Bukht-e-Nasr, the city of Jerusalem, with Masjid Al-Aqsa as its centre, had served as the capital of the worshippers of Almighty Allâh for hundreds of years. Established by Nabi Dawood Alahis-Salaam, and erected by his noble son, Nabi Suleimân Alahis-Salaam, this magnificent Masjid stood tall and high, as a symbol of religious rule in the lands.

Unfortunately, this favour of Almighty Allâh was not appreciated, and a time came when the vast majority of the inhabitants of this unique city fell into acts of open transgression, inviting upon themselves Divine Wrath, which came in the form of the armies of the mightiest king of Babylon, Bukht-e-Nasr (Nebuchadnezzar II).

The tragedy that befell the city of Al-Aqsâ at the hands of the inhumane savages of this army has been described in great detail in the books of Târikh and Tafsîr, the gist of which is:

Almighty Allâh sent Bukht-e-Nasar of Babylon upon the Bani Israil as a punishment for the great acts of transgression they were perpetrating. His armies killed scores of the Bani Israil and exiled the remaining, leaving the city in total ruin. (Ibn Atiyya)

When Nabi Uzair Alahis-Salaam passed by, in sadness and wonder he remarked:

أَتَى يَحْيَى هَذِهِ اللَّهُ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا

'How will Allâh ever give life to this land after this!?'

As an exhibition of Almighty Allâh's Divine Power to revive the dead, and to keep religion and the lands of religion alive, despite its revival seeming impossible, Almighty Allâh caused this Nabi Alahis-Salaam to fall into a state of death for one hundred years. When he next opened his eyes, he found before him the land of Al-Aqsâ, bustling with people and religious fervour as it had once been. It has been narrated that Almighty Allâh initiated the revival of

Al-Aqsâ seventy years after his destruction, and its rebirth reached completion thirty years later, when Nabi Uzair Alahis-Salaam was given life again. (Ibn Kathîr¹)

In the verses of Qurân that discuss this unique historical episode one perceives some sort of indication that if one ever falls into depression witnessing the sad plight of religion and the people of religion, he should take courage from the fact that within a hundred years Almighty Allâh shall surely bring about some sort of religious revival, either in that very land or at some other spot.

Rasulullâh ﷺ himself explained this point when he stated:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَبْعَثُ لِهَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ عَلَى رَأْسِ كُلِّ مِائَةِ سَنَةٍ مَنْ يُجَدِّدُ لَهَا دِينَهَا (سنن أبي داود)
'At the turn of every century Almighty Allâh shall bring forth such an individual / individuals who shall give life to the religion!'

The state of Istanbul is much like that of Al-Aqsâ, i.e. it too occupied a most senior position as a religious capital before it fell into enemy hands, and after its collapse it needed only seventy odd years to find its roots again and re-ignite its revival.

¹ اختلفوا في هذا المار من هو؟ فروى ابن أبي حاتم عن عصام بن رَوَاد عن آدم بن أبي إياس عن إسرائيل عن أبي إسحاق عن ناجية بن كعب عن علي بن أبي طالب أنه قال: هو عزيز. ورواه ابن جرير عن ناجية نفسه. وحكاه ابن جرير وابن أبي حاتم عن ابن عباس والحسن وقتادة والسدي وسليمان بن بَرِيْدَة وهذا القول هو المشهور. وقال وهب بن منبه وعبد الله بن عبيد بن عمير: هو أرميا بن حلقيا وقال مجاهد بن جبر: هو رجل من بني إسرائيل. وذكر غير واحد أنه مات وهو ابن أربعين سنة؛ فبعثه الله وهو كذلك، وكان له ابن فبلغ من السن مائة وعشرين سنة، وبلغ ابن ابنه تسعين وكان الجد شابا وابنه وابن ابنه شيخان كبيران قد بلغا الهرم، وأما القرية: فالمشهور أنها بيت المقدس مر عليها بعد تخريب بختنصر لها وقتل أهلها. { وَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ } أي: ليس فيها أحد من قولهم: خوت الدار تخوي خواءً وخوياً. وقوله: { عَلَى غُرُوبِهَا } أي: ساقطة سقوفها وجدرانها على عرصاتها، فوقف متفكراً فيما آل أمرها إليه بعد العمارة العظيمة وقال: { أَنَّى يُحْيِي هَذِهِ اللَّهُ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا } وذلك لما رأى من دثورها وشدة خرابها وبعدها عن العود إلى ما كانت عليه قال الله تعالى: { فَأَمَّا اللَّهُ فَمَنْ دَاوَمَ عَلَيْهِ } قال : وعمرت البلدة بعد مضي سبعين سنة من موته وتكامل ساكنوها وتراجعت بنو إسرائيل إليها (ابن كثير)

When Mustafa Kamal Pasha reached the last days of his life, he perhaps took great joy in his satanic achievements of raping the city of Istanbul of its entire Islamic identity and transforming it into a 'secular' city of 'modern Europe'. Little did he realise that within less than one hundred years from his death the world would receive a practical answer to the question posed in the above verse of the Glorious Qurân, viz.

أَنَّى يَحْيِي هَذِهِ الْاَلَدَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا

'How will Allâh ever give life to this land after this!?'

As per the demand of 'following sequence' our first discussion shall centre on the rise of 'Islambul' (which was its name before Mustafa Kamal changed it to Istanbul) as a magnificent capital of the Ottoman Caliphate and Islamic World.

From Constantinople to Islambul (The City of Islâm)

Constantinople was one of the largest and wealthiest cities in Europe. Throughout the medieval ages, it was renowned for its power and splendour. Covetous of its riches, many eastern and western powers sought the city for themselves. But despite countless attacks, Constantinople stood firm and survived for over 1,000 years. It fell once to Christian Crusaders in 1204 due to disunity which allowed the enemy to exploit a weakness in its defences. Only the Ottomans managed to conquer Constantinople in 1453. They did so by ushering in a new age of warfare; the age of gunpowder.

What made it so hard to conquer?

Constantinople was favoured with natural advantages that made it difficult to conquer. It was located on an elevated rocky peninsula, surrounded by the sea on three sides. To the north lay the estuary known as the Golden Horn. To the east lay the straits known as the Bosphorus. The Bosphorus connected the Black Sea further north with the Sea of Marmara. Finally, on the southern shore of Constantinople, lay the Sea of Marmara itself.

Attacking Constantinople by sea was difficult. The strong currents of the Bosphorus endangered hostile fleets without shelter. Meanwhile the Golden

Horn served as a perfect harbour for the Byzantines in war and peace. During times of war, it sheltered friendly ships. At the same time it allowed Constantinople to receive supplies by sea to withstand long sieges. Enemy ships were easily blocked from entering the Golden Horn by chains laid out across the waters.



The Golden Horn

The only landward route to the city lay on its western side. Countless hosts of bloodthirsty enemies approached from this front in the hopes of taking the city. But the land walls of Constantinople continually thwarted their efforts. Known as the Theodosian walls, it was situated 1.5km west of the original Constantinian walls. The Theodosian walls, built around 412, stretched 6km. The first line of defence was a moat that ran along the lands walls. It was about 20 metres wide and 7 metres deep. A stockade on the side of the city reinforced the moat. If enemy troops managed to cross the moat under heavy arrow fire, they came to the land walls of Constantinople.

Around 90 square of octagonal towers lined the walls every 70-75 meters. These towers provided additional defences and a position to mount catapults

on. A low outer wall about 9 metres in height provided the second layer of defence. Enemy troops that made it past the outer wall and accompanying projectile fire would find themselves obstructed by the last line of defence; an inner wall. The formidable inner wall was around 12 metres high and about 6 metres thick. Adequately manned, the land walls of Constantinople were impregnable.

The walls of Constantinople



The moat between the walls



Despite its power, the land walls had some weaknesses which enemies could exploit. Firstly, there were the pipes and aqueducts that supplied the city with water. In times of war, the defenders cut off these supplies and survived on water collected by the cisterns. But the enemy could still enter Constantinople via the aqueducts if the defenders were not prepared.

Secondly, the Blachernae area where the land walls met the sea walls, tended to be more vulnerable. Situated on a slope, it was not part of the original walls and tended to jut out. As a result, it lacked an outer wall and a moat. This made it a source of frequent attacks during sieges. The Byzantines remedied this weakness by strengthening its defences in the 12th century.

The Gate of Romanus

Lastly, there was a vulnerable area between the Gate of Adrianople and the Gate of St Romanus known as the Mesoteichion. Due to the terrain, the walls

had to accommodate the valley of the River Lykos. This gave the attackers the advantage of higher ground from which they could bombard the defenders. The moat also tended to be shallower in this area. Many attacks focused on this area of the walls. But all these vulnerabilities never delivered the city into the hands of attackers.

The Chain blocking the Golden Horn

Sea walls, not as powerfully built as the land walls, lined the sea facing sides of the city. Any naval attack on the city upon these walls however was difficult due to the hazardous sea currents. To be successful by sea, the enemy had to seize the Golden Horn on the northern side of the city. But a 300m long iron chain and the Byzantine navy blocked the Golden Horn in times of war. Supplementing these naval defences was the Byzantine secret weapon; Greek fire. Only once during the 4th Crusade did Constantinople fall because of its sea walls.

Greek Fire

A key factor in the defence of Constantinople was the secret weapon; Greek fire. Greek fire was a liquid flame projected through siphons that was capable of burning even on water. Not only were its effects devastating, it also dampened the morale of enemies who had never seen this fearsome weapon before. Many key naval engagements and sieges may have been lost without Greek fire. The exact composition of Greek fire was a state secret which remains unknown till today.

The capacity of Constantinople to withstand sieges

Because Constantinople was an imperial capital, it had to have the capacity to withstand long sieges. Water was essential to the survival of the city in times of war and peace. But Constantinople lacked drinking water. The Byzantines addressed this issue through two means. Firstly, aqueducts from Thrace supplied water to the city. Secondly, vast cisterns collected rainwater and stored it for public use.

Next, there was the issue of food supplies. Most of its residents had their own gardens to grow vegetables. Due to its strategic location, food and other necessities could reach Constantinople by land and sea. In the meantime, the imperial granaries stored a reserve of grain in case of an emergency. All these measures contributed to the ability of Constantinople to withstand long sieges which slowly whittled down its attackers through attrition.

Inefficient management of waste during a siege could be fatal to the health of the defenders. Luckily, Constantinople also had an underground drainage system that carried wastewater out of the city.

The morale of the defenders

Finally, there was the defenders; the human element. Most sieges tended to be long. As the months dragged on and the conditions worsened, hope and faith were all that sustained the defenders. It was the underlying self-confidence of the Byzantines that enabled them to fight on in the most adverse of circumstances.

Firstly, the Byzantines believed in the power of their defences, technology and the divine leadership of their emperor. Secondly, the Byzantines believed that Constantinople had divine protection from the Virgin Mary and the other precious relics stored in the city. By displaying the icon of the Virgin Mary during a siege, the morale of the Byzantine defenders would receive a vital boost.

In a crux, conquering Constantinople during its heyday was a daunting task. The geographical advantages, fortifications, technology, bountiful supplies and dauntlessness of its defenders made the city almost impregnable. During many critical moments in their history, the Byzantines were also lucky to have skilled and valorous emperors to defend the empire against their enemies. **All these factors combined to make Constantinople one of the most difficult cities to conquer in history.**

The Muslim Ummah and Constantinople

The Muslim Ummah throughout times understood the importance of conquering this city. Despite the many failed attempts to capture the city and the mission seeming quite impossible, Muslim armies never lost hope in one day entering as conquerors due to the faith they held in the promise of Rasullullah ﷺ that this city would one day surely be conquered.

Rasullullah ﷺ had on various occasions spoke regarding this city, but the statement that contributed the most to creating zeal for this most daunting task was the praise Rasullullah ﷺ had lauded upon the army that shall conquer this city.

لتفتحن القسطنطينية و لنعم الأمير أميرها و لنعم الجيش ذلك الجيش
(المستدرك للحاكم²)

You shall surely conquer Constantinople.

How wonderful shall be its leader and how wonderful shall be its army!

It was these words of Rasullullah ﷺ that kept the desire burning within every Muslim leader to become the title-bearer of this royal glad-tiding, thus whenever the Ummah found the opportunity, an army would be sent out in this direction.

For this purpose, Hadrat Muawiyah Radhiyallahu-Anhu, in the year 58 A.H. prepared a huge fleet under the command of Yusr ibn Abi Orto'a to put Constantinople under siege from the sea side. He sent his son, Yazîd Ibn Muawiyah, with an army from the land side. The siege continued for several months but they could not conquer it. The great companion, Hadhrat Abu Ayoub Ansâri Radhiyallahu-Anhu passed away during this battle and was buried near the gates of Constantinople.

A second attempt was at the time of Sulaimân Ibn Abdul Malik (98H) when he prepared a large army under the command of his brother Maslama ibn Abdul

² تعليق الذهبي في التلخيص : صحيح

Malik. He besieged the city by land and by sea for one full year. The Muslims retreated without conquering.

A third attempt was made by the Abbâsi caliphate, Haroon Rasheed in the year 165H. The army had reached the suburb of Uskudar when the queen of the Romans asked for peace and promised to pay the Jizya. The caliph agreed and returned back without conquest.

Almighty Allâh had willed that the conquest happen at the hands of Sultan Mohammed ibn Mourad (Al-Fâtih –The Conqueror).

Muhammad Al-Fatih was born on 27th Rajab, 835 A.H, (1432). He was brought up under the supervision of his father, Sultan Murad II, the seventh Ottoman Sultan. His father prepared and trained him to shoulder the responsibilities of the position of a Sultan. Muhammad Al-Fatih memorized the entire Qurân, studied Ahâdith, Islamic jurisprudence, mathematics, astronomy and the skills required for war.

He also learnt Arabic, Persian, Latin and Greek languages. He would join his father in his battles and conquests. His father appointed him as a ruler of a small emirate so that he could receive practical training on administering state affairs under the supervision of some of the top scholars of that time. This matter influenced the character of the young prince and tinted his personality with Islamic morals and manners.

Shaikh Shamsud-Dîn, one of the scholars who supervised the upbringing and education of Muhammad Al-Fâtih, managed to inculcate in his heart the spirit of Jihâd and the desire to be a person with high ambition. The Shaikh also told Muhammad Al-Fâtih that he may be the one referred to in the hadith regarding the conquest of Constantinople. All this shaped the character of Muhammad Al-Fâtih. He was devoted to Jihâd, highly ambitious, widely cultured, and had deep knowledge of the skills of war and combat.

While only twelve his father handed over to him the reins of rule, which allowed him to rule as Sultân for two years, until his father was forced back to the throne following an insurgence by the Sultân's personal guards.

After the death of his father, Sultan Murad II on 5th Muharram, 852 A.H. (1451), Muhammad Al-Fâtih once more took over. He was now a strong young man, only twenty years old, very enthusiastic and ambitious. He was thinking of the conquest of Constantinople, the capital of the Byzantine Empire. This dream overwhelmed him to the extent that he would not talk about any subject except for the conquest of Constantinople. He would not even allow anyone who was sitting with him to talk, except about the expected conquest.

The first step in achieving his dream was to take control of the Strait of the Bosphorus so that he could prevent any support or supplies that might come to Constantinople from Europe. For this he built a huge castle on the European seashore of the Strait of the Bosphorus. Along with top senior officials, he personally participated in building the castle. It took three months to build this castle that came to be known as the Romanis Fort. On the other bank of the Strait of Bosphorus there was the Fort of Anatolia, built fifty years previously by Bayezid I, ("The Thunderbolt") as part of his preparations for the Second Ottoman Siege of Constantinople, which took place in 1395. He too had come on to the verge of conquering the city, after having laid siege to it for over five years, but then had to call it off due to problems being caused by shia groups back home. With these two forts it now became extremely difficult for any ship to cross except with permission from the Ottoman forces.

At that time, a talented engineer managed to make a number of cannons for the Sultan, Muhammad Al-Fâtih. One of these cannons, never known before that time, was 700 tons and its projectile weighed 1,500 kilograms. The sound of its shell could be heard from a long distance away. It was pulled by one hundred oxen aided by one hundred strong men. This giant cannon was called the Sultanic Cannon.

The conquest of Constantinople and the realization of the glad tidings.

After completing his preparations, Sultan Muhammad Al-Fâtih marched to Constantinople with an army of two hundred and sixty-five thousand fighters. This army had infantry forces as well as horsemen. Huge cannons supported this army. The army besieged Constantinople and the Ottoman cannons started to fire their missiles at the fortified walls of the city day and night.

A summary of the war

Preparation for the conquest of Constantinople began in 852A.H. (1452). Huge canons that were necessary for the great siege were moulded in Hungary. The Rumeli Fort on the European side was constructed to control the Bosphorus, a mighty fleet of 16 galleys was formed, the number of soldiers were doubled, the supply routes to Byzantine were taken under control, and finally an agreement was made with Genoese to keep Galata neutral during the war. On the 6th of April 1453, the first Ottoman frontier forces were seen in front of the city, the siege was starting, which would last for 1 month, 3 weeks and 2 days. Here is a chronological dateline of the important points of the conquest:

Chronology

— 6 April 1453

Sultan Muhammad pitched his imperial tent by the door of St. Romanus in Topkapi neighbourhood. The same day the city was besieged from the Golden Horn to the Marmara Sea from the land.

— 6-7 April 1453

First cannons fired. Some of the fortresses in Edirnekapi neighborhood were destroyed.

— 9 April 1453

Baltaoglu Suleyman Bey launched the first attack to enter the Golden Horn inlet.

— 9-10 April 1453

Some of the fortresses on Bosphorus were taken. Baltaoglu Süleyman Bey seized the Marmara Islands.

— 11 April 1453

The big walls were bombarded by cannon fires. Holes and cracks were opened here and there. Serious destruction inflicted by ceaseless bombardment.

— 12 April 1453

The Ottoman fleet attacked the ships protecting the Golden Horn. The victory of the Christian ships decreased the morale of the Ottoman army. At the order of Sultan Mehmed, the Byzantine ships were pounded by mortar fire, and one galley was sunk.

— Night of 18 April 1453

The Sultan gave his first crucial order. The attack lasted four hours but it was scattered.

— 20 April 1453

A naval skirmish took place close to Yenikapi neighborhood between the Ottoman fleet and four Byzantine warships with three supply ships full of food and weapons sent by the Papacy. The Sultan came to the shore himself and ordered Baltaoglu Süleyman Pasha to sink those ships by any means possible, but the Ottoman fleet were unable to stop the enemy's ships. With this failure, the Ottoman army lost its morale and showed the signs of defeat. Ottoman soldiers started defecting from the army. Soon, the Byzantine Emperor wanted to take advantage of this situation and offered peace.

The offer was supported by the Vizier Çandarlı Halil Pasha, but was rejected by the Sultan. The siege and bombardment of the fortresses with cannons continued.

During this chaos and widespread feeling of defeat, a harsh but encouraging letter from the Sultan's spiritual teacher, Sheikh Shamsuddîn, promised good news about the conquest. Encouraged by this spiritual support, the Sultan escalated the attack and decided to add an element of surprise.

His master plan was to attack the Eastern wall on the Golden Horn in the hope of drawing the defence away from the heavily guarded Western wall. In order to

get around the chains and enemy ships blocking the Golden Horn, **he devised the most amazing scheme in the history of military strategy:**

— **22 April 1453, the day seas became dry**

Without having his enemies know, he ordered the cutting down of trees through a mountain side surrounding the city. He then ordered for several barrels of oil and grease to be brought. He then ordered for the timber to be laid on the landward side around the Chain boom from the Bosphorus region all the way up to the Golden Horn. The logs were then greased to facilitate the transportation of 70 of the Muslim ships 3 miles over rough, mountainous land, around the massive chain boom, into the Golden Horn inlet from where he had planned to launch his surprise attack. Amazingly enough, he had miraculously accomplished this task in the cover of a single night!

In the early hours of the morning, the Byzantines were shocked and horrified when they saw Ottoman galleys moving down on the hills of the harbour. Seventy ships carried by cows and balanced by hundreds of soldiers via ropes were slid over slipways. By the afternoon, the ships were inside the protected bay.

The surprise appearance of the Ottoman fleet in the bay created panic among Byzantine residents of Constantinople. The wall on the shore of the Golden Horn became a vulnerable spot and some of the Byzantine forces were moved there.

This weakened the defence of the land walls. The Sultan ordered that both the Eastern and Western walls be attacked simultaneously using the Great Ottoman Bombard as a primary means of deterrence and attack. This action would severely demoralize the Byzantines, which would lead to the fall of Constantinople soon afterward.

Muhammad Al-Fatih would enter Constantinople in honour and dignity. He would spare the cities people and religious practices as well as grant freedom of passage to anyone who wished. He would also rebuild the massive walls which had been reduced to rubble during the siege out of respect and courtesy for the great city.

No army on Earth had ever accomplished what the army of Muhammad Al-Fatih had in every respect. It is said in history, that this strategic scheme of Muhammad Al-Fatih, to the Greeks, earned him the recognition of a commander who surpassed even Alexander the Great. This was undoubtedly one of the Ottoman Empire's most amazing highlights in history.

— 28 April 1453

The attempt to burn the Ottoman ships in the bay was prevented by heavy cannon fire. A bridge was constructed between Ayvansaray and Sutluce neighbourhoods to attack the walls located on the shore of the bay.

An offer of unconditional surrender was delivered to the Emperor through the Genoese. If he surrendered he could have gone wherever he wanted and the life and property of his people would have been spared. The Emperor rejected this offer.

— 7 May 1453

A three hour long attack was launched on the stream of Bayrampasa with a 30,000 strong force; but it was repelled.

— 12 May 1453

A thunderous attack made towards the point between Tekfur Palace and Edirnekapi was defeated by the Byzantine defence.

— 16 May 1453

When the underground tunnel dug in the direction of Egrikapi intersected the Byzantine underground tunnel, an underground skirmish erupted.

The same day, an attempt to cut the big chain blocking the entrance of the Golden Horn failed. The following day the attack was repeated, but again ended with failure.

— 18 May 1453

Ottoman forces launched another attack from the direction of Topkapi neighbourhood by using a wooden mobile tower. The Byzantines burned the tower at night and emptied the trenches that were filled by Ottomans.

Over the following days, bombarding of the land walls continued.

— 25 May 1453

The Sultan sent Ismail Bey as an ambassador offering the Emperor to surrender for the last time. According to this offer, the Emperor and his followers could take their wealth and go anywhere they wished. The people who decided to stay could keep their belongings and estates. This offer too was rejected.

— 26 May 1453

According to rumours, European countries and especially Hungarians were planning to mobilize their troops to help the Byzantines unless the siege was ended. Upon hearing these rumours Sultan Muhammad gathered his war council.

In the meeting Halil Pasha and his party defended their previous position, that is, of putting an end to the siege. Sultan Muhammad with his tutor Zaganos Pasha, his teachers Shumsuddin, Molla Gürâni and Molla Hüsrev opposed the idea of quitting. They decided to continue the war and Zaganos Pasha was commissioned for preparations.

— 27 May 1453

The general attack was announced to the Ottoman army.

— 28 May 1453

The army spent the day by resting and preparing for the next day's attack. There was a complete silence among soldiers. Sultan Muhammad inspected the army and encouraged them for the great attack. On the other side, a religious ceremony was held in the Hagia Sophia Church. The Emperor urged people to participate in the defence. This would be the last Byzantine ceremony.

— 29 May 1453, Conquest

Platoons positioned for the assault. Sultan Muhammad gave the order to attack at midnight. Inside Constantinople, while the soldiers positioned for war, people filled the churches.

The Ottoman army launched its final assault. The first assault was performed by infantry and it was followed by Anatolian soldiers. When 300 Anatolian soldiers were killed, the Janissaries started their attack. With the presence of Sultan Muhammad, the Ottoman army was motivated and hand to hand fights started.

A young soldier, Ulubatli Hasan, who first erected the Ottoman flag on Byzantine land wall, was martyred. Upon the entrance of the Janissaries from Belgradkapi neighbourhood and the surrender of the last defenders in Edirnekapi front, the Byzantine defence collapsed. The Emperor was killed during street skirmishes.

After the Ottoman forces conquered the city, Sultan Muhammad arrived on his horse in a great procession that included his ministers and army commanders. Ever since that time, the Sultan was known as Muhammad Al-Fâtih (the Conqueror). The soldiers were shouting: *Mâshâ-Allâh! Mâshâ-Allâh! Long live our Sultan! Long live our Sultân!*

The Sultan's procession marched until it reached Hagia Sophia church where the people of the city had gathered. When they knew that the Sultan had arrived, they came out weeping and crying because they did not know their fate; what Sultan Muhammad Al-Faatih would do to them.

When the Sultan arrived, he dismounted from his horse and prayed two Rak`ahs thanking Allâh, who had blessed him with this conquest. Then the Sultan addressed the people of the city who were still in tears:

'I am Sultan Muhammad and I would like to tell you, your brothers, and all the people present that your lives and freedoms are protected.'

The Sultan ordered that the church be turned into a Masjid and for the first time, the call for Salaah was heard from this place. He also decided to take Constantinople as a capital of his country. It was called Islambul, meaning the House of Islam. Later on the word was viciously twisted (by Mustapha Kamal) to become Istanbul.

The Sultan was very tolerant and merciful with the people of the city, and acted according to the teachings of Islam. He commanded his soldiers to treat their prisoners of war in a good manner. The Sultan himself paid the ransoms for a large number of prisoners of war from his own money. He also allowed those who left the city when it was under siege to return home.



Istanbul -A city beautified with Masaajid

The end of the Middle Ages and the Beginning of The Modern Era

The conquest of Constantinople has had such a historical impact in the world, that some historians even marked it as the end of the Middle Ages. With the siege of Istanbul, the Ottomans proceeded to establish hegemony over numerous independent Turkish states (Beylik) within Anatolia (Asia Minor). The result of the imperial conquest was to unify the Turkish populations in Anatolia. In turn, other non-Turkish, Muslim communities and principalities were brought together under the aegis of Ottoman leadership so that the Ottoman Beylik would eventually expand into an Empire.

After the conquest, Ottoman Muslims were to take dynamic roles in shaping international politics. Up until that point European Christendom had kept Muslims from Asia Minor away, with Istanbul functioning as a border station for the Crusaders. But after the conquest, the sovereignty of the Muslims was assured, and they were no longer threatened by the Crusaders.

The aftermath of the conquest of Constantinople

Later on, Muhammad Al-Faatih headed to complete his conquests in the Balkan. He managed to conquer Serbia, Greece, Romania, Albania and Bosnia Herzegovina. He also looked forward to conquering Rome so that he would have another source of pride in addition to the conquest of Constantinople. In order to achieve this great hope, he needed to conquer Italy. He prepared a tremendous fleet for this mission. He managed to land his forces and a large number of cannons near the Italian city Otarant. Consequently, he managed to capture its castle in Jumaadaa Al-Awwal 885 A.H. (July 1480).

Muhammad Al-Fâtiḥ decided to take Otarant as a base for his northern military operations until he could reach Rome. The European world was terrified because of this attempt and they expected the fall of the historical city, Rome into the hands of Muhammad Al-Fâtiḥ. Unfortunately, he passed away suddenly (on the 4th Rabee' Al-Awwal, 886 A.H. (3rd May, 1481) while he was preparing to realize this dream. All of Europe were very happy when they knew about his death. The Pope of Rome ordered that thankfulness prayer be held in churches as a means of expressing joy and happiness over the news.

Muhammad Al-Fâtiḥ as a statesman and a sponsor of civilization

During the reign of Muhammad Al-Fâtiḥ and because of his wise leadership and well-planned policy, the Ottoman State reached boundaries that it had never done before.

All these conquests were not the only achievements of Muhammad Al-Fâtiḥ. Through the help of some of his loyal men, he managed to establish a constitution based on the Book of Allâh and the Sunnah of Rasullâh ﷺ, and the Ottoman state adhered to this constitution for about four centuries.

Although he was very busy, he managed to establish more than 300 masjids, 192 of which were in Istanbul alone. He also built 57 schools. Among his most famous architectural monuments are the Masjids of Sultan Muhammad, the Masjid of Abu Ayyub Al-Ansâri, and Sarai TopKapi Palace.

After Sultan Muhammad, Islamic conquests and the building of unique Masâjid in and around Constantinople continued, until it reached its peak some 60 years later, during the era of Suleiman, The Magnificent, the tenth and the longest reigning Ottoman Sultan, who ruled from 1520 till his death in 1566.

The Suleimâniya Masjid – An architectural masterpiece



To gain some sort of idea as to what heights the Ottomans had reached in the constructing of Masâjid the following article, titled 'The Suleymaniya Mosque and the great architect Sinan' should suffice:

"The Suleymaniye mosque in Istanbul stands atop of the third hill of the imperial city, and has been doing so as a monument to Ottoman culture and civilization for over 450 years, becoming an integral part of the landscape.

Named after the Ottoman ruler who commissioned it, Suleyman the Magnificent - otherwise known as Kanuni Sultan Suleyman - its construction was completed in the year 1558 after being impeccably designed by the one of the greatest architects of the millennium, Sinan.

Complete with schools, a library, a public bath, a hospital and many other facilities, its dome stands at 53 meters off the ground and is still one of the largest mosques in Turkey today.

Having survived a number of earthquakes and fires with only minimal damage, its awe-inspiring design, art and architecture has mesmerized both worshippers and visitors alike for centuries, and has become a subject of great interest and study for contemporary architects all over the world.

Sultan Suleyman hired Sinan, whose expertise had caught the attention of his superiors while serving in battle with the Ottoman janissaries in the field of military infrastructure, to construct a mosque that would symbolize his magnificence as a ruler – as was a custom tradition for Ottoman rulers at the time.

The Sultan had no doubt that such a grand project would take many years to complete, but trusted Sinan nonetheless to get the job done properly. However, after many years, not a single brick had been laid. Sinan, it seems, was in no rush to get started.

Consequently, rumors and accusations about Sinan began to spread among the people, with some claiming that Sinan had realized he had taken on an impossible mission and was planning to go on the run so he wouldn't have to face the furious Sultan. Nonetheless, the rumors reached the palace, and Suleyman was understandably very upset with what he was hearing.

Sinan, in an autobiographical account, reported that he himself had no idea about the rumors that were being spread about him, and was shocked when he suddenly found the Sultan confronting him about the delay. When the Sultan asked Sinan when the construction of the mosque would be finished, Sinan simply replied saying 'It will be complete within two months.'

While Suleyman had every right to suspect that Sinan was pulling his leg, which was indeed a grave and punishable act, the Sultan decided to give Sinan a chance to prove himself, and turned back to the palace. Meanwhile, Suleyman's ministers and advisers were convinced that Sinan had lost his mind.

Upon the completion of the mosque, the Sultan once again suspected that Sinan was wasting time when he heard rumors that Sinan was sitting in the middle prayer hall smoking shisha (narghile/hookah). Arriving at the mosque to find that Sinan was indeed blowing on a waterpipe, the Sultan was once again infuriated.

However, on closer inspection, the Sultan found that Sinan was not actually smoking tobacco, but was simply blowing bubbles in the water. He was in fact listening to the sound of the bubbles to test the acoustics in the prayer hall, measuring the echo of sound bouncing off the mihrab.

Sinan was well-known not just for the aesthetic beauty of his masterpieces, but for also taking many factors into consideration when designing his buildings. Another factor he considered was the smoke that would come out from the 275 candles that would be used to light the prayer hall at night. He therefore designed the walls in such a way that the soot coming from the candles would be channeled into a special gallery inside the mosque, where it would be collected and later turned into a very fine ink.

Furthermore, his buildings also held some symbolic meanings. For example, the presence of a total of 10 balconies on the mosque's four minarets is in tribute to Sultan Suleyman being the 10th ruler of the Ottoman Empire.

His adoption of using rails to support the structure of the Suleymaniye mosque, which would allow the building flexibility to shift up to 5 degrees to either side, is today used as a basis by contemporary architects when constructing tall skyscrapers.

In fact, Sinan was so thoughtful that he left hidden handwritten notes all over the mosque, giving advice to architects in the future who would come to carry out repair and maintenance work.

In the 50s, when the Suleymaniye Masjid was undergoing repairs, maintenance workers found a message written in Ottoman Turkish. After the message was transliterated and translated into modern Turkish, architects realized they had stumbled upon a personal message signed and dated by none other than Sinan himself.

The message read, 'As you have found this note, it means that one of the locking stones in the arch has slipped and you are unsure of how to replace it,' before going on to describe the necessary process required to in doing so.

Sinan's advice was taken, and today, almost 500 years on, the Suleymaniye mosque still stands as a tribute to the great mind and legacy of this proud son of Anatolia. (Worldbulletin.net)"



Inside The Suleimaniyah Masjid –

Note the design of the interior that wherever one sits he enjoys a full view of the Imaam at the front.

The fall of the Caliphate and the secularizing/modernizing of Istanbul, raping it of its true Islamic garb.

The manner in which the rise to power of Mustafa Kamal and the ‘Young Turks’ was orchestrated by shaitaani agents working around the clock to abolish the caliphate and ensure it never stands again is indeed a point worthy of deep contemplation, since this devilish trick has been drawn from shaitân’s magical hat on numerous occasions throughout history, yet one still finds fellow brethren falling for the trap time and again, merely on account of ‘media hype playing with one’s emotions’.

Rasulullâh ﷺ, with great affection, advised his Ummah to take lesson from previous errors and mishaps, since those traps and tricks of the shaitân and his agents which had delivered results once are bound to be utilized again and again. Rasulullâh ﷺ thus stated:

لَا يُلْدَغُ مُؤْمِنٌ مِّنْ جُحْرٍ مَّرَّتَيْنِ³

‘A believer is not bitten/should not be bitten from the same hole twice!’

Shaitaani trickery in Istanbul

Throughout history, where many sincere men and women were prevented from practicing on their Din, through torture, threats and untold forms of persecution, there were many others who were misled into abandoning their Din totally, except that they did it happily.

Where the iron fist was used, the fear would always remain of the masses uprising, but where corrupt leaders were portrayed to the masses as saviours of their Din, they would even be ready to apostate, and still regard their leader as ‘The sign of God’.

Well known examples of this are:

³ رَوَاهُ أَبُو دَاوُدَ الطَّيَالِسِيُّ بِسَنَدٍ الصَّحِيحِ – اتحاف الخيرة

1. Paul –the 1st major adulterer of the teachings of Nabi Isa Alahis-Salaam

After Nabi Isa Alahis-Salaam was lifted, his disciples, with great difficulty, and under constant persecution, continued with his noble work. Then suddenly, a wealthy man called Paul, famous for his harshness against the Christians, steps into the scene. He explains the reason for his repentance, i.e. a figure that had appeared in front of him, covering the horizon, and reprimanding him for his evil ways, and efforts against the Christians.

The Christians explode in excitement, and accept him immediately in their circles. His money, efforts and life has now been sacrificed for the Christian cause...or so it seems...

Not long after, the close disciples of Nabi Isa Alahis-Salaam start drawing away from Paul, for he is now making claims of such beliefs that they had never heard before. Explaining the true belief to Paul proves futile for he is convinced that Jesus is conversing with him directly. Explaining to his supporters is also quite difficult, since Paul is hero-number-1. The disciples voice their concern, but the harm has already been done. Christianity has been poisoned.

2. Constantine –the 2nd major adulterer of the teachings of Nabi Isa Alahis-Salaam

Constantine, the grand emperor of the Romans accepted the Christian faith about three hundred years after the ascension of Nabi Isa Alahis-Salaam to the heavens, which caused a great deal of rejoicing in all religious quarters, since this was the first leader of a mighty kingdom that had accepted the Christian faith. The religion would now reach new heights, or so it seemed...

The support that Paul's views had enjoyed was until now limited. Through Constantine and his mother, Helina, Paul's Christianity became law, with a unique blend of Persian, fire-worshipping beliefs. Many Christians would later voice their concerns but the damage had already been done. Amongst the

masses the notion had settled that Constantine can never be wrong. Rather it seems as though he is God's vicegerent on earth (Na uuzubillâh!!)

3. Khomeini –shaitâns helping hand in rebuilding the nest of the devil in Iran/Irâq under the name of 'shiasm'

Prior to the era of Hadrat Umar Radhiyallahu-Anhu the land of Irâq (including Irân) had served for over a thousand years as the centre of the Persian fire-worshipping/satanic empire. In fact, the role that this land played in shaitaani activities, before and even after Islâm, was such that special mention was made in the narrations regarding its importance in shaitaani missions. For example:

- ★ Hadhrat Abdullâh ibn Umar Radhiyallahu-Anhu has narrated that he witnessed Rasulullâh ﷺ pointing towards Irâq, saying, *'Listen well! Fitnah (trials and tribulations for the Ummah) shall come from there! (Rasulullâh ﷺ repeated this thrice.) It is there that the horn of shaitân shall rise!'*⁴
- ★ When Hadrat Umar Radi-Yallahu-Anh was preparing an expedition towards Iraq, Ka'b Ahbâr Radi-Yallahu-Anh cautioned him saying: *'O leader of the faithful, do not proceed in that direction, for verily in that land lies nine-tenths of black-magic, the most evil of the jinn, and the worst of the killer diseases!'*⁵ *And it is here that shaitaan has laid his eggs and they have hatched!*⁶

Throughout Islamic history shaitaani plots would be hatched from the lands of Irâq and Irân, but due to it being under Muslim Rule the plots would always be

⁴ عن ابن عمر قال : رأيت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يشير بيده يوم العراق ها ان الفتنة ههنا

ها ان الفتنة ههنا ثلاث مرات من حيث يطلع قرن الشيطان (مسند احمد بسند صحيح)

⁵ ان عمر بن الخطاب أراد الخروج إلى العراق فقال له كعب لا تخرج إليها يا أمير المؤمنين فإن بها تسعة أعشار السحر (الشر) وبها فسقة الجن وبه الداء العضال (موطأ إمام مالك باب ما جاء في المشرق)

⁶ وبها باض إبليس وفرخ (كنز العمال)

implemented in a concealed manner. As long as this land remained under Muslim rule it was always possible for the righteous scholars and the pious to refute the practices and innovations of the shaitaani agents of that land. It is for this reason that the Ulema of Irâq and Irân, throughout the centuries, stood out boldly as 'revivers of Dîn' and 'preservers of the faith'.

Unfortunately all of this changed when the shia state of Irân was established. From that time on, the land has witnessed the most sorrowful tales of shia persecution against Muslims of true faith, whilst at the same time trumpeting their hypocritical slogan of 'desirous of unity'.

One thus hardly finds it difficult to believe articles of the nature as the one produced below. Rather, if one were to say that the facts in the article are a mere scratch on the surface of the actual torture and oppression meted out to the Ahlus-Sunnah in Iran by government forces, one would not at all be exaggerating.

Sunni Muslims living in fear in Iran as state-sponsored persecution ramps up

By Peter Tatchell January 22, 2015 (<http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/sunni-muslims-living-in-fear-in-iran>)

Iran is a majority Muslim country, on in which Islam is enshrined in the constitution and all laws are subject to Islamic principles. Indeed, the country's official title is the Islamic Republic of Iran.

You'd think, therefore, that Iran would be a safe haven for Muslims; a nation where there are none of the anti-Muslim persecutions that happen in other parts of the world.

But you'd be wrong.

In recent months, there has been a wave of arrests of Sunni Muslims. Dozens are currently on death row and at risk of death by the sadistic Iranian method of hoisting on cranes and slow strangulation by hanging. How can this be?

Iran is a Shia Muslim state. Muslims who don't adhere to the Shia interpretation of Islam are regarded with official distrust and disrespect. They often suffer discrimination - and sometimes much worse.

While Iran officially claims to defend the rights of Islamic minorities - their freedom of faith is enshrined in the constitution - the reality is very different. Followers of non-Shia Islamic sects are deemed not true Muslims. They are seen as potential enemies of the state and of God, which is a capital offence. This is particularly the case with Sunni Muslims. The Shia-dominated Tehran regime regards them as their main religious rivals - and a threat.

In everyday life, Sunni Islam is tolerated up to a point. But whenever it gains converts or influence, the state cracks down - particularly in the ethnic minority Kurdish, Arab and Baluch regions of Iran.

Last November, two Sunni prisoners of conscience from Iran's Baluch minority were executed. According to the Human Rights Activists News Agency (HRANA), 22-year old Vahid Shah Bakhsh and 23-year old Mahmoud Shah Bakhsh were hanged on charges of 'Moharabeh [enmity against God] and acting against national security'.

Both men had been subjected to severe torture at the Ministry of Intelligence Detention Centre in Zahedan. There are serious doubts about the evidence against them and the fairness of their trial. That same month the Supreme Court of Iran confirmed the 33-year jail term imposed on an Iraqi Sunni Muslim, Marivan Abdolkarim Reza, who was found guilty on similarly vague charges.

Also last November, 16 Sunni converts from Iran's Ahwazi Arab minority were arrested during a Qur'an class in Ahwaz city, according to HRANA.

Meanwhile, the International Campaign for Sunni Prisoners in Iran (ICSPI) reports: "The pro-Shia Iranian government has been alarmed by the rise of Sunni Islam among the Ahwazi Arabs in the traditionally Shia-majority Khuzestan province.

"At least 10 Sunni converts were arrested in July 2014, with three arrested after preaching Sunni beliefs and seven arrested after holding congregational Sunni Taraweeh prayers during Ramadan."

More than 20 Sunni converts were arrested last February at a Qur'an and Arabic language study meeting in Koye Alawi in Ahwaz city. The ICSPi adds that, "only a month ago, a further two Muslims from Iran's Ahwazi Arab minority, who had preached Sunni beliefs after converting from Shi'ism, were charged with 'causing corruption on earth', a charge which carries the death penalty.

"The Iranian authorities claim the two Sunni preachers, Hossein Saboori and Sami Zebady Alboghobesh, were involved in burning down a Husseinia [a Shia place of worship]. The two men have strongly denied the accusation.

"The Iranian authorities often falsely accuse Sunni preachers and activists of involvement in various incidents in an attempt to justify their arrest. In some cases, a single incident has been used as justification for the imprisonment of dozens of different Sunni activists."

Intensification of persecution

The Iranian human rights organization, the Abdorrahman Boroumand Foundation (ABF), confirms that the repression of Sunni Muslims has been intensifying since late 2012 when six young Kurdish Sunni activists were hanged in Rajai Shahr Prison. Their execution was shrouded in secrecy, as was the judicial process that stripped them of their rights to due process and a fair trial.

The six activists were tried along with four other young Sunnis - Shahram Ahmadi, Jamshid and Jahangir Dehqani and Kamal Mola'i - who are also now at imminent risk of execution. All 10 defendants said their confessions were extracted from them after months of torture and solitary confinement and after promises of leniency.

ABF observes: "Sunni Muslims are estimated to constitute about 10% of Iran's total population. According to Article 12 of the Islamic Republic's Constitution, they can practice their faith freely. In practice, however, the Shia rulers of Iran have subjected Sunnis to discrimination and have denied them political, civil, economic, social, and cultural rights, through restrictions in access to government positions, employment, education, and places of worship.

"Sunnis live in a majority in the most impoverished provinces of Iran, such as Kurdistan, Turkmen Sahra, and Sistan & Baluchestan, and the uneven distribution of resources remains one of their main grievances, vis-a-vis the central government."

Blocking entry into mosques

Restrictions on places of worship for Sunnis are cited by Human Rights Watch, including the refusal of permission to build new mosques and blocking entry into mosques on important Sunni religious occasions. A 2008 report by Amnesty International noted that there was not a single Sunni mosque in Tehran.

"The religious institutions of Sunni Kurds are generally blocked, while those of Shias are encouraged and supported by the state...the government has restricted the expansion of Sunni mosques that exist elsewhere in the country," said Amnesty.

The Iranian government's objective seems to be to restrict the growth and influence of Sunni Islam and to encourage Sunnis to pray in mosques controlled by Shia clerics in the hope of eventually converting them. With this in mind, dissident Sunni clergy have been detained, imprisoned, exiled and even executed for the vaguely worded offence of "waging war against God."

In 2014, a report by the UN Special Rapporteur on Iran stated that at least 150 Sunni Muslims are currently "detained for reportedly organizing religious meetings and activities or after trials that allegedly often failed to meet international standards."

These failures include being denied access to their lawyer and the right to call evidence and witnesses in their defense; as well as subjecting the accused to 10-minute summary trials while shackled and blindfolded.

Many Sunnis believe their persecution is aimed at stopping them from promoting their own interpretation of Islam, raising awareness about the unjust treatment of Sunnis and exposing the misuse of religion by the state.(End of quoted article)

How did Komeini rise to power?

Upon the destruction of the Ottoman Caliphate the Muslims were gripped with an inferiority complex. There was no power that could muster the courage to speak against Britain and America.

Then suddenly the oppressive Shah of Iran was defeated, and Khomeini, whose lectures and appeals to the public had, 'most surprisingly' been aired from Paris throughout the Shah's rule, stepped into the scene.

Iraq, armed by the West, launched numerous attacks against the 'newly formed Islamic Iranian Revolution' but 'surprisingly' Iran could not be defeated (the reason being that Iran too was secretly receiving weapons from shaitani Western states.)

In front of Iran's threats even the most daring weapon-wielding-West 'amazingly' drew back in fear. Muslims around the world rejoiced, thinking that Islam has finally found a protector. A revolution had begun. Islam had found a saviour....or so it seemed.

Not long after, Khomeini in bits and trickles began explaining his concocted version of Islam. Concern was voiced, but the Iranian masses could not accept that their Ayatullah Khomeini could ever be wrong.

Shia-Iran thus emerged as one the most glaring examples of shaitani trickery in recent times

4. ISIS – Islamic State of Irâq and Syria – the western world's scapegoat to massacre thousands of Syrians without any fear of reproach

When one studies the various shaitani conspiracies that the believing world has thus far seen, one shall realise that in every conspiracy Almighty Allâh clouds the minds of the conspirators, causing them to make major errors in carrying out their mischievous activities, despite it having been rehearsed and planned to the finest detail.

Such errors were witnessed world-wide after the September 11 attacks on The World Trade Centre in New York City, when shaitani agents attempted to pin the blame upon a lone figure hiding in the mountains of Afghanistan, by the name of Usama ibn Ladin, then on a 'international terrorist organization', by the name of Al-Qaeda, which prior to this attack was so unknown that perhaps even Usama himself was unaware of the existence of such a group!

The numerous errors committed by the shaitaani agents during their quick investigation, followed by their united allegation that Usama bin Ladin was responsible for the attacks, have been gathered by independent researches and investigators and published on an independent basis, but unfortunately the vast majority of 'modern' man has been trained to eat only that which the international media feeds.

In the issue of ISIS too the errors of the shaitaani agents behind this movement were made evident right at the very beginning. Here too however, due to playing upon emotions, the media were quickly able to cover the tracks of the conspirators behind ISIS, and the voices of concern of the few who could see, beyond its dazzling veil, the true, ugly face of ISIS, fell upon deaf ears.

Had the message of Nabi Yaqûb Alahis-Salaam been heeded, many who had initially fell for the trap of ISIS, laid by shaitaani conspirators, would probably have been saved from their foolish error.

In the hope that perhaps this message of Nabi Yaqûb Alahis-Salaam benefits someone in the future, it shall be explained here-under:

A valuable lesson taught by Nabi Yaqûb Alahis-Salaam

The brothers of Nabi Yusuf Alahis-Salaam, after managing to draw him away from his protecting father, differed whether they should murder him (Na uuzubillâh) or merely lower him into some well, in the hope that travellers shall discover him and take him away as their slave. After agreeing on the second option they felt it appropriate to present some proof for the tale they had fabricated, i.e. that a wolf had attacked young Yusuf in their absence and had torn him into pieces.

As proof of their tale they slaughtered a ram and dipped the upper garment of Nabi Yusuf Alahis-Salaam into its blood. As they approached home they began their act of uncontrollable weeping and lamenting. When Nabi Yaqûb Alahis-Salaam enquired the cause of their pitiable state, they brought forward the

garment soaked in blood, and between huge sobs explained their predicament.

Nabi Yaqûb Alahis-Salaam at that moment did not allow himself to be blinded with the scary sight of dark, red blood, nor did he allow their sobs and tears to throw him into emotional blindness. Rather, with full control over his mental state, he, Alaihis-Salaam, looked through the tears and the blood and pondered over the issues which the brothers desired to remain concealed.

Realising that the garment of Nabi Yusuf Alahis-Salaam had not even a tear, forget being ripped in pieces, Nabi Yaqûb Alahis-Salaam calmly stated:

بَلْ سَوَّلَتْ لَكُمْ أَنْفُسُكُمْ أَمْرًا فَصَبِرْ جَمِيلٌ وَاللَّهُ الْمُسْتَعَانُ عَلَى مَا تَصِفُونَ

'Rather, this is that which you have concocted.

Patience shall be my recourse, and from Allah do we seek help over what you claim!

The lesson that Nabi Yaqûb Alahis-Salaam left for the Ummah in his short but unique method of investigation is that 'blood' and 'tears' are many a time utilized in order to blind one from a stark reality lying behind the false screen of emotion and fear. Nabi Yaqûb Alahis-Salaam did not spoil his investigation by staring at the blood on the garment of Nabi Yusuf Alahis-Salaam. Rather, he Alahis-Salaam looked beyond the blood and trained his eyes upon the garment itself. When he found no tear on the garment, he understood immediately that there was no 'wolf' in this episode.

Had this method of reasoning been applied at the immediate outbreak of ISIS into international spotlight, the falsehood of this organization would have been made evident from the very beginning. The details of this is as follows:

ISIS sprang to international spotlight with the 'execution'/slaughter' of a British citizen at the hands of an ISIS recruit, known as 'Jihâdi John'. The brutal execution was videoed and made viral through all methods of social network. In the scene one could see an executioner, with face covered, drawing his knife back and forth against the neck of the 'hostage'. After a short pause, the next scene shows the 'hostage' lying face down with stains of blood upon his drape. These two scenes were enough to throw the world into panic, and play

upon the emotions of the world at large, causing Non-Muslims to burn in fury against the Muslim World, and at the same time instigating innocent, ignorant Muslim youth to voice their support and happiness over the incident, as though it was a 'brave deed of Islâm'!

The mistake that the 'executioner' made was that he ignored the 'obvious' fact that when a knife is pushed hard against the sensitive skin of a man's neck, the immediate result should have been a spontaneous outburst of blood, which did not occur.

The trained eye of photo specialists and investigators very soon hatched unto the error and declared the entire 'execution' to be a fraud. Unfortunately, due to the shaitaani agents who orchestrated this 'drama' in order to give rise to 'ISIS' having control over the international media the declaration of 'fraud' was given no prominence, as though it was never made.

Once it was established that the rise of ISIS to prominence was based upon a 'total lie' it should have become clear that the entire structure of this organization is naught but a 'shaitaani event'. Unfortunately, for the vast majority, that never happened, due to most of man being trapped in a world of 'mind-control', programmed to accept whatever is fed by the media, and never to search for answers to issues that make no sense whatsoever.

Mustafa Kamal, another 'lie' in a long series of lies

Istanbul, the capital state of the Caliphate was on the brink of being taken into British control. The rule of the Ottoman Empire over the Arab lands had already been snatched away. It seemed as if nothing could now stop the British robbing the Turks of their independence.

Suddenly, Mustafa Kamal, a Young Turk, who had 'coincidentally' just returned from England, stepped into the arena. The invincible British army, upon seeing Kamal's small band of soldiers, retreated almost immediately. (A similar episode occurred during the initial stages of the rise of ISIS.)

The Turks were left amazed. Mustafa Kamal had preserved their independence and thus received the accolade of 'Ataturk' (Father of the Turks). His fame

spread far and wide. The Caliph had no option but to appoint him as chief commander of the Turkish army. Mustafa had saved for the Turks their land and their religion...or so it seemed...

Not long after, the Caliph is robbed of all his authority. Mustafa even has the caliph jailed on charges of fraud. Within a short while, Azaan, Salaah, the Arabic language, learning and reciting Qurân is prohibited. The pious voice their concern, but it is too late. Atatürk can never be wrong. Rather, the accepted view amongst the masses is that he is their saviour!

Mustafa Kamal and his modus operandi in stripping Istanbul and Turkey of its Islamic identity

After having imprinted his awe and majesty in the minds of the masses Mustafa Kamal now found no impediment in implementing his devilish reforms, amongst which were:

- 1) Abandoning the Arabic script, which was being utilized for writing Turkish, and replacing it with the Latin script.
- 2) Abandoning the Islamic Calendar and replacing it with the Gregorian calendar.
- 3) Issuing an edict that the public dress in accordance to western standards and discard the garb of the religious elders. (Had there been no real significance in adopting the garb of the pious, the shaitaani agents operating behind Mustafa Kamal would never have bothered issuing and forcefully implementing such an edict).
- 4) Appointing western-oriented lecturers as the Imams of all the Masâjid of Turkey, which had by then reached 70 000. Through these eloquent hypocrite preachers in a few years Mustafa was able to corrupt the mind-set of the general Turks, and create a western, modern, atheistic orientated Turkey.

- 5) Issuing an edict that the Azaan be called out in the Turkish language, instead of Arabic.
- 6) Banning the learning and teaching of the Glorious Quraan.
- 7) Closing down Madrasahs and erecting instead westernized schools and universities, in which a uniform exposing the legs of females was made compulsory. Through this, in a short space of time, the Muslim women of Turkey lost their shame and soon became accustomed to walking around in almost total nudity.
- 8) Converting the Masajid into museums, whereby it could be frequented by, and desecrated by hundreds of nude, impure women of Europe on a daily basis.
- 9) Having his spies pinpoint the areas and individuals posing a threat to his shaitaani mission and in a subtle manner having them assassinated by his secret police.
- 10) Prohibiting the usage of the word 'Allâh' and replacing it with '*Tanrı*' (which means God of the Blue Sky).

Note: Shaitaani agents have always desired that man discard the name 'Allâh' and utilize instead some substitute, whereas the name of Allâh has no substitute, nor any translation.

Devilish Translations

If one wishes he may utilize a translation of any of the Qualities of Almighty Allâh, known as The Ninety Nine Names of Allâh, eg. The Most Merciful, The Most Forgiving, The Creator, The Sustainer, etc.

As for the word Allâh itself, which is the Only True Name of Almighty Allâh, this has no substitute.

Having understood this one should ponder deeply as to the origin of the word 'God' and to its true meaning. It is obviously not a translation of the name

‘Allâh’, nor is it a translation of any of the Divine Qualities of Almighty Allâh. So what then is it and what does it really mean. When one delves into this issue it becomes clear that there are many such words in our Islamic vocabulary which have been blindly adopted from non-Muslim translators, whose intentions when translating were not always sincere.

For example:

- a) **‘Prophet’** – This is not a true translation of Rasûl, which means ‘Messenger’ nor is it a translation of Nabi, which means ‘Informer of the unknown’. As for the word ‘prophet’ one many a time finds it being used in dictionaries as a synonym for the word ‘soothsayer’.

The intended purpose of the one who first coined the term ‘prophet’ shall perhaps never be known, but it would obviously be advisable to avoid such a word, and instead use the word ‘messenger’, or to simply utilize the Arabic words ‘Rasul’ and ‘Nabi’.

- b) **‘Mekka’** – Initially this was the common spelling method used for the most sacred city of the Muslims, which houses the Magnificent Ka’bah.

It was only after Muslim scholars alerted the Saudi government to the actual meaning of ‘Mekka’, which refers to any centre which attracts crowds, even if it be for evil, filthy purposes, did they retract from this spelling and pronounce an order that the sacred city should be spelled as ‘Makkah’ or Makkah al-Mukarramah, instead of Mecca.

- c) **Mosque** – This word does not provide a true translation to the word Masjid, which refers to an area designated for the special worship of Almighty Allâh. As for the word ‘mosque’ much speculation has been made over its origin and actual initially intended meaning. It would thus be best to avoid it and use the word ‘Masjid’ instead.

These are but a few examples of shaitaan’s tactics in getting Muslims themselves to show disrespect to matters demanding the greatest of sanctity

and honour. Although the usage of such words, when utilized with sincere intentions, is not sinful, it should still be avoided, and instead an effort should be made to utilize the original Arabic word instead, viz. Nabi; Rasûl; Masjid, etc.

The Death of Mustafa Kamal and the birth of an Islamic Revolution

As with Al-Aqsâ after its being left in ruins by the army of Bukhk-e-Nasr, Istanbul too soon began picking up its pieces and bringing about its religious revival. Due to hypocrites occupying senior positions in Istanbul's cabinet and due to strong anti-Islam military support the process of revival was obviously going to be subtle and slow, but after seventy years from the demise of Mustafa Kamal one who visits the land of Istanbul shall surely get a smell of the fragrance of an Islamic Revival.

How it happened

The following article, written by Dr. Can Erimtan⁷, published on the 13th Jan, 2015, explains the 'religious revolution' that Turkey is currently undergoing and how it came to be⁸:

The end of "Secular Turkey" or "Ottomans re-emergence"?

On the international scene Turkey is playing a high stakes game, trying to transform itself into an international energy hub as vividly illustrated by the recent rapprochement between Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Russia's Vladimir Putin.

⁷ Dr. Can Erimtan is an independent scholar residing in İstanbul, with a wide interest in the politics, history and culture of the Balkans and the Greater Middle East. He attended the VUB in Brussels and did his graduate work at the universities of Essex and Oxford. In Oxford, Erimtan was a member of Lady Margaret Hall and he obtained his doctorate in Modern History in 2002. His publications include the book "Ottomans Looking West?" as well as numerous scholarly articles. In the period 2010-11, he wrote op-eds for Today's Zaman and in the further course of 2011 he also published a number of pieces in Hürriyet Daily News. In 2013, he was the Turkey Editor of the Istanbul Gazette.

Domestically however, the current government seems more concerned with the spiritual well-being of the people under its care and the spread of Islam in the nation.

Intra-Islamic rivalry inside a "secular" system

Turkey throughout the 20th century had been dominated by the long shadow of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and his far-reaching reform movements that transformed Turkey into a paragon of 'modernity in the Middle East' and a beacon of 'democracy and secularism' in a sea of 'reactionary Islam' or backward Muslim dictatorships.

The common consensus was that, in Turkey, the issue of religion (meaning Islam) had been relegated to the private sphere and that public life was dominated by the various right- and left-wing strands of political discourse well-known in moderate and less moderate societies elsewhere.

The Republic of Turkey was founded in 1923 as the successor to the Ottoman Empire, the self-proclaimed leader of the (Sunni) Muslim world as the home of the Caliphate. In contrast, the Republican base was firmly entrenched in the ideology of nationalism, Turkish nationalism, and this philosophical framework largely replaced the religion of Islam as a source of communal identity for the ethnically rather mixed population groups of Anatolia.

But rather than being the outcome of an organic personal experience, the religious life of Turkey's people was in reality largely controlled by the state by means of the Directorate of Religious Affairs (or Diyanet, in Turkish). At the same time, however, the authorities actively promoted a permissive attitude towards Islamic restrictions and regulations (such as the prohibition of alcohol and the obligation of five daily prayers). And as a shorthand, people at home as well as abroad referred to this Kemalist project advocating a lenient state of affairs as constituting "Turkish Secularism" (called laiklik, in Turkish after the French laïcité), as vividly illustrated by the much-respected BBC announcing in 2007 that the "modern Turkish state was established on strict secular principles." And the Constitution stipulated that the Turkish Army was supposed to act as the 'guardian of Turkey's secularism', hence the numerous military coups and interventions in post-war Turkey. A salient and fairly recent example of such military meddling was the so-called "Eighteen Recommendations" issued by the National Security Council (SNC) on 28 February 1997 (known in Turkish simply as 28 Şubat). This military intervention has been characterized as a Post-modern coup and led to the resignation of Turkey's first Islamist Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan.

In early January 1998, Turkey's constitutional court even banned Erbakan's Welfare Party (or RP, Refah Partisi in Turkish). Following this successful military intervention against Turkey's creeping Islamization, Turkey's Armed Forces next issued a so-called E-memorandum (in Turkish, e-muhtıra), published on the internet on 27 April 2007, in an effort to influence the election of Turkey's president. This last "virtual" military intervention contained the following declaration of intent:

"It should not be forgotten that the Turkish Armed Forces are a[n] . . . absolute defender of secularism . . . Those who are opposed to Great Leader Mustafa Kemal Atatürk . . . are enemies of the Republic of Turkey and will remain so."

Islamic re-awakening, 1982-2014: Piety through education

In spite of the Turkish Army's above-cited readiness to defend Atatürk's legacy, I would argue that the military coup of 12 September 1980 in many ways laid the groundwork for a re-emergence of Islam in Turkey's public life and a concomitant growth in displays of piety in the wider nation and its leadership.

The 12 September coup leaders introduced "a new constitution in 1982 and in the present context, this legal document's 24th article appears particularly poignant. The article starts off with the phrase,

"Everyone has the right to freedom of conscience, religious belief and conviction," but then also contains this section: *"Education and instruction in religion and ethics shall be conducted under state supervision and control. Instruction in religious culture and moral education shall be compulsory in the curricula of primary and secondary schools",*

It would [thus] appear that the military coup's indirect outcome was to challenge the very doctrine that General Evren and his henchmen set out to defend. In 1994, 12 years after the new constitution was introduced, Necmettin Erbakan's pro-Islamic Welfare Party came to national prominence and... today's AKP under Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is but the apparent heir to the long-since-banned RP."

In other words, I would argue that, in an effort to placate the wider population (or pacify the masses) and stem the rise of political violence that in the course of the

1970's had reached near-civil war proportions, the Turkish Armed Forces let the genie out of the bottle. It might even seem possible that in the then-current Cold War context, the Turkish Army acted in accordance with Zbigniew Brzezinski's scheme of utilizing Islam as a weapon against Communism. The above-quoted relatively recent military interventions - the 1997 28 Subat and the 2007 e-muh'tira - were belated attempts to reverse this trend, but by then the momentum had become irreversible and the current AKP-led government is now busy putting the Islamic cherry on top of the proverbial Turkish cake.

As persuasively illustrated by the 1982 Constitution, the best way to influence the future behavior of a population is through tampering with the **education system**. In December 2013, the 19th National Education Council (or Sura) took place in the coastal city of Antalya and during that meeting a momentous **179 "recommendatory decisions"** were taken.

Those included **the introduction of religious courses into the curriculum of primary schools**. Whereas, middle school pupils undergoing training to memorize the Quran (known as hafızlık in Turkish) would be able to leave school for the duration of two years but will still be allowed to sit exams. At the same time religious instruction in high schools will be doubled, while the teaching of the history of Turkey's reforms and the principles of Kemalism in middle and high schools will be subjected to a critical revision more in line with a contemporary understanding and current needs. **But the most spectacular "recommendation" or decision was arguably to turn the instruction of the Ottoman language (Osmanlıca, in Turkish) into a compulsory course for vocational religious high schools as well as social science high schools.**

Turks turning Ottoman: 1994-2014

These "recommendations" will undoubtedly leave their mark on the children that will be attending school in the coming years. These pupils will learn about religion (Islam) all throughout their school-going years, which will arguably mean that they will become well-versed in Islamic doctrines, beliefs, and practices later on in life. But the fact that the instruction of the early history of the Republic of Turkey and the principles of its founding father, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, will be reinterpreted and adapted to contemporary conditions probably means that the emphasis will now be laid on continuity rather than change - the continuity between the Ottoman period and the current Republican age.

Traditionally, history education in Turkey was primarily aimed at highlighting the novel and progressive aspects of the Republic of Turkey, much to the detriment of the preceding Ottoman period, generally portrayed as a backward time when the people at large had been subject to the regressive influence of Islam and the arbitrary rule of despotic sultans. In reality though, over the past two decades (particularly following the RP's meteoric emergence in 1994), public opinion in Turkey has very much re-appropriated the Ottoman past.

The introduction of the new Turkish Latin alphabet in November 1928 ensured that Turks would more readily look towards Europe and the West than to their Arab and Muslim neighbors in the East. Throughout Turkey's Kemalist period (1923-2002), the terms Ottoman and Islam were used interchangeably, and in the current post-Kemalist era, ushered in by the AKP, this attitude has not changed. But instead of a negative stigma, the current political leadership of the country presents the Ottomans' adherence to Islam as a positive trait meant to transform the Muslim creed into an even more attractive proposition for Turkey's wider population, arguably alienated from their pious roots by means of years of Kemalist indoctrination and a permissive attitude towards Islamic restrictions and regulations. As a result, it seems to me that these classes in the Ottoman language are more like a backdoor to learning the Arabic alphabet, which is a prerequisite for reading the Quran.

Rather than training pupils in learning a dead language comprised of three separate tongues (Turkish, Arabic, and Farsi) and ill-suited to the quick pace of modern life, these classes will guarantee that every pupil (and subsequent adult incarnation) will in future be able to go to the Holy Book and read its hallowed lines for him- or herself. **And the end result of this exercise in educational engineering (for want of a better term) will arguably be that future citizens of the Republic of Turkey will identify themselves primary as Muslims (or Neo- or Pseudo-Ottomans, if you will) rather than Turks.**

The Ministry of Education has sent 39-page fascicles to the Governors' Offices in all 81 provinces across the country, containing an outline of a new moral education program to be taught in schools nationwide. The Turkish daily *Milliyet* reported that these documents contain such pious phrases like *"death is a blessing according to our faith. It means salvations from the heavy burden of living,"* and that *"patience protects moral chastity,"* lines clearly meant to inculcate deep Muslim feelings of predestination and resignation into the hearts and minds of Turkey's malleable pupils.

The Quraan shall never be defeated!

Mufti Muhammad Taqi Uthmâni has written regarding his own experience when he visited Istanbul in 1407 (1986), 46 years after the death of Mustafa Kamal:

“A programme was made to visit one of the Madrasahs of Istanbul, a madressa for memorising the Quraan. I expected it to be some small structure catering for a handful of students, but when my eyes fell upon it, I was overjoyed. The Madressa was a five-story high building, used for classes as well as boarding. The number of those boarding was over six hundred. Besides them there were many more students who were staying elsewhere and coming daily for classes.

Together with the memorising of The Noble Quraan, lessons were also being imparted regarding basic Arabic and daily, practical masaa'il (injunctions of the Shariah). The colour of 'obedience to the Sunnah' was evident upon all the Asâtizah (teachers), in their dressing as well as their conduct. From their talks one could easily ascertain that these were men of sincerity and zeal for Islam.

The standard of education seemed quite high. We were taken into a large hall wherein about 100 students, ranging from the ages of 10 to seventeen, sitting on carpet, were engaged in the recitation of the Noble Qurân, in a most unique and systematic manner, under the supervision of a Ustaadh seated at the front of the hall. On our approach he stood up to greet us, but then too his students did not even halt in their recitation. The Ustaadh explained that these were those students who had completed the memorising of the Noble Quraan and were now busy in 'dhor' (constant repetition). We were then asked to test the students at random. (365)

I tested close to twenty students and found the results quite amazing. Each one recited at least one 'ruku', and not a single one of them erred, neither in recitation nor in their application of the rules of tajweed. Their voices were so melodious that one felt like listening to them the entire night.

I was later informed that this Madrassah was just one of a number operating under a well-structured programme. In the city of Istanbul alone there were over two hundred such Madressahs. As for the entire Turkey over five thousand of such Madressahs had already been set up, which was catering for six hundred students plus. All these Madressahs operate with the explicit permission of the government.

Whilst listening to the details of these Madressahs the thought passed my mind that this is that very land in which Mustafa Kamal had at one time smashed a copy of the Noble Quraan on the head of the acting “Sheikhul-Islam” (implying that Turkey no longer has any need for the Ulema nor for the Quraan – Nauu'zubillah!). It was this very land in which Quraanic education had been declared unlawful. Even Azaan in the Arabic language had been prohibited!

Mustafa Kamal perhaps thought that by forcing his nation to abandon the Islamic headgear (topi) and replace it instead with western caps, he would succeed in making their minds 'western'. Almighty Allah's plan however rules above all else. Today, six hundred thousand of Turkey's young generation have once again donned Beautiful Islamic headgear and are engaged in memorising the Glorious Quraan.

During meals I had the opportunity to engage with many Ulema of the city, during which we discussed in detail with regards to the past, the present and the future of Islam in Turkey. Until then, it was only a picture of a modern land that would come to mind whenever Istanbul would be discussed, drowning in western culture and adoration. During the discussion however I found a new picture of Turkey taking shape, one of true Islam, which was always the original direction of the masses of this land. Despite thousands of shaitaani efforts the traces of true Islam in Turkey could never be effaced, and today with great vigour one finds it coming again to the fore. (End of quote, with slight editing)

That was what Hadrat Mufti Sahib had seen in 1986. Today, 30 years later, one can clearly perceive, in every Masjid of Istanbul, the re-emergence of the Glorious Quraan as the most valuable asset of the masses of Turkey, as it was during the days of The Glorious Ottomon Empire.

Mustafa Kamal and his shaitaani superiors had perhaps thought, that through their nefarious plots and schemes, the spirit of Quraan had been lifted forever from Turkey. It seems that their filthy minds were oblivious of Almighty Allah's Divine Declaration of:

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ

***'We alone have revealed This Reminder (The Quraan),
and We alone shall see to its preservation!'***

A Personal Experience at the Masjid of Sultan Ahmed (The Blue Mosque)

On the first day of our visit to Istanbul we were directed to the world famous 'Masjid of Sultan Ahmed', commonly known amongst Westerners as 'The Blue Mosque', due to the beautiful blue colour perceived within when the rays of the sun filter through its blue panes.

In order to subdue the spiritual light that permeates from the Masaajid, Mustafa Kamal had converted the Masaajid of Istanbul into museums and tourist sites, thus allowing it to be desecrated by the scantily dressed immoral women of Western countries, who come in droves to view the fantastic architecture of the Masaajid of this land.

It was thus with a deep feeling of sorrow and hurt that we proceeded towards the Masjid, surrounded on all sides by tourists rushing to gain entrance. From far our eyes fell on the sad sight of non-Muslim men and women, gaily striding into the Masjid, snapping 'selfies' as they proceeded along. This was my first perception of the scene from far. However, as we proceeded ahead and glanced at the situation from close quarters a different picture came to the fore, one that brought a smile to the lips and a unique thrill and awe of the Fantastic Workings of Almighty Allah to the mind.



A subtle invitation to Islam, hidden under the robes of Mustafa Kamal's treachery

Perhaps due to internal pressure the present government finds itself still unable to prohibit the entrance of non-Muslims into the Masaajid. What they have done however is to subtly curb the extent of desecration by enforcing the following:

- 1) Those in unsuitable attire are required to don additional pieces of garment provided at the entrance, which includes scarfs, arm coverings, trousers, burqahs, etc.
- 2) Shoes must be removed
- 3) Non-Muslims must confine themselves to a designated area at the back
- 4) Permission for entry as a tourist stops half an hour before Salaah

What fascinated me was the sight of non-Muslim women happily donning Islamic modest attire in order to receive permission to enter. In their homelands, western media work tirelessly in pumping drivel that such attire is oppressive, back-dated, etc. It seemed as though all the effect of such western propaganda was being washed away in just seconds as these women slid themselves into simple samples of Islamic dress code. One could not help overhearing them ask their partners to snap a picture of them dressed as a 'Muslimah'. When one woman asked her friends as to how she looked, and they replied in unison that she looked 'gorgeous', it was then that I realized that Almighty Allah had opened up a door of subtle invitation to towards 'modest Islamic dress' in the very land that Mustafa Kamal had forbidden Islamic attire.

Mustafa had left no stone unturned in ensuring that every Muslim girl in Istanbul exposes her legs in public, by enforcing school education, coupled with a compulsory western dress code. This very Mustafa's plans of bringing tourists into the Masaajid was now being used by Almighty Allah as a means of educating 'brainwashed westerners' with regards to the beauty that lies within modesty. That women who had never dreamt of covering her hair and legs in public, especially not on a scorching day of Summer, was now happily

throwing herself into an Islamic garb and experiencing for herself the sense of self-honour, security, and inner-satisfaction that Islamic dress affords women.

Women, born as Muslim, many a time do not realize the thrill that Islamic garb creates within one, due to never having experienced the darkness that is associated with immodest dress. As for a non-Muslim, drowning in spiritual darkness and frantically searching for even a spark of light, an Imaani thrill envelopes them as soon as they cover themselves in accordance to Islamic principle.

The thought also passed the mind that just as the magicians in the era of Nabi Moosa Alahis-Salaam had been blessed with Imaan, on account of their donning themselves in the garb of Nabi Moosa himself, and on account of the respect they afforded Nabi Moosa Alahis-Salaam when they asked whether he would initiate the contest or should they do so, here too was a scene of non-Muslims, happily and in respect of the sacredness of the Masaajid, donning themselves in the garb of Islam. It is thus not far-fetched that this act of theirs shall follow them home and soon become a means of their as well as their entire family reverting to Islam. (And nothing is difficult for Almighty Allah).

Effacing western media poison

In the beautiful courtyard of the Masjid I found scores of tourists lining up at the walls, attempting to understand the beautiful frames that had been hung across. Here too I felt myself being gripped by the awe of Divine Wisdom, as I witnessed non-Muslims, with the aid of Islamic frames, happily and perhaps unknowingly educate themselves regarding 'true Islam'.

From amongst the frames that caught my attention was one depicting the 'genealogy tree' of the famous Ambiya Alahis-Salaam, beginning with Nabi Adam Alahis-Salaam and ending with the seal of the Ambiya, Sayyiduna Muhammed ﷺ.

Through the diagram one could get a clear picture of the relationship of Rasulullah ﷺ to Nabi Ibaheem Alahis-Salaam (Abraham), who the Christian and the Jew regard as the 'Father of the Messengers'. Translated verses of the

Noble Quraan on the frame also helped explain the exalted honour that Nabi Isa Alahis-Salaam (Jesus) as well as his noble mother, Mariam Alahas-Salaam (Mary) occupy in Islam.

It was indeed most heart-warming to hear a non-Muslim father affectionately explain to his small son the details of the frame, innocently and unknowingly exposing himself as well as his son to the beauty of true Islamic knowledge.

The sight of non-Muslims clustering around a frame of the Magnificent Ka'bah, showing millions in prostration around it, also left an unforgettable impression upon my mind. For those who have been blessed to personally set eyes upon as well as touch the Holy Ka'bah a picture of the Ka'bah may perhaps not draw more than a second glance of appreciation. But for the one who has never seen this magnificent building, even an artist's impression of it is enough to cause the eye to stare in admiration and the fingers to click away on the camera, in order to share the sight of this most beautiful building with their family and friends back home. And the cherry on top of this awe-striking picture's subtle invitation to Islam is the information that this 'House of Almighty Allah' was erected for the worship of Almighty Allah by none other than Nabi Ibrahim Alahis-Salaam (Abraham), the father of the Ambiya Alahis-Salaam, and the great-grandfather of the Bani Israil.

Other frames that caught my attention were those depicting the honour of women in Islam, by citing the bequest of Rasulullah ﷺ made in favour of women in his sermon during the final Hajj; those depicting Islam's sanctity for the blood, wealth and respect of fellow mankind, irrespective of their creed; and those depicting Islam's attitude against terrorism, by citing the command of Rasulullah ﷺ that even in times of war, the aged, the young, and women must not be harmed.

With such frames delivering their subtle messages, and being happily perused by simple-minded tourists, it was not surprising to find many entering a room at the far end, designated for answering questions of guests interested in knowing more about Islam. Through the frames of the courtyard of the Masjid of Sultan Ahmed, I am sure much of the poison injected by western media regarding Islam and terrorism, Islam and cruelty to women, etc in seconds

gets wiped away. With thousands of western tourists visiting this site per month, it is not far-fetched that as they return home a subtle invitation towards 'true Islam' returns with them.

The lasting impression of a man in prostration and the melodious tune of Quraanic recital

Immediately after the Fardh Salaah tourists start pouring into the back section of the Masjid, greeted by the sight of many still engaged in the optional prayers. The fact that many immediately drew out their cameras and mobiles to catch the scene impressed upon my mind the beauty that Almighty Allah has placed in the postures of Salaah, especially that of Sajda (prostration). One could clearly make out the expressions of awe and delight of the non-Muslim tourists as they witnessed men and women around them falling into prostration.

A few minutes later a recitation of one Ruku' of Quraan commences from the front. The melodious tune of the reader echoes throughout the Masjid and perhaps for many of these tourists this becomes their first acquaintance with the beauty of Quraan, which for many perhaps becomes the moment of their life where they experience their first pull towards Islam.

These were just some of the feelings and thoughts that settled in the mind during my first visit to 'The Blue Mosque' (The Masjid of Sultan Ahmed), thoughts that left me feeling that I was indeed in the wake of an Islamic Awakening in Istanbul, one whose ripples shall soon be felt throughout Europe, Insha Allah!



The Masjid of Sultaan Ahmed (at night)

Fathullah Gulan

Upon my return, after hearing me praising and requesting dua for the present government of Turkey, many friends queried regarding 'Fathullah Gulan' due to the many religious education institutes that he and his supporters are presently erecting in South Africa.

My knowledge with regards to this man is indeed limited. However two aspects of his life do stand out in lending sufficient indication that this man and his institutes could well be 'a wolf in sheeps clothing'.

The first is with regards to the reasons behind the party of Recep Tayyip Erdogan totally distancing themselves from Fathullah Gulen and branding him a 'traitor', after enjoying years of support from The Gulen Movement. Had Fathullah Gulen been truly loyal to the cause of Islam, why would he ever involve himself in a plot to overthrow the ruling party at a time when its giving rise to 'true Islam' has become so evident?

The second aspect that leaves question marks on Gulen's 'sincere intentions' is the fact that CIA agents assisted greatly in his acquiring asylum status in the United States. From that time onwards, from his small centre in Pennsylvania, he has managed to open up over 120 charter schools in America alone, making it the largest charter network in the US.

During present times, when Muslim organizations around the world are targeted and branded as 'terrorist hotspots' upon the most flimsiest of excuses, one cannot be blamed for expressing amazement that no 'real effort' has been made by American Intelligence to shut down or at least hamper the spread of Fathullah Gulen's influence in the States.

And Almighty Allah knows best and He indeed is The Best of Planners.

Biography of Sultan Muhammad al-Fatih, The Conqueror of Constantinople

The Ottoman Sultans prior to Sultan Muhammad

1. Uthman Ibn Ertugrul (al-Ghāzi) – The Founder of the Ottoman State

Uthmān was born in the year 656 A.H (1258), the very year in which the Mongolian and Tartar barbarians under Halāku Khan tore apart the capital of the Islamic Caliphate, Baghdad. These barbarians spared not a single believer on that fateful day. They killed whoever they got hold of, be it men or women, young or old, until finally the city of Baghdad flowed with the blood of over two million innocent souls.

Muslims sought shelter from their barbaric acts in wells, sewage areas, strong buildings, Masjids and Madrasahs, but it all proved vain. With their might and devastating weapons the Tartars tore down the heavy doors of these buildings and cornered the inhabitants on its roofs. The gallons of blood that then flowed down the gutters would perhaps be the only indication to what thereafter occurred on those roofs. (To Allah do we belong and to Him is our return!)

The situation at that time was indeed precarious. The Ummah was at its weakest. Due to the sins of the believers Almighty Allah had allowed the Mongolians a free hand over them. Without any trace of human sympathy they looted, raped, killed and tore cities down to the ground. The skies perhaps shuddered at their barbaric doings, yet the Tartars/Mongolians never battered an eye-lid.

By ordaining the birth of Uthmān (al-Ghāzi) to coincide with this great catastrophe, Divine Will was issuing a loud statement to all kāfir states, armies and leaders that they should never regard the destruction of Muslim lands and Muslim armies to be the destruction of Islam. Nay! Islam is a faith that shall never die. Rather, it shall ensure that after every autumn and winter there shall always be a spring, in which new warriors, scholars, preachers, guides, and devoted followers shall be made to stand up.

The fall of the Muslim capital was not a signal of the fall of Islam, but rather it was a signal of the beginning of another Islamic Dynasty (The Ottoman Empire), which would in fact reap more fruits than its predecessor, i.e. The Abbasids.

At that time had it been said that within the next two hundred years the Ummah would see the conquest of Constantinople and the entering of Islam into Europe, hardly anyone would have believed. That however is the Divine System of Almighty Allah, who provides sustenance to this Dīn from avenues none could ever have imagined and who irrigates the new gardens of Islam with the blood of the martyrs of the preceding era.

Coming to Turkey

In 618 A.H (1220), when the Mongolian attacks began under the leadership of Jenghis Khan, Suleiman, the grandfather of Uthmān al-Ghāzi, migrated with his family from Kurdistan to Anatolia. Upon his death in 628 A.H, his son, Ertugrul continued the journey towards the North Western side of Anatolia. During this journey his caravan stumbled upon a battle that was at its peak between the Saljuk Muslims and the Byzantine army. The battle was tipping in favour of the Christians and victory would have perhaps been theirs, had it not been for Ertugrul and his brave family members who rushed into the frontline of the battle and pushed the disbelievers back.

This battle would be followed by many thereafter, until finally Sultān Alā-ud-Dīn (leader of the Saljuks) managed to uproot the Byzantine forces of that area in 630 A.H. In appreciation of the noble services rendered by Ertugrul and his Turkish caravan, the Sultan offered them a district in the North-Western part of Anatolia (Sukud). Due to this piece of land being on the borders of the Islamic Saljuk State, the title of 'Protector of the Muslim Borders' was given to Ertugrul. Under the authority of Sultan Alā-ud-Dīn, Ertugrul began launching attacks upon the neighboring Byzantine lands and in a short space of time acquired under his control many more states.

Uthmān al-Ghāzi took over after the death of his father in 699 A.H, and soon found his father's few conquered lands (of 4800km²) developing into an

empire spanning 16 000km². It would be this empire that would one day become the biggest Muslim Empire that history has yet witnessed, stretching over Asia, Europe and Africa, an empire that would play a huge role in the spread of Islam in Europe and in defending Islam from the attacks of the Christian world.

Understanding the Ummah to be one, Uthmān united under his flag Muslims from Greece, Hungary, Bulgaria, Albania, etc. The name Uthmān was adopted as the identifying title of this group of warriors and the strategy and modus-operandi that was laid out for its future leaders was 'to grasp firmly unto the Shariah in every major and minor issue'. Uthmān made it clear that above every command of the leader of this group would preside the judgement of Almighty Allah. In his bequest to his son, Orhan, Uthmān had the following penned down:

'O my beloved son, never bother with matters which Almighty Allah has not ordained. Whenever faced with any difficult seek council, from the Ulema. O my beloved son, shower with favours those who obey you and show your generosity to your army. Let shaitaan never deceive you on account of your wealth and your armies. Never distance yourself from the people of the Shariah. O my beloved son, remember that our purpose in life is to acquire the pleasure of Almighty Allah, and that through Jihād the light of our religion shall filter throughout the world, thereby earning us the Divine Pleasure of Almighty Allah.

O my beloved son, we are not from those who initiate wars merely in order to appease their greed for power. Rather it is for Islam that we live and for Islam that we lay down our lives. It is for this, o my beloved son, that you have been created!

2. Orhan ibn Uthman (اورخان) ruled from 1324-1362

Continuing with the mission of his beloved father, within three years of his rule the ancient Greek city of Nicomedia (Izmit) was conquered, a city 500 km from Constantinople (Istanbul). Taking pride in this victory, Orhan had the first

Ottoman Islamic University erected there and handed its administration over to Allamah Dawood al-Qaisari, author of مقدمة شرح الفصوص.

Under the guidance of Orhan, the first Ottoman Military was established, the emblem of which was 'a martyr of a victor - شهيدا أو غازيا'. Orhan's brother, Alā-u-Dīn, designed the flag for this new army which was a red flag, with a crescent in the center and a sword underneath it. The aims laid out for the military was:

- a) To continue raising the flag of Jihād against the Byzantine forces
- b) To conquer more lands with the sole purpose of spreading the truth
- c) To utilize the reverts of the conquered lands to spread the message of Islam to their people

Orhan placed special emphasis on the establishment of madrasahs in every locality and Islamic Universities (Dār-ul-Ulūms) in every city. In the thirty-five years that Orhan ruled the size of the empire increased from 16 000km² to over 100 000km².

3. Murad 1st – ruled from 1362-1389

Under the rule of this great conqueror and devoted worshipper, the Ottoman rule extended deep into Asia Minor and Europe. In 726 A.H the Ottoman forces captured Edirne, which was the second most important Byzantine city after Constantinople. Due to its strategic location, Murad soon thereafter adopted it as the capital city of the Ottoman State.

After twenty-nine years of rule, Sultan Murad 1st was blessed with martyrdom whilst fighting with his forces. Prior to this final battle, in the thirty-nine battles that he personally participated in, he attained victory in all. During his reign the Ottoman State grew from 100 000 km² to over 500 000 km².

4. Bā-Yazid 1st (The Thunderbolt) ruled from 1389-1402

Within a year after taking the seat of Sultan, the Christian states of Anatolia were brought under Ottoman followed shortly thereafter by Bulgaria. Realizing the danger posed to Constantinople, the pope raised the call throughout

Europe for warriors to stand up against the Ottoman threat. An army consisting of more than 120 000 fighters from Almania, France, Scotland, England, Switzerland and Italy soon gathered, due to which Ba-Yazid was forced to lift a seven-month siege on Constantinople and defend the state against the approaching Christian menace, which he managed to repel successfully.

Ba-Yazid's march into Europe was finally brought to an unfortunate end by the Mongolian warrior, Taimur-Lang, in the Battle of Ankara. Ba-Yazid was taken prisoner and passed away one year later in Central Asia, in captivity far away from his homeland.

The Ottoman State dwindled to quite an extent thereafter, due to in-fighting between the sons of Ba-Yazid, which lasted for approximately eleven years. During this period the state fell from 920 000 km² to 420 000 km². Finally, one of his sons, Sultan Muhammad 1st managed to wrestle control of the state and restore it to its previous glory.

5. Muhammad 1st – ruled from 1413-1421

Once a year he would send a gift to the Ameer of Makkah, to be distributed amongst the poor of Makkah Mukarramah and Madinah Munawwarah. Due to his love for ilm and Ulema, he shifted his capital from Edirne (the city of the fighters) to Bursa (the city of the Fuqaha/jurists).

Due to his successful efforts of uniting the state upon one leader, historians have regarded Sultan Muhammad 1st as the second founder of the Ottoman Empire.

In a short eight year rule, after taking part in 24 battles, and sustaining over forty wounds this valiant leader brought the Ottomon State back on course, and lifted its area of rule from 420 000 km² to 550 000 km².

6. Murād 2nd – ruled from 1421-1451

At the tender age of eighteen the reigns of leadership came into the hands of Sultan Murad 2nd, but his young age did not harm the cause of the state in the least bit. Instead, under his thirty-year rule, the Ottoman Empire grew tremendously, encompassing Asia Minor and the Balkans, defeating the Germans and Albanians and making a total sweep over the Greek Peninsula. His successful expeditions forced the Byzantine Emperor to agree to pay Jizyah and eradicated the threat of a European attack open the Ottoman lands. No nothing was left but Constantinople and its surroundings.

At his hands the state expanded to 900 000 km², after which he resigned and handed over the throne to his twelve-year old son, Muhammad 2nd, preferring a life of asceticism instead. Taking advantage of the tender age of the new Sultan, Europe launched a full-scale attack against the state, which forced the young Sultan to order his father to return to his seat of power.

Sultan Murad 2nd quickly defeated the newly-formed Crusaders, and brought matters back under control. He thereafter remained on the throne until his death at the age of forty-seven, upon which the reigns of rule once more returned to the hands of Muhammad 2nd, who had now reached the age of twenty-one.

7. The Conqueror of Constantinople Sultan al-Fāṭih Muhammad Ibn Murād

On the twenty-seventh of Rajab this great conqueror opened his eyes for the first time, which naturally brought immense joy to both his father, Sultan Murad 2nd and to his mother Khadija. As the eyes of the Sultan fell upon his new-born he exclaimed in delight, *‘His face shines as though it is a full moon. With the will of Allah, this shall be a most blessed child, given to us on a most blessed night.’* His mother then asked if the name ‘Muhammad’ could be kept, to which the father replied, *‘This is the most virtuous of names, for a most virtuous son, if Almighty Allah allows.’*

The role of the Ulema in the nurturing of this noble conqueror

Mullah Ahmed Gurani

His father, Sultan Murad 2nd, from a very early age showed concern for the proper upbringing of his beloved son. After being informed that young Muhammad was not showing adequate respect to his teachers, and not learning well, he sought counsel as to who would be the most fit to tutor his son.

The name of Mullah Ahmed ibn Ismail Gurani was mentioned, who was renowned for his mastery over all branches of Islamic knowledge, and who possessed an awe-inspiring temperament. Sultan Murad 2nd summoned him almost immediately and handed him a cane, permitting him thereby to punish his son if need be. Mulla Gurani, on his first meeting with Muhammad, addressed him thus, 'Your father has sent me to teach you, and if you refuse to learn I shall not hesitate to punish you. Muhammad, as according to his naughty nature, laughed and ignored the warning. Mulla Gurani immediately lifted his cane and hit Muhammad so severely, which caused the young prince to develop great fear and awe for his teacher, due to which he quickly completed his memorizing of Quraan.

The awe for Mulla Gurani did not leave Muhammad, even after his rise to the throne. When Mulla Gurani would approach Sultan Muhammad, he would not address him with any title, nor would he kiss his hand. Rather Sultan Muhammad would stand in respect of him, kiss his hand and request his dua.

Sheikh Aaq Shamsud-Dīn (Muhammad ibn Hamza Dimishqi)

In the sultan's early days

It was through the encouragement and dua of this great saint that Sultan Muhammad found himself gripped by a burning desire for conquering Constantinople. Many a time, Sheikh Aaq Shamsud-Dīn would hold the hand of Muhammad and stroll with him on the shore, pointing towards the high walls of Constantinople. He would then say, '*That, my young son, is Constantinople! Verily, the Rasul of Allah ﷺ has informed us that a man from*

this ummah shall one day conquer it, and I feel that you shall be that honoured one!

During the battle of Constantinople

During the siege of Constantinople, there were a few occasions wherein it seemed that victory had been written for the Byzantine defenders. During those tense moments when majority of the cabinet were applying pressure on the Sultan to retreat, Sheikh Shamsud-Dīn stood firm and did not permit the Sultan to make any such move.

Sultan Muhammad, finding himself under immense pressure, summoned Sheikh Aaq to discuss the matter. Sheikh Aaq, who was in one of the fighting camps, excused himself and merely sent a re-assuring reply back, that '*Do not worry. Allah shall surely bless us with victory!*'

Sultan Muhammad however was not completely consoled, and thus summoned his sheikh for a second time. Sheikh Aaq this time replied with a sterner message of encouragement. His words were:

'He, Allah alone is the one who gives honour, and it is He alone who gives aid. Verily the issue of the ships (wherein Byzantine ships were able to break through the Muslim barricade and bring supplies into the city of Constantinople) has created weakness and cowardice in the hearts of your men, and happiness and joy for the disbelievers.

انّ القضية الثابتة هي : أنّ العبد يدبر و الله يقدر و الحكم لله

Remember! It is the work of the slave to plan, but Allah alone is the one who has the power to allow one's plans to find result. For this, we have indeed pleaded to Almighty Allah for aid, and we have recited a great amount of Quraan!'

This message of Sheikh Aaq, brimming with faith (Imaan) and conviction (yaqeen) hit target almost immediately, and the cabinet of Sultan Muhammad once again pledged their all-out support for the campaign.

Just before the conquest

After many days of intense fighting, when it seemed that the Muslim army had a possible chance of storming into the city, Sultan Muhammad summoned his

sheikh, Aaq Shamsud-Dīn, so that he could have him close by if need be, and as a means of extra encouragement for the front-line mujāhids, who were preparing for their martyrdom attacks in order to break down the city's line of defense.

The messenger returned saying that the guards of the sheikh's tent had prohibited him from entering and conveying the Sultan's order. This caused the Sultan to become uneasy, and in anger he rode off in the direction of the tent of his sheikh, but he too was prevented from entering by the guards on duty, since Sheikh Aaq had ordered them to not allow anyone into his tent, regardless who he may be.

Finding no alternative, Sultan Muhammad approached the tent from the rear, and with his dagger lashed into its leather. From the cut made, the Sultan peeped in. To his joy, he found his sheikh in a lengthy sajda. Sheikh Aaq's turban had rolled off his head and his white hair lay dangling on the ground. With tears dripping from his eyes, he slowly arose from his sajda.

Sultan Muhammad raced back to the frontline, and found that his soldiers had already begun forcing themselves through the broken walls into the city. Sheikh Aaq shortly thereafter joined the Sultan and in a stern manner cautioned him that in victory the laws of the shariah should not be trampled, nor should any of the inhabitants be unjustly persecuted.

After the battle

After three days of celebration and honouring his soldiers with gifts and words of affection and praise, Sultan Muhammad requested his sheikh to address his army. Sheikh Aaq Shamsud-Dīn stood up and said:

'O army of Islam, understand that you are that very army regarding whom Rasulullah ﷺ said, 'Constantinople shall surely be conquered. What a wonderful leader that shall be and what a wonderful army!'

We thus ask Almighty Allah to guide us and to forgive us. Listen well! Do not waste the booty you have received. Rather spend it in good causes and upon the people of this city. Listen to your sultan, obey him and love him!

Sheikh Aaq then turned to Sultan Muhammad al-Fatih and said: *‘O my sultan! You are indeed the coolness of the eye for the family of Uthmān. Always remain devoted to Jihād!’*

Finally, in a loud, booming voice the sheikh proclaimed: *‘Allah-u-akbar!’*

Paying particular attention to the spiritual nurturing of Sultan Muhammad al-Fatih

Fearing that pride and haughtiness overtake Sultan Muhammad, due to his most glorious conquest, Sheikh Aaq Shamsud-Dīn took immediate measures to prevent such a thing happening. When the sultan sought permission to meet with him a few days later, Sheikh Aaq issued permission but showed no sign of happiness at the coming of the sultan, nor did he stand or even sit up to receive him, and when the sultan took leave, Sheikh Aaq let him exit without any show of respect and honour.

This harsh attitude shocked and saddened the sultan, forcing him to enquire the reason behind the sheikh’s change of attitude towards him. A companion, Ibn-Waliyud-dīn, explained, *‘O my master, this sheikh is a spiritual mentor. He fears that pride shall overtake you, on account of your glorious conquest.’*

After the Conquest

Sultan Mohammad started the process of rebuilding in Istanbul after the conquest of Constantinople. He rearranged the city without damaging the fabric of Istanbul.

Before the Conquest, Istanbul was but a dead city. Sultan Mohammad strove with great energy to make it again into the political and economic centre of an empire; to this end he took measures for the speedy reconstruction of the City, as well as bringing back its population.

Before Istanbul's conquest by the Ottoman Turks, the Aayasofiya was in a sad state of ruin. The very first act of the Conqueror was to have the famous church

restored, and converted into a Masjid. To its repair and to the salaries of those employed in it he allocated huge grants.

Following in the footsteps of the Sultan, the ministers and notables allocated endowment establishments (waqf) in section after section of the City, and these in turn developed into new districts, contributing to a rapid extension and repopulation of the City. These establishments generally a masjid, a madrasah and an imaret, to which were added inns (for passing caravans) and shops. Thus Istanbul, in the Conqueror's very lifetime, became covered with palaces, hostels, inns, markets, colleges, etc, and assumed the aspect of a flourishing, active Turkish city.

Other Conquests

The capture of Istanbul was followed by a long succession of campaigns which resulted in a tremendous extension of direct Ottoman rule. After the conquest of the city, Sultan Mohammad marched towards Morea (a peninsula in Southern Greece) and captured the cities of Greece one after another. He then conquered the area close to western Black Sea. Among those areas that fell to Sultan Muhammad were Serbia, Greece, the Empire of Trebizond, Wallachia (a region of Romania), Bosnia, Karaman, Albania and several Venetian and Genoese (Italian cities) maritime establishments.

Muhammad al-Fatih, A conquering Mujāhid, not a blood-thirsty warrior

The history of Sultan Muhammad, the conqueror, is an exemplary illustration of the difference between war and Jihād. In war, the principle motive is conquering lands for personal gain. It is thus replete with incidents of exacting revenge from one's opponents, dishonoring women, cruel and barbaric acts, etc. As for Jihād which is done purely in order for the truth to spread and injustice to vanish, instead of finding scenes of revenge and barbarism, one rather finds astonishing acts of forgiveness, forbearance, tolerance and self-sacrifice.

The trait of a true Mujāhid after attaining victory

In contrast to how a conquering warrior enters a defeated land, Sultan Muhammad's victory ride into Constantinople was hardly anything short of the ride of a slave into the land of his master. Threading the noble pattern laid by Rasulallah ﷺ when he ﷺ conquered Makkah Mukarramah, Sultan Muhammad too entered the city with his head lowered in humility.

Then, just as Rasulallah ﷺ forgave the inhabitants of Makkah Mukarramah after the conquest, Sultan Muhammad too threaded the same path. He called the patriarch and announced: *'You, your companions and all the inhabitants of this land are free. Your lives, your wealth and your honour is protected!'*

Freedom of religion

The pact that Sultan Muhammad dictated for the Christian inhabitants of Bosnia after its conquest, speaks volumes of the freedom of religion that Islam affords its sub-ordinates. And it is not just mere words, since Sultan Muhammad and the Muslim leaders that followed after him all showed practically how devoted they were to the fulfillment of their pacts and promises.

The pact dictated is as follows:

"I, Sultan Khan the Conqueror hereby declare to the whole world that the Bosnian Franciscans are under my protection. And I command that:

No one shall disturb or give harm to these people and their churches! They shall live in peace in my state. These people who have become emigrants, shall have security and liberty. They may return to their monasteries which are located in the borders of my state.

No one from my empire notable, viziers, clerks or my maids will break their honour or give any harm to them! No one shall insult, put in danger or attack these lives, properties, and churches of these people!

Also, whosoever these people have brought from their own countries, they too have the same rights...

I swear by the holy name of Allah who has created the ground and sky, that no one from my citizens will react or behave the opposite of this decree!"⁹

The difference between war and Jihād

When one ponders over the horrendous activities of the armies of Genghiz Khan, over the sacking of Baghdad by Halaku Khan, over the brutal slaughters of thousands by the crusades when they invaded Jerusalem, and over the genocide that has and continues occurring in the lands of Aqsa, Shaam, Iraq, Afghanistan, Burma, etc. at the hands of shaitaani, barbaric forces, when one compares all of this to the humble manner in which one of the greatest conquests of history occurred, at the hands of one of the greatest conquerors, one shall easily understand the difference between fighting for Allah (Jihād) and mere fighting.

Had Muhammad al-Fatih desired to follow the cruel methodology of the Spaniards, as they rid Spain of every trait of Islam, the lands of Constantinople would today not have had a single Christian. It was but Islam, and the teachings of Islam which ensured that Muhammad, the Conqueror, would not merely be a fighting Turk, but rather an Allah-fearing Mujāhid, who's every act would be regulated by the laws of the shariah.

Understanding his responsibility

Sultan Muhammad al-Fatih on numerous occasions would say: *'Almighty Allah has placed this sword in my hands, so that I strive in Jihād. If I now fail to fulfill*

⁹ This decree, which has provided independence and tolerance to the ones who are from another religion, belief, and race was declared by Mohammad, the Conqueror, and granted to Angjeo Zvizdovic of the Franciscan Catholic Monastery in Fojnica, Bosnia and Herzegovina after the conquest of Bosnia and Herzegovina on May 28 of 1463. The decree has been recently raised and published by the Ministry of Culture of Turkey for the 700th anniversary of the foundation of the Ottoman State. The edict was issued by the Sultan to protect the basic rights of the Bosnian Christians when he conquered that territory in 1463. The original edict is still kept in the Franciscan Catholic Monastery in Fojnica.

It is one of the oldest documents on religious freedom. In 1971, the United Nations published a translation of the document in all the official U.N. languages.

the rights of this sword, I shall not be worthy of carrying the title of Al-Ghāzi (The Islamic Warrior). How shall I then face Almighty Allah on the Day of Judgement?

Final bequest

Speaking to his son, Ba-Yazīd 2nd, who he had appointed as his successor, Sultan Muhammad said:

'I am soon to die, but I do not have any regrets, since I leave behind one who seems to be a worthy successor¹⁰. O my son, be a just, pious and noble leader. Spread your wings of protection over all your subjects, without preferring some over others. Strive for the spreading of Islam, for this is the duty of Muslim kings and leaders.

Let Islam be given preference over all other matters, and never become lax in fulfilling its obligations. Never appoint as leaders those who show no loyalty to Islam, nor those who indulge in evil and immoral deeds. Abstain totally from all innovations, and devote yourself to broadening the Islamic state.

Never allow the wealth of the state to be wasted, and never stretch your hand towards the wealth of anyone from your subjects, unless when allowed by the shariah. Shower your kindness on those who deserve it and always aid the weak.

Since the Ulema are the pillars of support for this Ummah, strengthen their positions and honour them greatly. If you get to hear of any great scholar in a distant land, summon him to you and shower him with wealth and honour.

O my beloved son, Let wealth and your armies never deceive you! Never distance yourself from the Ulema and never incline to any act which is contrary to the Shariah.

Remember, Dīn is the purpose of our life, and the straight path is what we seek. It is on account of Dīn that we are aided.

¹⁰ The son of Sultan Ba-Yazid 2nd was indeed a most worthy successor, in terms of fervor for Jihād as well as in piety. Despite his many duties and responsibilities, from the time of maturing he never performed a single salaah out of its time.

Take lesson from this: I came to this land like a small ant, after which Almighty Allah blessed me with all of this. Thus follow my path and thread in my way. Never spend the wealth of the state in futile affairs, for this is from the root cause of one's destruction!"

Death

After thirty years of continuous war, solely for the spreading of Islam and strengthening its borders, in which he personally participated in over 25 battles, this great Mujāhid of Islam bid farewell to this temporary abode and entered into the world for which he was truly created for.

His death occurred in the month of Rabi-ul-Awwal, 886 A.H (1481) whilst his armies seemed on the verge of conquering Italy and moving forward to Rome. With his tragic death however, movement in this direction came to an abrupt halt, even though the empire continued expanding in other directions. Realizing how close they had come to being totally defeated, the Christian world announced a day of rejoice upon receiving the news of his death.

Sultan Muhammad, the Conqueror, was indeed as Rasulullah ﷺ had described him:

فلنعم الامير اميرها

'What a wonderful leader he shall be!'

May Almighty Allah fill his grave with light, elevate him to the highest stages of *Firdaus*, and let the Ummah see the likes of many more such men. Aameen.

Islamic Giants of Turkey who stood firm against the shaitaani storms of the Kamalist Regime

Hadrat Sheikh Mahmud Effendi and his mentor Sheikh Ali Haydar Effendi

After enjoying a stable period of around seven hundred years, the land of Turkey during the years 1923 onwards found itself totally gripped in the clutches of shaitaani forces, with no hope of survival. Had there been no Divine Promise that Islam would never be left orphan, the masses and even the scholars would have long ago given up hope of Islam ever returning back to Istanbul; a city that had served for hundreds of years as the centre of the Islamic Caliphate.

Through the wretched being of Mustafa Kamal and his secular armies, shaitaan unleashed upon the land of Turkey the most devastating of shaitaani weapons, against which man, if left alone, could find no answer. With an arsenal of secular schools and universities; cinemas, clubs, and parties; novels and magazines; hypocrite scholars and deviated mentors; devious politicians and iron-fisted armies, shaitaani agents went out in full force to ensure that the light of Islam never again glows in the lands of Turkey. They had however forgotten one most valuable detail, i.e. this light of Islam was not burning on its own, but rather because Almighty Allah had not allowed that it ever die out.

When one studies the history of Turkey, with regards to how Almighty Allah thwarted the shaitaani plans of Mustafa Kamal and his armies, through the sterling efforts of a handful of individuals, one gets some sort of idea with regards to the meaning of the verse:

يُرِيدُونَ لِيُطْفِئُوا نُورَ اللَّهِ بِأَفْقَاهِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ مَتَمُّ نُورِهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُونَ

'They desire to blow out the light of Allah. And Allah shall surely complete His light, no matter how much the disbelievers dislike it'

So many armies, so many agencies, so much of propaganda and so many plans and schemes, all united in their attempt to extinguish one flame; similar to a group of a thousand all blowing at the same time to blow out just one candle, but the flame refuses to die out. The blowers become tired but the flame remains strong, and with the passing of every day its light glows brighter and brighter.

From amongst the giants whom Almighty Allah raised in this most beautiful land to eradicate and expel the disastrous poison that the regime of Mustafa Kamal was pumping into the mind and soul of every citizen, two that capture the attention of one browsing hastily through the pages of Turkish history are Sheikh Ali Haydar Effendi, and his most senior vicegerent, Sheikh Mahmud Effendi.

In the lines below a glimpse at the lives and the workings of these two illustrious men shall be presented, through which, it is hoped, the people of Iman shall awaken from their sense of 'despair' and shall raise their shoulders high, knowing full well that their religion of Islam will not rest until and unless it dominates over all other faiths and ideologies.

1. Qutb-ul-Irshād – Hadrat Sheikh Ali Haydar Effendi

Hadrat Ali Haydar was born in the Hijri year of 1288 (1870), ten years before the birth of Mustafa Kamal, as though he was born specially to counter the threat of the Kamalist regime that would raise its ugly, satanic head fifty years later.

His outstanding knowledge of tafsir and fiqh lifted him to the highest pedestal of religious authority, during the era of Sultan Abdul Hameed. In 1916 he was appointed as the Head Speaker of the Sultanate Lectures, which was the most distinguished academic circle at that time. These lectures would be given during the month of Ramadhan, in the presence of the Sultan. Around fifteen accomplished Aalims would participate in these auspicious lectures and discussions. Prior to the lecture an Aalim would recite ten verses from the Noble Quraan. Thereafter questions would be posed to the Ulema within the framework of the verses recited and consequently the gathering would

become an academic discussion. The Sultan along with many eminent guests would listen and observe the discussion.

His knowledge in fiqh was such that he was authorized to give fatwa on any subject in any one of the four Madhabs. He once remarked, whilst expressing anger over what the Kamalist regime were doing in order to destroy all sources of Islamic Knowledge, 'What do they think? They will not be able to destroy even a dot from this Din. Even if all the books of the four madhabs were to be destroyed I have the ability to re-write all of them to the smallest detail!'

Blending knowledge (ilm) with the recognition and love of Almighty Allah (ma'rifat and ishq-illāh)

It has been noted that whosoever Almighty Allah had selected for a great revival of Din (*tajdeed*) Almighty Allah first blessed him with mastery over both knowledge and practice, ilm and amal, Qāl and Hāl, Shariah and Tariqah. So too was to be the case of Sheikh Ali Haydar.

Initially he would keep his distance from tasawwuf and tariqah. In fact, he would at times openly criticize the mashāikh and the places of Zikr, the reason being that most of the followers of tariqah in that era were involved in open innovation. Thus, what he opposed was not the Mashāikh, but rather misguided individuals parading in the guise of the Mashāikh. Since he had never enjoyed the opportunity of spending time in the company of true Mashāikh, he ignorantly believed that such men do not exist.

He happened to travel to Bandirma Province in the month of Ramadhan on a lecture tour. The news spread quickly that an eminent Aalim from Istanbul has arrived, causing a mass of people to gather at the Markaz Masjid. Throughout his speech he spoke of the Shariah, the one's opposed to the Shariah, bid'ah and superstitions that had invaded the Muslim community. While expounding on this topic he touched upon the point of Tekkes (places of Zikr). He said that the Tekkes had a wrong understanding and were on the wrong path. Instead of rectifying Dīn, they were in fact destroying it.

Despite his harsh language none took offense since his indications were ambiguous. At the end of the lecture however he personally criticized Sheikh Ali Riza Bezzaz, who was a Nakshābandi sheikh, a man whom all of Bandirma loved and respected, and who was a cause for the guidance of many of them. Ali Heydar's criticism of this great sheikh upset many, especially since Sheikh Ali Riza Bezzaz himself openly opposed innovations, and day and night strove in inviting towards the adopting of the complete Sunnah.

The criticism of Ali Haydar was based upon incorrect information received regarding this great Sheikh, since Hadrat Ali Riza Bezzaz was a saint who strove day and night to revive the Sunnah of Rasulu ﷺ to the letter, and who openly denounced all sorts of innovations, even though they appeared to be somewhat beneficial. News regarding Ali Haydar Effendi's lecture soon reached the ears of Hadrat Ali Riza, upon which he commented, 'Allah who made iron pliable in the hands of Nabi Dawood Alahis-Salaam will make Ali Haydar pliable in our hands. Don't worry! He'll soon come to our door!'

As predicted, a sense of grief soon overtook Ali Haydar and it forced him to go in search of the sheikh he had spoken ill off. He found him as he was walking out of a fabric shop. As he came up to him a spiritual condition overtook him and he fell unconscious. When he regained his senses he dragged himself towards the great Sheikh and expressed his apology. He begged the saint to forgive him and accept him as his disciple.

Hadrat Ali Riza Bezzaz advised that he first meet Sheikh Ahmed Hilmi Effendi, who resided close to where he lived, in the Carsamba neighbourhood of Istanbul. From there he was directed to Ali Baba of Mashlak, who resided in the Topkapi neighborhood.

Ali Haydar Effendi and Ali Bāba of Mashlak

Ali Haydar headed to the house of Ali Baba of Mashlak and arrived to find an old dilapidated building. He knocked and waited for about half an hour, receiving no answer. His ego teased and rebuked him thus, 'O Ali Haydar! You are the head of the Sultanate Lectures, yet you allow yourself to be treated like this! You are waiting for over half an hour in front of a dilapidated house for a man whom you don't know. Does this befit your dignity?'

While these thoughts were passing through his head the door opened and a little girl opened the door and allowed him in. She asked him to be seated and then left. One hour later an old hunched-back man with grey hair and a luminous face entered. Ali Haydar attempted to kiss his hand out of respect. Ali Baba angrily reacted, 'Get your hands off me! I don't give my hand to unfamiliar people!'

Ali Haydar was deeply hurt by this cold reception but kept his composure and introduced himself. When he mentioned that he was an Aalim (a scholar) Ali Baba taunted him as to how he could even think himself to be an Aalim (scholar). Ali Haydar responded with a verse of the Quraan, which says, '*Can those who know ever be regarded as equal to those who do not know?*' What he meant was that since he did have knowledge he found nothing wrong with describing himself as an 'Aalim' (scholar).

Ali Baba in return answered mockingly, 'And you even have the courage to recite verses of Quraan?!' In response Ali Haydar asked, 'What is wrong with my reciting from Quraan? Am I in a state of impurity that it is not permissible for me to do so?'

Ali Baba said, 'I wish you were only in a state of physical impurity (*janabah*), because a mere bucket of water would then have been sufficient to cleanse you of your filth. But it is your spiritual impurity that worries me, which I fear the entire ocean shall not be able to cleanse!'

Upon hearing these words, a spiritual effect overtook Ali Haydar and he began to cry. Ali Baba thereafter came forward and affectionately reassured him that he was only joking, and that his spiritual progress was indeed possible. Ali Haydar Effendi would later on comment on this incident, saying, 'Towards the end of the conversation, I was overwhelmed by a spiritual sensation. I couldn't help crying. The anger I felt for that man at the beginning turned into tranquility and my hatred into affection.'

After this incident, Ali Haydar returned to Sheikh Ahmed Hilmi Effendi and learnt from him the principles of tariqah (tasawwuf). Upon the death of Sheikh

Ahmed Hilmi, he entered into the service of Hadrat Ali Riza Bezzaz. Hadrat Ali Riza, just before his death, in 1914, appointed him as his chief successor. Ali Haydar Effendi was at that time 44 years old.

In 1923 the declaration of the Republic of Turkey was made and the caliphate abolished. Although he kept his distance from politics, he too was put through great trials, ordeals and suffering. Interrogations, trials, prison sentences, releases all followed in quick succession. Even after release he was kept under security observation for over twenty-five years.

Sheikh Ali Haydar in prison and glad-tidings of his release

Whilst in prison, awaiting the decision of the court regarding their fate, a friend of Ali Haydar Effendi saw a dream, which he later related as follows:

It was another sleepless night. I somehow fell asleep for a while and saw a dream. 'Sheikh Ali Haydar Effendi and I had a joint salary passbook. I walked towards the cashier's office to withdraw our salary. After giving a couple of banknotes, the cashier offered to give me one gold coin in addition to my salary, if I wanted. I said, you would be doing me a favour by doing so. I haven't seen one for a long time. I would feel very happy indeed. Thereupon the cashier handed me a gold coin with a broken edge. When I saw it, I asked, 'O sir, if you are doing me a favour, let it be a complete one. Please switch it with another one.' Then the cashier took the faulty coin and gave me a new coin in the shape of a mawlawi sikke (special hat of the Ulema of Turkey). I took the gold coin and thereafter woke up.

I explained this dream to Ali Haydar Effendi, who offered the following interpretation:

'The switch of the faulty gold coin with another one refers to the switch of the decision against you and me.'

What Ali Haydar meant was that the court had already decided to have them executed, but Divine Decree had over-ruled the decision of the worldly, shaitaani court, due to which the judge would find himself helpless the following day in issuing any verdict except that they be released. Exactly as

interpreted, the following morning they received the surprising but pleasing news that all charges had been dropped.

The dream of Ali Haydar and Aatif Effendi

The night before the court hearing all were busy drafting their pleas for pardon. Ali Haydar however had busied himself with the recitation of Surah-al-Fatha. Every time he completed it he would make a scratch on the bed-head to keep track of how many times he had already recited it.

As for Sheikh Aatif Effendi of Iskilip, he was just waiting for the morning, with his eight-page-long plea wrinkled and creased in his hand. When he saw Ali Haydar Effendi reading and scratching, he asked, 'Hey Sheikh! What are you doing?' Ali Haydar Effendi said, 'O Aatif! I dreamt of my Sheikh, Hadrat Ali Riza Bezzaz, who instructed me to recite Surah-al-Fath thrity-three times and ensured me that this would result in my release. You too should read it and with the permission of Almighty Allah you too shall attain freedom.' Aatif Effendi replied, 'I saw Rasulullah ﷺ in my dream. He said to me, *'Why do you bother with scribbling pleas when you can be with me?'*

Aatif Effendi was being put on trial for a minor offence, which at most could demand a three-year detention. Sheikh Aatif however had a strong belief that he was going to receive capital punishment the following day. That is why he said, 'Ali Haydar, you will see, they will hang me tomorrow. I know this because Rasulullah ﷺ has invited me to be with him and I have happily accepted the invitation!'

In the morning they were all taken to the Independence Courts, and what was seen in their dreams became reality. Aatif Effendi of Iskilip accepted the invitation of Rasulullah ﷺ and received the honour of martyrdom.

Ali Haydar was released and all charges were dropped, but this was only on paper. He was kept under constant surveillance by detectives who noted his every move. This surveillance and intimidation went on for twenty-five long years, which made being of service to Islam and the Muslims extremely

difficult for him. Despite all this shaitaani interference, when Almighty Allah had willed that the candle of Islam shall continue burning in Turkey through these illustrious men, no force of the world could blow it out, despite their numbers, their intelligence agencies, their propaganda machines, their wealth and their military strength.

Ali Haydar Effendi was endowed with a brave, awe-inspiring personality. He had an ability to lecture and influence thousands with his ilm and taqwa. His love for ibādah and zikr was endorsed by his ability to recite the kalimah of tawheed fifty thousand times daily. He devoted his life to learning and teaching the Sunnah of Rasulullah ﷺ and most of his spare time was spent in recitation of the Noble Quraan.

He raised many Aalims and helped the seekers of Allah to reach their desires. He led many people to the true path via his speeches. Far from missing any fardh, wajib or sunnah, he would never consent to miss any of the Islamic Aadaab (etiquettes).

In the last years of his life the biggest concern of Ali Haydar Effendi was the future of the khanqah of his sheikh (Ismet Effendi Tekke). As he grew older he was looking for someone to entrust this great spiritual trust.

While he was occupied with these thoughts and concerns, he dreamt of his sheikh, Hadrat Ali Riza Bezzaz. His sheikh introduced a young man that Ali Haydar neither knew nor saw, and said to him, "This young man is ours. Come to Bandirma immediately and take care of our trust!"

That young man to whom the spiritual trust was to be entrusted, who was to become the *qutub* of the future, the light for the believers of Turkey, the joy of the hearts, a body of knowledge and a treasure of secrets, was none other than Hadrat Mahmud Ustaosmanoglu Effendi.

In this way, the next ring of the golden chain following Ali Haydar Effendi was determined.

2. Qutb-al-Irshad Hadrat Sheikh Mahmud Ustaosmanoglu Effendi

Hadrat Mahmud Effendi was born in Mico (a village in the province of Trabzon) in 1929. His father and mother were revered people who were known for their piety and taqwa. His father, Ali, was the Imam of the Masjid in the village and a farmer as well. Although his farm was far from the Masjid, he would never hesitate in his duty, and without fail he would go to the Masjid, call the adhaan and lead the Salaah.

His mother, Fatima, was very careful and diligent about the rights of her neighbours. She would cover the mouths of her cows while taking them to the meadows so that they could not graze on someone else's field. If one of her cows per chance happened to graze on someone's field, she would immediately tell the owner of the property about what had happened and ask for their forgiveness. She would also ensure that the milk of that cow for that particular day be given to the owners of that field.

Ali Effendi and Fatima couldn't have any children for a long time, and whenever she did fall pregnant, the babies would pass away soon after birth. After every Azaan, Ali Effendi would make dua for a righteous child.

Many years later, Fatima became pregnant again and saw in her dream that the moon had come down from the sky, laid upon her lap and enlightened the world. A short time after this dream, Hadrat Mahmud Effendi was born.

Ali Effendi took his new-born to an Aalim and Wali (saint) whose name was Kal-Omar Mahmud Effendi. The saint held the baby and made dua as follows, 'May your name be the same as mine, may your wisdom be the same as mine, and may your taqwa be more than mine!'

At the tender age of six, under the supervision of his father and mother, Hadrat Mahmud Effendi completed the memorization of the Glorious Quraan. From that time he was punctual not only with his faraaaidh and wajib salaah, but even with his nawaafil.

At the age of sixteen he received ijazah in Islamic studies and a few years later he joined the army to complete his military service. At that time he dreamt that some sheikhs had handed him over to Hadrat Ali Haydar Effendi. In 1952 he was assigned to the province of Bandirma for military service, and while there he met his sheikh, Hadrat Ali Haydar Effendi.

It was the habit of Sheikh Mahmud from childhood to visit the Ulema and the pious. In Bandirma he visited the resting place of Hadrat Ali Riza Bezzaz, and was informed that the successor of this great sheikh, Hadrat Ali Haydar, resided in Istanbul. Hadrat Mahmud found his heart yearning for a meeting with Hadrat Ali Haydar, despite him being so far away, and began thinking of ways to travel to Istanbul.

Around that time, Hadrat Ali Riza Bezzaz introduced Mahmud Effendi to Sheikh Ali Haydar in a spiritual way through a dream and ordered him to come to Bandirma and take possession of his trust. Sheikh Ali Haydar left immediately for Bandirma and upon arriving instructed his mureeds, 'There is a soldier here (with a pious disposition). Find him and bring him to me.'

The Meeting of Two Oceans

It was on the auspicious day of Jumuah that Almighty Allah had willed for the eye of Mahmud Effendi to fall upon the noble countenance of his soon-to-be sheikh. The next day when Mahmud Effendi found an opportunity to enter upon Sheikh Ali Haydar, he heard the sheikh say, *'Here comes the one who my books will be handed over to!'*

With the duas of his sheikh, the post of Mahmud Effendi was soon switched to Istanbul, which made participating in the discourses of his sheikh quite easy.

Hadrat Ali Haydar took a keen interest in Hadrat Mahmud Effendi. He loved him and placed a lot of importance on him. He would express his affection for him by saying, *'If I had one hundred children, I would sacrifice all of them for my dear Mahmud. A son for me isn't through my progeny but rather the one who follows my path.'*

Whenever he was informed that Hadrat Mahmud Effendi was studying late into the night he would encourage him by saying, 'O my son, Mahmud! Study hard now, because in the future you will not find any time to read books!'

In the year 1960, Hadrat Ali Haydar Effendi parted from this earthly abode, leaving behind him a successor who would illuminate the hearts of hundreds of thousands thereafter. The time that Hadrat Mahmud Effendi had spent with his sheikh was only a mere eight years, but it was more than enough for Sheikh Ali Haydar to transfer his spiritual legacy over.

Ali Haydar Effendi's revered son, Hafiz Bahaddin Effendi narrated how his father raised Sheikh Mahmud and transferred over to him the love of Almighty Allah which burned vigorously within his heart,. He says 'My father would stand alone together with the venerable Mahmud Effendi after mid-morning and say to me,

'O my son! As you can see, I am transferring what I have over to him. However I am doing it gradually so that I can keep him under observation, for no mind can cope with acquiring spiritual knowledge at one go!'

The efforts of Hadrat Sheikh Mahmud Effendi after the death of his sheikh

After the death of his sheikh, Ali Haydar, a new phase in the life of Hadrat Mahmud Effendi began. Together with being the Imam of the Masjid and teaching ilm and giving Ijazat, he now also began guiding thousands of mureeds, known as the 'ikhwān' via the tariqah inherited from his sheikh.

After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, a new state had been founded and all the troubles faced in those turbulent years were attributed to Islam, by a group of impertinent people who declared war against Islam and everything it represented. Thousands of Aalims were hung and thousands more were exiled and tortured. Many others were taken in the middle of the night from their houses not to be heard from again. Even the ones who dared to ask the whereabouts of these missing Aalims were subjected to various oppressions.

Hundreds of Masjids, madrasahs and Tekkes were destroyed or damaged and others were turned into storehouses, barns and entertainment venues.

Islamic works and books were burnt and destroyed, even the archives of the Othmani Empire were sold to foreign countries as scrap paper.

With the replacement of the Arabic script with the Latin script, people were prevented from reaching Islamic sources; the history of Islam was manipulated; and a huge nation that brought justice and civilization to the world was left ignorant by being distanced from its own values. It became very difficult to find someone to bury the dead in accordance with Islamic traditions, to lead Taraweeh Salaah and recite the complete Quraan during Ramadhan.

The masses were incapable of reciting the Quraan, and the obligations and duties of Islam were forgotten. People did not even know the five tenants of Islam or how to pronounce the shahada. The adhaan was called in Turkish for 18 years and the ones calling it in Arabic were identified and persecuted. Aalims and Muslims in general were defamed, blackened and slandered in the media so that they would fall from public grace and to a large extent their media campaign was quite successful.

The ones with beards and turbans were labelled as priests and women wearing *charshaf* (black outer garments which concealed their bodies from the view of men) were depicted as ogres and even accused of being prostitutes. Many films, dramas and plays were arranged in parallel with this purpose in mind.

From primary school onwards, the children were now being raised with this kind of doctrine. People were urged to imitate the West without question and for this cause of theirs, all social values and norms were trampled on and all kinds of shame and indecency were committed openly.

The ones performing Salaah, keeping beards, and whose wives wore the veil were expelled from public offices. They were even prevented from working in other places.

Apart from banning Islamic books, the recitation of the Quraan too was banned. The ones that were still demanding to learn their Dīn under these

horrendous circumstances studied on top of mountains, in caves, barns or graveyards secretly.

Under these difficult circumstances, when it was hardly possible to even recite the Quraan in Arabic, Hadrat Mahmud Effendi, in a 40-50 year time frame managed to teach and raise thousands of male and female Aalims and Alimahs; tens of thousands of students of ilm, and millions of men growing sunnah beards and women wearing the charshaf.

In Turkey today we find thousands of 15 year olds who don't have the desire to shave their beards, and prefer to do the turban and jubbah instead. Similarly young girls can now be found eager to wear the *charshaf* and memorise the Quraan. This is without doubt an open testimony to the *karamat* (miracle) of Hadrat Mahmud Effendi and a sign of Divine Assistance.

Whenever he would be asked if he desired anything he would say, 'Build two Madrasahs in every neighbourhood, one for boys and one for girls!' Accordingly, he made great effort to increase the number of Quran teaching Madrasahs stating that, 'Even if you open a Madrasah as small as a chicken coop in your neighbourhood, this too shall serve as the spiritual guard of that area!'

Today in Turkey there are hundreds of Madrasahs established in various regions, from which tens of thousands have learnt and continue learning their Din.

Some of his tajdeedi (revolutionary) efforts

In the field of knowledge

At a time when the masses were concerned only with earning an income and had no appetite at all for Dīni knowledge, Hadrat Mahmud's gradual way of increasing Islamic knowledge amongst the people is indeed unparalleled. He started off with a few elementary books teaching Arabic morphology and grammar, consisting of a mere few pages, promising his students that with this they would soon understand Qurānic knowledge.

As he noticed their thirst increasing, he increased the academic ceiling and added other books such as *Izhaar* and *Izzi*, and motivated his students by saying, 'The one who studies this is really an Aalim!'

Slowly but surely the academic ceiling continued being lifted, and soon included books such as *Kaafiyah*, *Mulla Jaami*, *Nurul-Idha*, *Multeqa*, *Telkhis*, *Sharul-Aqaaid*, *Hidaayah*, etc. Soon his students would find themselves reading detailed tafsirs, books on Ahādith and fiqh. Advising his students to study fiqh for a further seven years after graduating as Aalims, Sheikh Mahmud was now speaking out his actual intentions, but the manner that he brought them up to this level, that was indeed remarkable.

In the meantime he was also working on a project to educate women, since he did not feel comfortable leaving them ignorant regarding Islam. It was necessary to raise Aalimahs, as women would be the best to explain Islam to other women.

Male Aalims attempting to teach non-*mahram* women would bring about many problems and drawbacks especially in such a corrupted time. Sheikh Mahmud found the following solution: First of all he taught males, then he ordered them to teach their wives and daughters, and these ladies would in turn teach other ladies.

In a very short time madrasahs for females grew in number so much that they soon outnumbered the madrasahs built for boys.

Sheikh Mahmud would frequently say, '*O students of Dīn, you are the saturated clouds to quench the dry soils, you are the pillars of support for the domes of the Masājid!*' If I had 3 breathes left in my life I would tell you to '*study, study, study!*'

In the field of Tasawwuf

The following words of his, will to some extent help in understanding his path: '*To give value to ilm (knowledge) and neglect zikr is not suitable. It would in fact harm our journey to Almighty Allah. Prior to sleep we should engage ourselves with some Azkaar and lessons of Tasawwuf, and continue after*

tahajjud and finish at the time of Ishraaq. Thereafter we should spend all our time with studying Ilm and teaching it.'

Hadrat turned madrasahs into khanqahs, and khanqahs into madrasahs. He never considered ilm, zikr and tabligh as separate entities, but rather enjoined that one adopts all. Thus he always surrounded himself with the Ulema and students of Dīn.

He always reiterated that one should not attach too much of emphasis on dreams, super-natural occurrences, miracles, etc. The basic goal is to follow the path of the shariah, in a straight and consistent manner.

In the field of Tabligh

He would state the following words while expressing the importance of 'enjoining the good and preventing from evil': *'It would be of no value if all the houses in Istanbul were madrasahs but no one was 'enjoining the good and forbidding from evil! For the sake of Allah, have mercy upon those around you, because they are headed towards Jahannum like a flood!'*

He would frequently quote the expression of his sheikh, Hadrat Ali Haydar Effendi: *'The continuation and survival of the Din of Rasulallah ﷺ is dependent on the continuation of 'enjoining the good and preventing from evil', and the collapse of the Din of Rasulallah ﷺ is due to the abandonment of 'enjoining the good and forbidding from evil!'*

In adherence to the Sunnah and abandoning western culture

Hadrat Mahmud Effendi would never miss performing nawāfil salaah such as tahajjud, ishrāq, duhaa, awwābeen, tahiyyatul-Masjid, tahiyyatul-wudhu and shukr salaah. Once he mentioned, *'It is better that Mahmud dies rather than missing out on duhaa salaah!'*

He never missed Monday's and Thursday's sunnah fasts, and was constant with I'tikaaf during the last ten days of Ramadhaan. Hadrat Mahmud Effendi revived the forgotten Sunnah of Rasulallah ﷺ and performed the etiquettes of these sunnah with meticulous attention as though it was a fardh. He would say, *'There are around four thousand sunnah of Rasulallah ﷺ that are*

practiced in daily life. One who has witnessed me miss four of these should not perform salaah behind me."

He observed that making concessions from Islamic customs and the Sunnah leads people to live in the same way as disbelievers. He would say, *'We must not resemble the disbelievers. Imitating them is like hanging on to a rotten branch from which one is soon going to tumble down. What gain have we achieved by imitating them? We are only disgraced under their feet! There is a rift between Almighty Allah and us!'*

'It is true that a Muslim does not become a disbeliever when his appearance resembles theirs, but be careful, these are important matters. Whose clothes are you wearing and who do you resemble? If you have anything that belongs to the disbelievers on you, even if it is as little as a finger, it indicates that you are fond of them!'

'Allah the Exalted gave you Islamic clothing, yet you still prefer to wear English-style clothes! How long will you go on playing with your honour? When will you switch to your Islamic style?'

In partitioning of the genders

He would say, *'For a man and a woman who are not mahram to be in close contact with each other is like fire and gunpowder. They will burn each other out! The first collapse of the Bani Israil happened as a result of women (mixing freely with men).'*

'A married man should not let his brother see his wife and he too should not look at his brother's wife. On this issue they must not be offended with each other. They should preserve Islam. What benefit will they gain by viewing each other's wives? In respect to this issue many slander us, but by doing so they are in fact declaring a war against Almighty Allah.'

We will behave in accordance to the commands of Almighty Allah! Some get married like Muslims but prefer to live like the ones in the jungle. They argue that, 'I am his brother, so why can I not look at his wife?' You cannot, because

Almighty Allah desires it like that! We must protect the Shariah. None should be sure of themselves!

You are not even permitted to see your wife's sister! On this topic the warning of Rasulullah ﷺ is clear, 'the husband's sister-in law (for him) and the wife's brother-in-law (for her) is death!'

Hadrat Mahmud would always speak out against co-education, or men teaching women or women teaching men. He would in many of his lectures emphasize that the two most important causes of degeneration in the Islamic way of life are without doubt co-education and television.

With regards to sending girls to schools and universities, he would say, *'If they gave me the whole world with its earthly luxuries, provided that I send my daughter to school for one hour, I swear by Allah that I would not send her! These places are scorpion dens and brothels. In pre-Islamic times people would bury their daughters alive and those girls would be martyrs. Today girls being sent to school are being burnt alive (i.e. being pushed into the fire of Jahannum) but they shall not be recorded as martyrs. May Allah protect them.'*

In opposition to television/media entertainment

He would say, *'Those who watch TV are destroying their Jannah! The situation of a man whose house has burnt down is better than the one watching TV, because his stone-made house has burnt down while the other's life of the hereafter is collapsing. So far life without a TV was possible, so why is it not possible now?*

"Do I watch TV? No! I don't! One night a Muslim man who consistently listens to lectures from Ulema dreamt of our beloved Rasulullah ﷺ. In the dream he noticed that the number of Ulema accompanying Rasulullah ﷺ were very few. Rasulullah ﷺ asked, 'Why are there so few Ulema (of this area) here?' In the dream the question was posed to Hadrat Ali Haydar Effendi, who happened to be in the congregation. He replied, 'Unfortunately, most of the Ulema (of this area) have purchased televisions.'

Witnessing the fruits of his effort in this very world

In 2010 Hadrat Sheikh Mahmud Effendi gave *ijazah* to 44 Aalims for completing their study in ilm, and *ijazah* to 50 huffāz for successfully memorizing the entire Quraan. He has steadily continued the chain of *ijazah* through the Aalims that he himself raised.

In 2011 Hadrat, together with more than fifty thousand people consisting of mainly his disciples, made a spectacular '*irshad umrahi*' – something which hadn't been seen in ages.

Every year in summer tens of thousands of people flock to Uludag in the province of Bursa (where his khanqah is now situated) just in order to see his blessed face for a few minutes.

In 2013 Hadrat came together with sixty thousand admirers in an *ijazah* ceremony where 208 Aalims received their *ijazah*.

When one considers that just fifty years previously the military had the president, prime minister and practically the entire cabinet arrested for merely attempting to bring about some sort of Islamic revival, and after proclaiming martial law, they even had the Prime Minister, Adnan Menderes, who had reinstated the giving of the adhaan in Arabic, hung; in such an era and environment this spiritual lamp of guidance, Sheikh Mahmud Effendi, continued tirelessly making effort amongst the masses, knowing well that his Dīni efforts threatened his and his family's life greatly, and under such trying circumstances he managed to produce 50 years later a nation of Islam, garbed in Sunnah attire, desirous of Islamic knowledge, ready to lay down their lives for Islam and totally unconcerned with the slanderous comments of the shaitaani, western media, this alone speaks volumes of the remarkable service this luminary has thus far rendered to Islam.

Such remarkable work is also a clear manifestation of the wondrous system of Almighty Allah, wherein he utilizes and accepts lone, physically weak individuals to spread His Divine Light throughout the world, and through them

extinguishes the darkness of kufr, shirk, immorality, injustice and oppression that is spread by the shaitaani lobbies of the western world, aided by their media, their military, their intelligence agencies, their world banks and their hypocrites.

Indeed, in the fight against atheism and modernism, the names of Hadrat Sheikh Ali Haydar Effendi and Hadrat Sheikh Mahmud Effendi shall *Insha-Allah* forever stand out in the history of Turkey's unique exit from the clutches of the Kamalist, shaitaani regime back into the glory of the Ottoman Empire, and through their efforts *Insha-Allah* the world shall soon see once again the re-establishment of Islāmbul (the city of Islam) as the capital of this magnificent empire.

Aameen!

Places to visit in Istanbul

The Masjid of Sultan Ahmed 1st (The Blue Mosque)

The cascading domes and six slender minarets of the Sultanahmet Masjid (better known as the "Blue Mosque") dominate the skyline of Istanbul. In the 17th century, Sultan Ahmed 1st wished to build an Islamic place of worship that would be even better than the Hagia Sophia. The two great architectural achievements now stand next to each other in Istanbul's main square, and it is up to visitors to decide which is more impressive.

History of the Blue Mosque

The Blue Mosque was commissioned by Sultan Ahmed 1st when he was only 19 years old. It was built near the Hagia Sophia, over the site of the ancient hippodrome and Byzantine imperial palace. Construction work began in 1609 and took seven years.

The masjid was designed by architect Mohammad (Mehmet) Aga. Sultan Ahmed was so anxious for his magnificent creation to be completed that he often assisted in the work. Sadly, he died just a year after the completion of his masterpiece, at the age of 27. He is buried outside the masjid with his wife and three sons.

The original masjid complex included a madrasah, a hospital, a primary school, a market, an imaret and the tomb of the founder. Most of these buildings were torn down in the 19th century.

What to See at the Blue Mosque

One of the most notable features of the Blue Mosque is visible from far away: its **six minarets**. This is very unique, as most masjids have four, two, or just one minaret. According to one account, the Sultan directed his architect to make *altin* (gold) minarets, which was misunderstood as *alti* (six) minarets.

Whatever the origins of the unique feature, the six minarets caused quite a scandal, as Masjid-ul-Harām of Makkah Mukarramah also had six minarets. In the end, the sultan solved the problem by sending his architect to Makkah Mukarramah to add a seventh minaret.

The other striking feature of the exterior is the beautifully-arranged **cascade of domes** that seem to spill down from the great central dome. The arcades running beneath each dome add further visual rhythm. None of the exterior is blue - the name "Blue Mosque" comes from the blue tiles inside.

Inside, the high ceiling is lined with the 20,000 **blue tiles** that give the masjid its popular name. Fine examples of 16th-century Iznik design, the tiles feature flowers, trees and abstract patterns. The overall effect is one of the most beautiful sights in Istanbul.¹¹

The Masjid and Mausoleum of Hadrat Abu Ayood Al-Ansāri Radhiyallahu-Anhu

This masjid was erected by Sultan Muhammad al-Fatih over the tomb of Hadrat Abu Ayūb Ansāri Radhiyallahu-Anhu (known as **Eyūp Sultan**), the noble Sahabi who hosted Rasulullah ﷺ for several months after his ﷺ migration to Madinah Munawwarah.

Hadrat Abu Ayūb Radhiyallahu-Anhu despite his old age joined the expedition towards Constantinople which set out during the era of Hadrat Muawiyah Radhiyallahu-Anhu. His Radhiyallahu-Anhu passion to join this expedition, together with being due to the love every Sahabi Radhiyallahu-Anhum had for Jihād, was also coupled with the desire to attain the promise of Divine Forgiveness which Rasulullah ﷺ had given for the first Muslim army that would raise the banner of Jihād against Constantinople.

أَوَّلُ جَيْشٍ مِنْ أُمَّتِي يَغْزُونَ مَدِينَةَ قَيْصَرَ مَغْفُورٌ لَهُمْ (الصحيح للبخاري)

'Forgiveness has been promised for the first army from my Ummah that shall launch an attack against the city of Caesar, i.e. Constantinople.'

¹¹ sacred-destinations.com

During the battle Hadrat Abu Ayūb Radhiyallahu-Anhu fell extremely ill, and sensing death to be close, he requested from the Muslim leader that should he Radhiyallahu-Anhu pass away, the Muslim army bury his corpse as close to the walls of Constantinople as possible.

During the burial process one of the onlookers from the top of the walls of Constantinople shouted out, *'It seems as though you are burying one of your leaders. After your departure we shall dig out the body and mutilate it!'* In reply the leader of the Muslim army announced, *'If news ever reaches us that this body has been dishonored in any way, we shall tear down every church, and kill every christian that exists from here till Madinah!'*¹² Fearing the threat the christians gave up their filthy idea.

With the passing of time the area at which Hadrat Abu Ayūb Radhiyallahu-Anhu had been buried was forgotten, until the Muslim conquest of Constantinople, when Sheikh Aaq Shamsud-Dīn pointed out the spot to Sultan Muhammad al-Fātih.

The **Girding of the Sword** ceremony was traditionally held here. In this Ottoman enthronement rite, Osman Gazi's sword would be passed on, maintaining continuity within the dynasty as well as creating a connection with the Turk's early ideal of Jihād.

The Topkāpi Museum

¹² حكاية العتيبي بإسناد أن أبا أيوب الأنصاري مرض في غزوة القسطنطينية، فأتاه يزيد عائداً فقال: ما حاجتك يا أبا أيوب؟ قال: ادفني عند أسوار القسطنطينية ... فلما مات أمر يزيد بتكفينه وحُمل على سريره، ثم أخرج الكتائب فجعل قيصر يرى سريراً والناس يقتتلون فأرسل إلى يزيد: من هذا الذي أرى؟ قال: صاحب نبينا وقد سألنا أن تقدمه في بلادك ونحن منفذون وصيته أو تلحق أرواحنا بالله. قال: العجب كيف من ينسب أبوك للدهاء ويرسلك فتأتي بصاحب نبيك، وتدفعه في بلادنا، فإن وليت أخرجناه إلى الكلاب، فقال يزيد: إني والله ما أردت إيداعه ببلادكم حتى أودع كلامي أذانكم، فإنك كافر بالذي أكرمت هذا له، لأن بلغني أنه نبش من قبره أو مثل به، لا تركت بارض العرب نصرانياً إلا قتلته، ولا كنيسة إلا هدمتها فبعث إليه قيصر: أبوك أعلم بك، فوحي المسيح لأحفظنه بيدي (الدولة الأموية للصلاحي)

The Topkapi Palace is the biggest and one of the most popular sites to visit in Istanbul. It was built in between 1466 and 1478 by Sultan Muhammad al-Fatih, on top of a hill in a small peninsula, dominating the Golden Horn to the north, the Sea of Marmara to the south, and the Bosphorus strait to the north east, with great views of the Asian side as well. The palace was the political center of the Ottoman Empire between the 15th and 19th centuries, until they built Dolmabahce Palace by the waterside.

After the Conquest of Constantinople in 1453, Sultan Muhammad ordered to build his palace in its present location on top of the ancient Byzantine ruins. Local people called it as "Topkapi" which in Turkish means "Gate of Cannons" because of huge cannons displayed outside of its gates, those which were used during the Conquest.

There were originally around 700-800 residents of the Palace at the beginning, but during the centuries it dramatically raised to 5,000 during normal days and 10,000 during festivals, approximately. Amongst these, the Janissaries (elite infantry units that formed the Ottoman Sultan's household troops and bodyguards) were the biggest part of the population who were based within the first courtyard of the palace. The palace became the largest palace in the world, a city within a city. The walls surrounding it were about 5 kilometers (around 3 miles) long.

Today, the center of attraction within this huge museum is The Chamber of the Holy Relics, which contains religious objects sent to the Ottoman sultans at various times between Sultan Selim 1st's assumption of the caliphate in the 16th century to the end of the 19th century.

The caliphate passed from the Abbasids to the Ottomans with Selim's conquest of Mamluk Egypt in 1517, upon which event the Holy Mantle of Rasulullah ﷺ (*Hirka-i Sa`âdet*) was given to Selim by al-Mutawakkil 3rd, the last Abbasid caliph. The dispatching of holy relics to Istanbul would continue thereafter, particularly during the late 18th and the 19th century, when such objects were gradually removed to the Chamber of the Holy Relics for greater

protection. Similarly, the holy objects found in Medina Munawwarah were sent to the Topkapı Palace for the same reason during the First World War.

In respect of the Holy Relics, Sultan Selim 1st ordered that there be continuous recitation of the Noble Quraan in the chamber housing these blessed items. For this purpose many Huffāz were employed. This blessed practice continued for over five hundred years, until Mustafa Kamal's shaitaani regime stopped it.

By the Grace of Almighty Allah, this system has now been re-initiated to a certain extent.

Among the most important holy relics to be collected in this way between the 16th century and the first half of the 20th century were the Holy Mantle (blessed cloak) of Rasulullah ﷺ; the hair from the blessed beard of Rasulullah ﷺ; the reliquary in which was kept the blessed tooth of Rasulullah ﷺ, broken during the Battle of Uhud; and the footprints, letters, bow, and sword of Rasulullah ﷺ. There are also holy relics attributed to other Ambiya Alahis-Salaam and to the Sahaba Radhiyallahu-Anhu, viz. the tray used by Nabi Ibrahim Alahis-Salaam; the staff of Nabi Moosa Alahis-Salaam; the sword of Nabi Dawood Alahis-Salaam; the robe of Nabi Yusuf Alahis-Salaam; the swords of the Sahabah Radhiyallahu-Anhum; and the dress, cloak, praying mat, and chest-box of Rasulullah ﷺ's most beloved daughter, Hadrat Fatimah Radhiyallahu-Anha.

Conclusion

There is indeed in the land of Istanbul much that can be learnt and many a lesson that can be taken. It is a land filled with Islamic history and it is upon this land that much of the Ummah's hope lies. As Almighty Allah once accepted it for the protection, preservation and propagation of Islam to the world, it is our fervent dua that Almighty Allah allows this land to once more return to its mantle of glory and grandeur.

We ask Almighty Allah to protect this land, its leaders and population from all shaitaani attacks, to strengthen its armies, spiritually, physically and monetarily, and to accept us all for the great Islamic Revolution that shall Insha-Allah encompass the entire world. Aameen.

و صلى الله على النبي الامي و على آله و اصحابه
و الحمد لله رب العالمين

Completed, by the Grace of Almighty Allah on the 2nd of Rabi-ul-Aakhir 1437
(2016)