

In and Around
Istanbul & Konya

Ahmadul Islam Chowdhury



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ইছামুল কানিসার গাথ প্রান্তর

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Preface

By the grace of Allah Subhanuhu Ta-ala my book "In and Around Istanbul and Konya" has been published. I had another chance to visit Turkey in 2011. Of course the tour was patronized by Turkish Cultural Centre as an invited guest of them. Among us, there were Syed Mohammad Hasan, Maizbhandar Darbar, Chittagong, Syed Anowar Hossain Taher Zuberi Al-Madani, Khatib Shahi Jame Masjid, Anderkilla, Chittagong and Mr. Abdul Bari Chowdhury, businessman and social worker from Fatickchari, Chittagong.

After a day when we reached Istanbul Turkish Honorary Consul General Salahuddin Kasem Khan and PHP Group Chairman Sufi Mizanur Rahman along with his wife Tahmina Rahman and son Amir Hussain joined us. In fact, we went to Istanbul and Konya and the book is enriched on various facts on Istanbul and Konya and our tour programme schedule.

I like to express my deep gratitude to the cultural centre of Turkey for making our tour arrangement with sincerity. At the same time, we are more grateful to Salahuddin Kasem Khan, Honorary Consul General of Turkey as he took the initiative to make the tour successful with all arrangements.

In this connection I should mention here that from my book "Turkey: An Osmanian Empire" published in August 2012, three topics viz The Straits of Bosphorus, The Sulaimanya Mosque and The Narratives of Konya and Allama Rumi ® have also been added, because the history of those places are important and also the same.

I am most indebted and express my deep gratitude to Mr. Golam Nabi, Professor of English of M.E.S. University College, Chittagong who translated the book into English. But it is a matter of great sorrow that towards the end of completing this work Professor Golam Nabi died on 17th June 2013. May Allah bless and forgive him.

In such a situation, Pankaj Kumar Dastider, Chittagong Correspondent of The Financial Express, Mohammad Shamsal Islam, Senior Research Officer, Institute of Community Ophthalmology, University of Chittagong and Sheikh Manzarul Huq Chowdhury of Jaldi, Banskhal, Chittagong came forward to help me and finish the book. Another educationist Mr. Didarul Islam, Lecturer in English of Hamedia Rahima Fadil Madrasa, Banskhal, Chittagong also contributed to the work.

I hope the honorable readers of this book will have the chance to learn many things about Istanbul and Konya. As it is the first publication, it is quite natural to have some mistakes and printing defects regarding information and languages. The friendly readers are kindly requested to inform about it from their forgiving outlook. I can assure all that I will try my best to correct in its next edition.

I also offer special thanks to Salahuddin Kasem Khan, Honorary Consul General of Turkey as he has been so kind to publish this book.

With Thanks

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- Tawaaf and Zearah-1998
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- A Look Back into time yore, 3rd and 4th Volume-2001
- Pilgrimage and Zearah-2002
- Chief Mentor ® of Garangia-2003, 2nd Edition-2004
- Discourse about Chittagong-2004
- A Look Back into time yore, 5th and 6th Volume-2004
- Maktubate Hamed-E-Mazidi-2004
- Garangia Choto Huzur Smarak ®-2004
- Holy Remembrance-2005, 2nd Edition-2006
- Travel & visit of Mazar in Pak-Bharat, 1st Edition-2005
- Shan-E-Waisi ®-2005
- Hazrat Shah Saheb Chunati ®-2007,
3rd Edition-2009
- Shan-E-Waisi ® (published in English from India)-2007
- Visit of Ancient Human Habitation, 1st Volume-2007
- Hajj: Omrah, Zearah (In English)-2007
- A Look Back into time yore, 7th Volume-2009
- Discourse on religion 1st Volume-2009
- Turkey: An Osmanian Empire (Bengali)-2011
- Aina-E-Darbar-E-Garangia-2011
- Miracle mystique and magnetism of Merry of the Universe
(published by Islamic Foundation)-2011
- Kashmir-A soulless Heaven of the world-2012
- Travel and Zearah in India, 2nd Edition-2012
- Turkey: An Osmanian Empire (English)-2012
- From Persia to Iran-2012
- Miracle of Waisi ® (Published by Islamic Foundation)-2012
- Transportation of Pilgrim Passengers from Chittagong, Bangladesh-2013
- In and Around Istanbul & Konya (Bengali)-2014
- In and Around Istanbul & Konya (English)-2015

To be published

- Chittagong - A Seat of Heritage
- From Hezaz to Saudi Arabia
- Some countries on the Indian Ocean
- Visit to ancient places of Habitation: (2nd Volume) Yemen
- The famous Saints of West Bengal (2nd Edition)
- A treatise on religion
- A sight and view of the past, 8th Volume
- Chittagong and Famine of 1943
- Humanity
- 68 days in Europe, America

On the occasion of the 30th Anniversary of the establishment
of the Consulate General of Turkey, Chittagong (1984-2014)



*Honorary Consulate General
of the Republic of Turkey
Chittagong*



Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim

Message

I am very pleased at the publication of "In and Around Istanbul and Konya" by Janab Ahmadul Islam Chowdhury, a widely travelled and prolific writer of Chittagong, having twenty seven books to his name and eight in the process of publication. He comes from a distinguished political family of the Port City of Chittagong. Janab Chowdhury has done a great service to Bangladesh-Turkey relations by writing a series of weekly articles in one of the leading Bengali paper of Chittagong, the "Purbokone", over the last two years, after his visit to Istanbul and Konya, sponsored personally by the Turkish Honorary Consul General of Chittagong. The compilation of his weekly writings has led to this second book on Turkey this year.

In 2011, he had published "Turkey & Osmanli Imparatorlugu (Turkey: An Osmanian Empire)" which was launched in the presence of the then Turkish Ambassador H.E. Mehmet Vakur Erkul, which in 2012 he had translated into English, for wider circulation in Bangladesh and abroad, which was launched in the presence of H.E. Mr. Hüseyin Muftuoglu, Turkish Ambassador.

I wish to record my sincere appreciation to the author for furthering the people to people understanding and deepening of relations between Bangladesh and Turkey-which have been nurtured over a millenia, by his writings on Turkey for the citizens of the Port City of Chittagong and Bangladesh at large.

Salahuddin Kasem Khan

Salahuddin Kasem Khan
Honorary Consul General
The Republic of Turkey
Chittagong.

Dated: March 14, 2014

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Istanbul a place of pride of Muslim Civilization

Istanbul-Constantinople-Byzantium-Kustuntunia-is a Mega City, hafted by nearly 20 million people, covers areas of Europe and Asia in the middle of which the Strait of Bosphorus flows, linking the Black Sea with the Mediterranean Sea.

Sultan Muhammad, the second, conquered Constantinople in 1453 A.D. and named it Istanbul, yet, far in the past, it was known as Byzantium.



View of Ancient Istanbul City

This great city has been bearing a glorious history since 1000 years B.C. Since its inception, Istanbul was a world famous trade centre, lying in the midway of trade route between the East and the West. Then its name was Byzantium. Until the plateau battle in 479 B.C this city was under the control of Persia. Thereafter, the sportsman general Pausanius ruled this city, according to him, and drawing the reign of Roman Emperor Saptimius. In 196 A.D. this city was conquered, sacked and destroyed later on, at the behest of his successor. He rebuilt the city. He extended its perimeter and built rear part around this city. He built magnificent palaces

and took the task of renovation of this city. Later on, King Constantine conquered this city. This city impressed him so much that he declared this city as the capital of Roman Empire in 330 A.D. Constantine christened it Constantinople according to his name. He ordered for turning it into Nova Roma. He built splendid castle in this city. He built there impressive churches among which the St. Sophia stands out most prominently. His successor Theodosius, the first, ordered for dismantling the non-Christian temples of this city.

The reign of emperor Justinian 527-565 A. D. is the golden period of this city. At the time of his death, his empire stretched from the Euphrates to the Strait of Gibraltar but that golden period did not last long since this city bore brunt of severe invasion in the 7th and 8th century from the Persians and the Arabs. The Strait of Bosphorus that runs from the Black Sea in the north to the Marmara Bay in the South separates Europe from Asia. The continent of Europe lies on the western side of the strait and Asia on its eastern side. The entire famous historic landmarks are in the European part of Istanbul.

A creek-like watercourse has carved into the European part of this city from the Strait of Bosphorus measuring nearly 6 km in stretch. It is called a Golden Horn. It is also known as the fresh water course of Europe. The part of the European portion of the city is situated on top of 7 hills centering on both the sides of the golden horn. Almost alongside a rampart wall built during the medieval period braces this part of the city. It used to serve as embattlement of the city. It served as a defence against outside aggression. Many citadel-like fortifications and long stretch of rampart still bear witness to its imperviousness. Three splendid bridges built on the Golden Horn bridge the European parts of the city. The modern and the old Istanbul city have grown upon both sides of the golden horn of the European part of Istanbul.

The process of the decline of power of the Roman empire and rise of the military might of the Arabs took place simultaneously. The battle of Yarmulke that took place in 636 A.D. is regarded as one of the spectacular and significant battles in the history of military campaign. The Arab Army inflicted a crushing defeat on the Roman Empire. The Arabs annihilated the Roman Army and occupied greater Syria, Palestine, Egypt and North Africa. It is said that one lakh Roman soldiers perished and their bastion was stormed. The Roman Army was on the rout. Thereafter it dared not challenge the rising of Muslim power. The Roman Army had strength of 2.5 lakhs soldiers. This battle gave birth to a myth that Muslims are irresistible and unbeatable. The various parts of the Roman Empire repeatedly became the targets of Turkish invasion after emergence of Turkish military muscle. The Roman emperors time and again made desperate bid to repel Turkish aggression with the help of Christian powers

of the west. At a certain stage, in the battle of Mahzikert the Byzantine emperor suffered a humiliating defeat at the hands of Turks although he was bolstered by combined Christian Army of Europe. Later on, in the 4th crusade, fought on the European soil, the Roman empire became split up. At a subsequent stage the 7th emperor Michael consolidated the empire and strengthened its position in 1269 but the Muslim invasion on the empire and its capital remained unabated when the Osmanli Sultan Muhammad, the second, finally conquered the historic Constantinople city. Emperor of Constantinople, the 11th Constantine, was the last emperor of the Fallen Roman empire.



Golden Horn of European portion in Istanbul Metropolitan

The Osmani Turkish people prior to their arrival in Asia Minor were inhabitants of Modern Soviet Russia in the Central Asia. They are actually the descendants of the Tartars. The Tartars were the closest kin of the Mongols. First they entered Persia. After dissolution of Seljuk empire, they entered Turkey and later on, their leader Osman established their first kingdom in Turkey. First the kingdom and later on the empire founded by him became known as Osmani kingdom and Osmani Empire. The western historians used to write the epithet Osmani as ottoman.

For that reason in most of the books that empire is called ottoman empire. The capital was transferred to Constantinople after its capture. Istanbul shone as a brilliant capital for 400 years in the history of the world. In fact in glory and magnificence it was unique and unsurpassed on the whole. From 1326 A.D. to 1683 A.D. the ottoman empire was an insuperable power on the map of the world with magnificent and glorious

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Istanbul as its capital. Istanbul was the nerve centre of the affairs of the world. It preserved in its trove the shining history of the Muslim. It acted as Torch bearer of Muslim civilization all over the world. In the then Indian sub-continent the Moghuls were the comparable emperor and peers of Osmani Sultans. They ruled over the Indian sub-continent almost nearly 200 years but the Moghul power was confined to the limits of the sub-continent. On the other Turkish power was unrivalled and unsurpassed throughout the world. It emerged as an undisputed power in Turkish power and officially the nomenclature of this empire was Osmani Sultanate and the rulers were called Sultans. The core and basis of this Sultanate lay in the basic principle and fundamental tenets of Islam.

Osmani Sultan Muhammad, the second, conquered historic and magnificent Constantinople city (1429-1482 A.D) in the time of his reign. Simultaneously, he was a versatile all conquering general, astute tactician, strewed maneuvered, able ruler, a reputed savant and was able to speak 5 languages fluently. He devised unique strategy for conquering Constantinople, prior to launching of frontal assault on the city. On account of the fact that all attempts made previously in order to capture this city had been foiled through novel tactics of defence.

Secretly he proceeded with his plan with utmost caution. At the estuary of the golden horn from the Bhosphorus strait the Romans erected and hung iron chain so that no ship could enter the golden horn. In order to evade the barrier of chain, the Sultan built up a flotilla of sleek and fast moving ships. They were virtually fast moving gunboat. The boats probed the barrier under cover of darkness. The Sultan also lay siege to the city from the land surface. He retrograded his fleet with wooden tyres. The boats were handled up to the top of the hills through the wooden rains.



Rest in front of Blue Mosque for sometime

Then he launched assault on the city from both the land and sea. The ramparts and the citadels of the city were battered. The siege lasted for long 50 days. The city embattlements were pulverized and the city fell at last. The Osmanli soldiers entered the city. Vicious encounters took place. The Sultan became victorious. Of course, sporadic skirmishes continued to happen. The victory tolled the death knell of the Roman empire and marked the advent of Muslim rule in Constantinople. Sultan Muhammad, the second, became famous as conqueror of Constantinople.

Most of the historians call him the real founder of Turkish empire. The Strait of Bosphorous, the Black Sea, the Marmara Bay and the Mediterranean Sea were ruled by Turkish fleet during the next 250 years. The fleet won the reputation of being irresistible.

A new era dawned in Istanbul after its conquest. Istanbul became the capital of the vast Turkish and Usmani Empire from 1453 A.D. to 1923, covering spanning a period of 470 years, sitting on the throne of Usmani Empire. The Sultans ruled the vast empire with its capital in Istanbul. The Sultans paid attention to building magnificent edifice and adorned it befitting to a vibrant and radiant city. They also built numerous magnificent and impressive mosques in the Istanbul metropolis. The empire that grew centering Istanbul had no parallel in the world up to Vienna in Europe, North Africa in the south and up to Russia in the north. The ottoman exercised its unchallenged sway and power, Sulaman, the magnificent, was one of the most majestic and charismatic Emperor during that golden spell of rule. Although the capital of Turkey has been shifted to Ankara after the cessation of hostility of 1st great world war, Istanbul stands out most prominently in the world with its outstanding glory and éclat, its mystique and charm have remained still undiminished. It is ever vibrant and throbbing but its imperial aura and pulsation are still felt.

It is palpably clear that the original city of Istanbul had its first growth in the European part of the city. A river has made its way into the European part from the Strait of Bhosphorus. Later on, Istanbul grew around the Golden Horn. The Dangling Charm was hung under the 3 magnificent bridges with avowing to keeping the invading aggressors, at bay.

But such obstacles were overcome by superortactics and innovative strategy. Twice the length of the Karnaphuli, 2 suspension bridges-one 6 lined and another 8 lined-at dizzy heights spanned the Strait of Bhosphorus. Over and above, a tunnel bridge is in the final phase of construction under the Strait of Bhosphorus. This has become a must in order to cope with the ever growing traffic and transportation of goods and people. The bridges ensure unhindered and unobstructed movement of ships. From the Black Sea to the Mediterranean Sea. Istanbul speaks of its age and glorious past but it's free from slink of age and squalor.

Istanbul Revisited

Istanbul is one of the prominent historic and landmark cities of the world. It is a unique city in many respects. It bears as much vicissitudes of time as it contains magnificent and glorious history. It bears scars of ravages as well as the outstanding Landmarks of history. The Osmani emperors have ruled a vast part of the world including present Turkey sitting on the throne based in Istanbul after its conquest in 1453. After the end of the first world war, the capital was shifted to Ankara for multiple reasons. In spite of this Istanbul retains its shining and glorious history and shiny accolade of its shapeliness and glory. Istanbul stretches both over Europe and Asia, two International Airports, located in both European and Asian portions linking the city with the outside world. Both of them are international airports. The European one is called Kamal Atatürk International Airport and the Asian one is called Sabiha Gokchen International Airport. At present, nearly 20 million people reside in Istanbul. In respect of health service, education, communication and other matters Istanbul is at top all other places. Its dynamism is astounding.



Dhaka Airport: From left guide Ismail Akbas, Mr. Khatib, Writer, Mr. Hasan, Turki Belel and Mr. Abbu.

Hundreds of thousands of people throughout the year visit this historic majestic city. On the night following 11th May 2011 A.D. Wednesday. I had a chance to go to Istanbul again, We along with a group of selected persons set out for the tour. Nearly one month ahead of our journey while parleying with Mr. Salahuddin Kasem Khan, honorary consul general of Turkey he informed us at a certain point of discussion that we are required to go to Turkey again. Later on, we knew we would have to go to Turkey as state guests under the auspices of the cultural centre of that country. Mr. Salahuddin Kasem Khan later apprised us that 4 (four) persons have been selected from Chittagong to go to Turkey at his recommendation. In order to be apprised of the advancement made by Turkey in respect of education, health service etc. Mr. Salahuddin Kasem Khan recommended 4 persons from Chittagong as members of the delegation. The delegation comprised of Moulana Syed Anwar Hussain, Taher Jaber Almadani, the Khatib of Anderkilla Shahi Jam-E-Masjid; Mr. Syed Muhammad Hasan of Maijbhandar Darbar Sharif, Mr. Abdul Bari Chowdhury, a prominent social worker and businessman and myself Ahmadul Islam Chowdhury. We set out for Dhaka en-route Turkey on being invited as state guests sponsored by Turkish Cultural Centre.

On being selected as delegates of the entourage we submitted passports together with the photographs with a view to going to Turkey on being invited by Turkish Cultural Centre on behalf of the Turkish Government. We have had brief discussion with Mr. Salahuddin Kasem Khan at his residence on related aspects and set out for Turkey on Wednesday night, the 11th day of May 2011 (A.D).

We gathered together at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in the evening. In the meantime, the Turkish Cultural Centre finished the process of passport, visa and tickets including the details of other formalities. In Bangladesh, our guide during visit to Turkey, Mr. Ismail Akbas, Chief of the International Turkish Hope School located in Chittagong and Mr. F. Fatik Celik, director of Culture Centre, saw us off at the Airport. We boarded the Turkish Air Line plane on completion of necessary formalities. The number of passengers in that large Airbus plane was only 40 to 50 persons. After nearly 3 hours journey it reached the Karachi Airport and the Airbus became filled with passengers. It seemed half of the newly boarded passengers were of Turkish nationality and half of them were of Pakistani nationality. The youth who boarded the plane from Karachi and sat by my side was a Ukrainian citizen he was traveling to his country on a flight from Karachi to Ukraine via Ankara. There were western passengers including a few European ones. It seemed the passengers were educated, well informed. The Pakistanis were either visiting Istanbul or going to other Western countries via Istanbul. In this connection it is worth mentioning that a big difference in respect of hospitality, treatment and amenities was perceptible to those who were going to either Europe or America.



Floral welcome in Istanbul Kamal Ataturk International Airport.

In other words, the treatment is one of apathy, negligence and discrimination. Flights from Dhaka to 6 Arab countries and flights from 6 Arab countries to Dhaka are notorious whereas flights to and from Western countries met out excellent hospitality and treatment when they are operated from Western countries via 6 Arab countries.

The obvious discriminatory treatment generates resentment among the passengers. The flights from Dhaka to Arab countries and Arab countries to Dhaka are irksome and unwholesome.

After about 5 hour journey from Karachi we landed on the Kamal Ataturk International Airport located in the European part in the early morning. While we were proceeding towards the Terminal after finishing the necessary formalities, we felt shivering cold. The temperature was running at 13 degree celsius. The sky was cloudy. We were received with bouquets in the Airport area. Our luggage was loaded in a luxurious mini bus. Then we set out for the guest house on that bus.

Our guide Ismail Akbas wanted us to go for rest. After having rest for 2/3 hours we opted for going out immediately after having repast. We thought it wise to go out after repast instead of taking rest. It was done so, i.e., we have had our breakfast after bath of hands and face. Our maiden programme in Istanbul was to see for ourselves the replica put up in miniature form and artificially animated scene of battle that finally led to the fall of Constantinople in the hands of Osmanli empire (Ottoman empire). In other words, the model replicated the scenes of assault on Istanbul.

Witnessing the actual combat and assault on Istanbul, i.e. its conquest

The boats of the Seljuk plied over the hills. Once it was a very popular and common saying in Chittagonian dialects. It is a virtual and veritable truth for once the Ottoman fleet scaled over the hills and battered the city ramparts of Constantinople, the highly fortified citadel capital of the Byzantine empire. The saying also refers to a unique and novel strategy adopted by Seljuk Sultan Fatih Muhammad, the second, while launching onslaught on Constantinople in 1453 A.D. It was a kind of play to dupe the defenders of the city, once thought impregnable because it was circled with impalements dotted with a circuit of invulnerable bastions repeated Muslim attempts to capture Constantinople was aborted by its insuperable. So Fatih Muhammad, the second, was extremely circumstanced in his preparation and resorted to innovative strategy rather than rash head long assault.

The location of the fortress was near the strait of the Bosphorous. In order to prevent entry and to deny access to the golden horn heavy chains were



Constantinople: Fortified Citadel, later on captured by Fatih Muhammad, the second

dangled down the bridge. The Roman emperor felt complacency at its vulnerability. The Sultan avoided attempts to enter the golden horn with the military might, rather, he berthed his sleek and fast moving gun boats by the side of the hills. The boats were thick and retrograded with no wooden roller tyres and handled up to the hill. The defenders were surprised and bewildered. The Sultan bypassed the bridges and thus scored a tactical victory. Under cover of darkness and through a detour the Sultan evaded the formidable defense. Such a military genius deserves accolade and acclamation. Once the obsoletes were overcome, the ships built in Chittagong Shipyard made forays into the emperors preserve. The Osmanli Sultans built up their own warships in Alexandria of Egypt. At that time Egypt was under the suzerainty of the Ottomans. But they opted for the ships of Chittagong as they were sleek, tough and resilient. The Sultani fleet comprising mostly of Chittagong Ships made a dash for the capture of Constantinople.

The boats fitted with deadly guns were dragged up the hills through the wooden rail tracks. It was an innovative tactics at that time. It created a stir and gave birth to the above mentioned saying. It expresses sense of exultation now that ship building has revived again in Chittagong. Chittagong served as the hub of vessel making for the Ottoman. After conquest of Constantinople in 1453 A.D. Sultan Muhammad, the Second, named it Istanbul. Nearly five hundred to eight hundred years have elapsed since Istanbul was first vanquished, but till to day one has to become overwhelmed with wonder on seeing the live compact on a small scale in miniature form. It will be hard to believe that the scenario of action is not a real one but a make believe artifice put up in replicated form.

The present Government undertook a scheme in 2005 A.D. to reconstruct the scene of battle for the conquest of Constantinople in order to give visual impression of the battle to the Turks as well as to the foreign tourists. The scenario of battle covers an area of 2350 square metres. The live scenario of combat has been named Panorama.

In other words, it means moving perspective of war. Eight artists have put-up this replica with great care and pains. On land previously used as Bus Terminal with all modern facilities the Panorama tickets the imagination of the people. The people are wonder-struck on seeing the battle action and chalking out of the whole battle plan. The construction of Panorama was completed in 2008 after 3 years of working.

The President of Turkey Tayef Erdogan formally opened it on the 31st January 2009. In fact, City Council of Istanbul, i.e. City Corporation is the sponsor of that Panorama. Prior to becoming Prime Minister Tayef



Partial view of Constantinople conquest (arranged)

Erdogan was the Mayor of Istanbul. One month after the 21st birth anniversary of the birth of Sultan Muhammad, the second, built up a choking stronghold in the month of April 1453 A.D. But, in view of multiple reasons, the emperor of Constantinople became scared of the Ottoman emperors on seeing the victories of the Ottomans since 1362. In order to protect fortress emperor of Constantinople took multiple defensive array around Istanbul with new formation. The city rampart is one of them. The residents of the city hoped that the impregnable ramparts around the city will protect them.

There was apprehension of that attack from the direction of the sea. So the access through the river was effectively sealed by dangling huge chain and satisfied with much confidence but the Sultan was aware of the obstacles put-up on the watercourse. He knew how to overcome such impediments. The defenders of the city wall observed with a sense of surprise on the early hours of Sunday, in the month of May 1453, the Muslim forces had built up a road along the slope of the hill with a view to handling up to 200 feet long vessels made of wood over the wooden built track lied on the hill. Guns were installed on those vessels.

Not only that, some of those ships were equipped with 19 tons shell throwing projectile system. The attack started in the morning of 28th May 1453. At every spot of the city warning bell was sounded. The Saint Sophia church was filled with devotees. They were praying and playing music.

Comparatively the number of defending troops was small barely numbering 7000. Among them 2000 troops were foreign mercenaries. 5000 people used to live in Istanbul at the time of invasion. Of course, among the said soldiers, the number of Turkish soldiers were not few in number. But the Turkish soldiers were loyal to Roman emperor and many of them were fighting siding with the emperor of Constantinople.

The records of the Ottoman bear evidence to the fact that number of Ottoman soldiers were 80,000. Among them there were considerable number of Christian soldiers. Then the Europeans were in confusion about the number of Ottoman soldiers as they used to rate highly the prowess of the Ottoman soldiers. According to some opinions the number was 1 lakh 60 thousand. Again, according to some other opinions they were 2 lakh or 3 lakh.

Sultan Muhammad, the second, formed and built up a naval force in order to attack Istanbul. The number of the vessels of this fleet was 100. Together with, it had supporting vessels of various types. The number of each group varied from 145 to 160. Side by side with experience of actual naval engagement he has a modern strong naval force. A review of the Ottoman history also reveals that they had at that time in their arsenal medium range missile. On the other hand, the emperors of Constantinople lacked modern tactics of warfare as much as they were backward in the manufacture of gun and missile.

The emperor of Constantinople arranged his defensive shield, mobilized all his strength in preparation of defense shield sensing the gravity of the situation. But Europe as a whole, usually of the Constantinople, was experiencing a sort of anarchy at that time. It was in a state of disarray when at a distance not far from Istanbul. The Turkish emperor built a fort in 1452 at Hilmar, located at the juncture of the Asian and European continents with shiver of fear into the marrow of the emperor of Constantinople. Emperor Constantine wrote in secret to European Union in expectation of succour but he got no favourable response to his appeal although he was very eager of getting help. Pope Nicholas was not swayed by Byzantine sentiment. He was under the influence of the western monarch and princes. On the other hand, France and England became weak because of the 100 year old war.

Sultan Muhammad, the second, took to the war himself along with his spiritual mentors and led the troops in this historic battle. Aged only 21, Sultan Muhammad, the second, stormed the apparently impregnable forces of king Constantine through his uncommon tactics and bold step.

The assault resulted in the fall of Constantinople crossing the golden horn of strait of Bosphorus. Thousands of Turkish soldiers invaded Constantinople. The strong ramparts of the city began to shelter due to pounding of the

cannon and shell fired from the revolving gun. Entering the fort, the forces of the Sultan launched offensive at a lightening speed and caused the fall of Constantinople. According to David, Constantinople was the most fortified place of that time of Europe. The fall of this city greatly agitated the Kingdoms of Europe.

Pope made an instant appeal to launch a counter offensive as was done during the crusade but no European king agreed to launch crusade. Through the capture of the city of Constantinople Sultan Muhammad, the second, became the possessor of a large prosperous capital city. The knowledgeable sources think that the fall of Constantinople marks the end of the medieval period in Europe because it sounded the end of the religious appeal and the cannon of medieval vantage. Consequent upon the occupation of Constantinople, the trade route through land between Asia and Europe came under the control of the Turks.

The Europeans began to seek sea route in order to go to Asia from Europe. The endeavour resulted in the finding of sea route and the British, the French and the Portuguese began to arrive in the Indian sub continent through the sea route.

In history, the exploits of a hero demonstrated during the expedition of Constantinople has been written in golden letters. The name of the Hero is Utubath Hasan. Born in 1428, he took part in the expedition of Constantinople at the age of 25. Like the martyrs he won distinction and fame because of his dash and dane during the assault against Constantinople and he became famous like a legendary hero. He was born in Ululate of Bushra province. It is said that he was a monster of a man, extremely tall. Lord Kin wrote in his report of Ottoman century that Utubath was giant of a man. He came at the age of 25 in order to be part in the conquest of Constantinople. He was the man who first ascended the city with Turkish flag in his hand in the midst of rain of arrows and spears. On seeing him with the flag in his hand the Turkish soldiers were inspired with new fervour and fought gallantly until the capture of fort. About 25 arrows struck him. As the British historian David Nicale adds the triumphant Turks treated the soldiers in a far better way than they treated others in the crusade of 1204. Only 30 fellow combatants were with him and inspired his fellow Comrades of the Army until the final victory. He fell down from the wall after he hailed the Ottoman flag aloft.

Commonly after victory, the victors inflict atrocities on the vanquished in the war. The wealth of the adversaries is plundered. David Nicale comments, "The atrocity meted out to the adversary after conquest of Istanbul is far less atrocious than the others inflicted. In fact, he adds, at the peremptory order of the Turkish emperor all kinds of atrocities and plunder came to a halt by the 3rd day of the phenomenal victory".

George Spront, a Byzantine historian, was an eye witness of the fall of Constantinople. He wrote in his diary "On the 3rd day of the fall of our city": The Sultan passed the 3rd day after the victory in a mood of rejoicing and happiness as though it were a festive day". He issued a proclamation to this effect that the citizens who had become scattered about the city in fear should come out of their hiding and assemble under



Another partial view of Constantinople conquest (arranged).

the open sky and those who have fled from their houses should return to their homestead with complete composure and perfect security of their life and property. The religious right would be restored to those persons who have deserted the city he adds.

The emperor had also declared if the uprooted and displaced persons had any questions to ask, they could easily do so without late or hindrance. He further informs, the Sultan assured the pameky citizens of the restoration of all their houses, properties and belongings. They responded to his call. It seemed, the Sultan wanted to create an atmosphere as if nothing had happened that posed a threat to life and property. As regards the fall of Constantinople, many hearsays, legend and myths were in circulation in Greece. It is said that the total lunar eclipse that occurred on the night of 22nd May 1453 augured the fall of Constantinople. After 4 days following that day, the entire city was wrapped by the pall of cloud. It boded all for the city, they felt in the month of May in that part of the world. It had evil prognostication when that fog disappeared at the time of

starlight a mysterious light was playing in the sky above the dome of Hoghia Govina. The unique perspective of light was observed by the people all around.

From the top of the city wall this shaft of ray was seen even in the rear of Turkish camp far away in the distant landscape was rustic in nature.

Seriously enough Osmani emperor fixed the date of the conquest of the city in 1453 or 857 as per Abjad letter of verse no 14 or 15 of Sura Balad of the Holy Quran.

After conquest of Constantinople Sultan Muhammad, the second, renamed this city as Istanbul.

The sacred verse 14/15 of the Holy Quran served as the inspirational source of the date of undertaking the task of conquest of Constantinople in 1453 A.D. i.e. 857 Hijree. The letters of the 14th & 15th verse of that Sura are in conformity to the calendar year 1453 A.D. or Hijree year 857. Constantinople's name was designated Istanbul after its conquest by Sultan Muhammad, the second in 1453 A.D. This process is said to be Abjad method of computation.

As a matter of fact, the Ottomans rendered its nomenclature into Arabia. The name of the Constantinople has been seen as being mentioned as Constantinople in many of the documents. It is presumed that the name Istanbul is derived from a Greek compound word as for instance. To the city, Greek Eistin-Polin, it is presumed that the name Eistin-Polin spread among the Ottomans before the conquest of Constantinople by the Ottomans. According to another differing account, Sultan Muhammad the second, rechristened Constantinople as Istanbul after its conquest. 'Bul' is derive from Turkish word subsequently but has changed into Istanbul as part of reformation and as per Turkish Postal law this city was officially named Istanbul in 1930 by Kamal Ataturk.

The Panorama has been designed with a view to giving apparently real experience of combat undertaken in order to capture Constantinople in a historic battle.

I failed to see many things in Istanbul during my last visit in 2008 since I had to go to Konya, Marsin, Tarsus, Gazi Anteb, Urfa etc. after staying in Istanbul for 2 days. This time, on reaching Istanbul in the early morning of Thursday, 12th May, we set out for seeing the Panorama after having breakfast in the guest house as we, the four, were exclusively from Chittagong. Mr. Ismail Akbas, the chief of the Turkish Hope School, it seemed, agreed to accompany us as guide during our tour to Turkey. He stayed in a room nearby that guest house.



Partial view of Blue Mosque from so far.

When we reached the Panorama spot around at 11 a.m Mr. Ismail Akbas bought tickets for us at 10 Lira per head. A Lira is equal to 57 taka of Bangladesh currency. Mr. Akbas bought information brochure on English for us and Arabic for Mr. Khatif. The brochures were on history of different aspects. They contained detailed accounts on relevant matters.

He had to spend extra money for this. Besides, he hired somewhat a bigger mobile set together with ear phone. Accounts of the battle began to play on as soon as the button of the Mobile pressed on. The accounts were dubbed in different languages, hanging such sets round the neck and adjusting the ear phones on our ears. Each picture of the Panorama continued an index number.

As soon as we pressed the button the accounts of each scenario began to ring in our ears. This helped us in having a comprehensive idea about the whole tenor of the battle scenario. Such device can be arranged for Mini Bangladesh built in Chittagong (Freedom Park). Accounts of different worthwhile places of interest were dubbed in this manner. They would put-up graphic description of the things for public view. This device helped us in being apprised of the different aspects of the campaign of Sultan Muhammad, the second, while launching the assault against Constantinople in order to seize it. The rare scenes of the battle appeared before us in a life-like manner. It seemed as if the combat was happening

before our eyes. The account of the battle was played in our ears concurrently. The tourists in turn were observing the scenes of battle on the upstairs. They came down in droves through a circuitous way.

Through another staircase we began to go upward. While ascending the circuitous staircase, it seemed to us that we were ascending to 3 or 4 storey layered building scarcely had we ascended up when we saw scene of an appalling battle. The construction of the profile of the battle is wonderful. It is set on a globular platform with a capacity of holding 200 people on it. We were watching the scene of battle along with other people, standing outside the circular railing. We watched the scene of thousands of warriors of the Ottoman empire launching the onslaught on Constantinople. The soldiers of emperor Muhammad, the second, had sheltered in fortified city walls at several points. The sights of the battle passed before us as spectacle of going battle. We saw the city walls collapsing at certain points. We also saw, side by side with the assault, the forces of the Sultan firing gun at the fort. The battering of the wall due to the impact of heavy gun fire passed before us like a kaleidoscope. Again, we saw blazing fire at some points. Although the defending soldiers of Constantine were trying to repulse the aggression they looked helpless and scared standing on a certain place, Sultan Muhammad, the second, was himself directing the course of the action. The spiritual mentors of the Sultan were seen engaged in seeking grace and benediction of Allah with the palms raised up. On looking upwards I saw with deep attention. I saw the blue sky with pall of light cloud.

This sky was only 10 to 12 feet above our head but this cannot be perceived as the whole device was a subtle piece of art. We have had to admit we felt as though we were standing below the open sky. Such was the illusion of the magical craftsmanship. We were under a contrived sky in a confined room watching a forged battle on a platform. We were for sure elided to think that we were standing on an open field and watching a forged battle as though it were the scenario of a live action. It is cold outside and light wind was blowing but it was not perceptible inside. The charisma and craftsmanship of the artists are so subtle and life-like that one is deluded to think that it is a spectacle of a passing battle. Each group of people was allowed to watch the battle for 30 minutes. As we began to descend downwards with other visitors we watched the rare snippets of Istanbul battle on coming down to the ground floor. The earphone played the running commentary on our ears simultaneously as we checked the relevant switch. We went to a nearby place for seeing some concrete vassalages of battle after sewing the rare pictures and contrivance of the military campaign. The Turkish Government has kept some evading intuit in order to remind enable the visitors to have a glimpse of the actual mile of battle and its remnants.

Zearah of Hazrat Abu Ayub Ansari (R.)

From there we went to the shrine of Hazrat Abu Ayub Ansari (R.) in order to pay homage and prayer in his honour. We were fortunate to offer Zearah at the Mazar of Ayub Ansari (R.) as a prominent companion of Hazrat Mohammad (Peace be upon him) is lying here in the city of Istanbul.

On reaching Istanbul on Thursday, the 12th May 2011, we visited the mock battle scenario called Panorama and therefrom we went directly to the compound of shrine of Hazrat Abu Ayub Ansari (R.) a prominent companion of prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). It was biting cold today in Istanbul. The weather was cloudy, light wind was blowing. As we had sufficient time in our hand we first paid our attention to offering of Fateha on his grave. At that time the renovation work of that Mazar was underway.

As such, we had to offer Fateha from a little distance. Besides offering Zearah, we were watching the movement of the Turks. To clothe boys with a special kind of white dress with matching cap before performance of circumcision is a prevalent practice in Turkey.



Visit Mazar of Hazrat Abu Ayub Ansari (R).

The circumcision is done either in a mosque or in a Mazar. We also observed here that before circumcision 10 to 12 boys, clad in white dress and donned with white cap, have been brought in order to seek divine grace.

It is worth mentioning here that during Khalifat of Amire Muabia (R.) the Muslim expedition naval force Hijree invaded Constantinople in Hijree 49. Hazrat Ayub Ansari, an octogenarian or nonagenarian man, took part in this holy campaign. He fell ill and expired there in 672 A.D. i.e. 52 Hijree year. According to his last wish he was buried in a place adjacent to the city wall of Constantinople. There are undoubtedly differences as to the date of his demise. The Greek Christians used to regard him with reverence.

Not only they revered him but also sought divine blessing and succour for relief from adversities and calamities by imploring God's grace at his grave. It is said that the Byzantine people built a tomb in Hijree year 55 after the Muslim forces lifted its blockade on Constantinople.

A shaft of ray outside the city wall was seen by the soldiers of Muhammad, the second after he conquered Constantinople. Then, at the behest of the Sultan a stone plaque engraved with the name of Hazrat Ayub Ansari in brew was recovered from that spot after digging. The Sultan covered up the top of this holy grave with silver foil and erected a tomb over the much venerated grave. Not only he built a tomb but he built a mosque and Madrasha also. In the graveyard adjacent to his grave, there are many graves of many renowned martyrs who fell in that famous battle. From that time onward, the later Sultans have shown great respect to this Mazar and paid homage. Together with many rites, the ceremonies respecting coronation were performed here.

In fact Hazrat Abu Ayub Ansari (R.) is one of the most prominent companions of Hazrat/Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him). Emigrating from Makkah Mukarrama to Madina Munawara Prophet Muhammad (s.) took refuge in his house. He took part in all the holy wars with prophet (s). He was also with the prophet (s) during his last pilgrimage. Subsequent to the demise of prophet (s.) and during the reign of Khilafat he participated in all the holy wars/expeditions and military campaigns. During the victory of Egypt he was also present along with Hazrat Amar Ibnul Aas (R) in Hijree year 21. Sometimes he led the prayers at the Masjid-E-Nabbabi when Hazrat Osman (R.) the 3rd Caliph, became beliguered by the rebels in his house. He was appointed governor of Medina Munawara when Hazrat Ali (R.) shifted the capital to Kufa in Iraq. This endeared companion of the prophet (s) was a prominent scholar of that time. He went to Egypt at the age of 75 in order to collect Hadith (sayings & reports of deeds) of Hazrat Muhammad (s).

The Zearah at the Mazar of Hazrat Abu Ayub Ansari is one of the prime attractions of Turkey. It can be said that the mosque attached to the Mazar



Mayor of Istanbul, Khatib of Ayub Sultan Mazar Mosque and Writer (From left).

is one of the startling symbols of Turkish architectural excellence. Sultan Selim, the third, rebuilt the mosque and Mazar in 1800 A.D. Many other martyrs are lying in eternal repose in the graves attached to the Mazars.

A solemn and revivifying atmosphere prevails in this area. All along, hundreds of thousands of people throng this place for offering Zearah. The modesty and the gestures of veneration of the women do not evade the attention of the people. Wearing modest dress and covering the head with scarf they enter the compound in a mood of great veneration. The abundance of articles aiding prayer and meditation is conspicuous by their presence helpful for contributing to prayers in the neighbouring shops. The shops abound in caps, rosary, scarf etc. Every article made in Turkey is up to the standard. Invariably, the consideration of Turkish articles comes to the fore while one goes to buy something of value and substance from the shops during the sojourn period of Omra and Zearah offering pilgrims in Makkah Mukarrama and Madina Munawara. Turkish wares and articles are of premium quality. Side by side with offering Zearah, we moved about the sanctified place for sometime. We entered the mosque at the time of proclamation of Azan. Rapidly the devotees were filling the huge mosque. The women devotees were filling the three sides of the upstairs in order to offer noon (Johar) prayer. Regrettably, in spite of entering the modern age the authorities of the mosques in Bangladesh are not coming forward in order to provide facilities to women for offering prayer for the women.

Soon after this call for Zohar prayer was made the devotees offered Sunnat prayer immediately after Azan. Then within the interval of a few minutes, the Muazzin (the caller) hummed invocatory verse and pronounced Ekamat (call for standing up with a view to offering prayer. Clad in special religious tune the Imam (the cleric) stood up and led the Zohar prayer. Immediately after the end of the prayer and turning off the face from the right to the left, the Muazzin invoked and implored the benediction of Allah through the microphone. The invocatory chant is, O Allah! Thou art, peace given and peace comes from your presence. Thou art beneficent (gracious), thou art magnificent owner of sublime dignity and thou art benefactor with the same voice. The entire devotees echoed this chant with the Muazzin with a mood of humility and submission. This invocatory hymn is chanted after obligatory Namaz or Salat throughout Turkey.

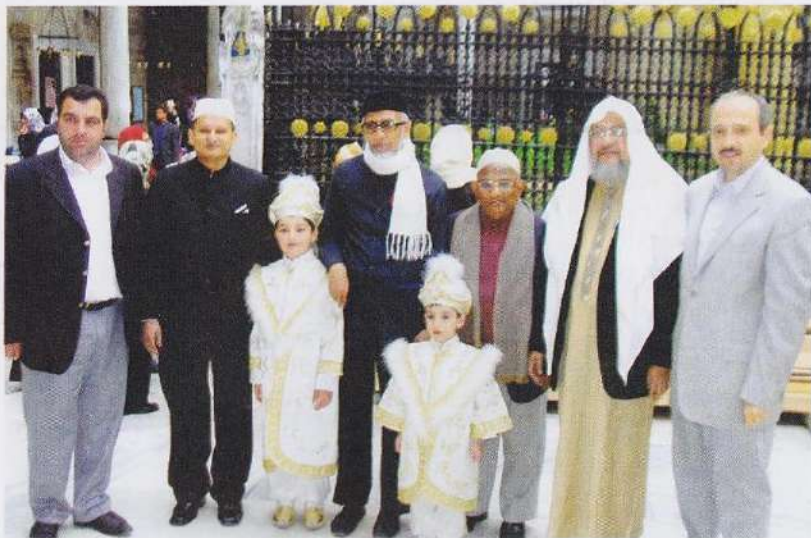
After offering the Sunnah prayer at the end of Farj prayer, the Imam turns off from the direction of the Kibla to the assembled devotees. He recited the verse of the holy Quran in a melodious voice. This practice is noticeable in all the big mosques of Turkey.

It is apparent from this that the Imams (clerics) of Turkey are meticulous reciter (Qari) of the Holy Quran.

He invoked grace with upraised palms after reading the text of the Quran in a melodious voice. Then the Hon. Imam stood up. The devotees came forward one after another and uttered Allah in Arabic and ritualistically shook hands with the honourable cleric (Imam). I also did likewise as I was in the front. He introduced me to the Mayor of Istanbul on knowing that I had come from Bangladesh.

The Istanbul City stretches over both Europe and Asia with a population of nearly 20 million. The strait of Bosphorous divides the city into 2 parts. The city has been divided into several segments. Each block has its own Mayor. The man who stood by the Imam Shaheb is also a Mayor. Within a short time Mr. Ismail Akbas introduced Mr. Hasan, Mr. Khatib and Mr. Abbu to him. In Turkish language, it is a general norm to proclaim Azan as soon as time for prayer arrives. In conformity with Makkah Mukarrama and Medina Munawara unlike our country, Salat is performed immediately after Azan. Like ours, there is no intermediary interval period.

After Salat we again offered Fateha at the Mazar of that prominent companion of Hazrat Muhammad (s). We watched the speculations of Turkish life and observed its form and rituals. The neighbourhood is called Ayubia. The solemn and sanctified atmosphere of that place vivified our heart. Its religious touch is rejuvenating and stirringly inspirational in enchantingly hallowed and balmy atmosphere! Walking a hill distance Mr. Ismail Akbas took us to a restaurant. The restaurants are neat and clean,



Two children for divine grace before circumcision at Ayub Sultan Mazar in front of one Turkey person, Mr. Hasan, Writer, Mr. Abbu, Mr. Khatib and Mr. Turki Belel (from left).

and give a smart look and are of high standard. The restaurants of Ayubia are hygienic, clean and up to the standard but he took us to a restaurant located in a little bit interior area. It is under either a 3 or 4 star standard hotel. The restaurant was in the ground floor of the Hotel. The name of the restaurant is Halitpasa Palace. On behalf of the Hotel chip-like food was served just before the supply of the ordered food.

In the meantime Mr. Bayram Saatci, the principal of eight Turkish International Hope Schools in Bangladesh has come to this hotel in order to have lunch side by side to exchange our wellbeing.

He enquired of our health and convenience. Among the food items of Turkey, the chicken steak of Turkey is up to my taste. Together with it, curdled milk and vegetable soup which has no much use of ghee, oil and spices. As a result, vitamin in food remains intact and the food is easily digestible. We set out to see miniature profile of Turkey after having luncheon at the restaurant. Mini Turkey is an artful contrivance. It provides a glimpse of Turkey as a whole.

The visiting of Mini Turkey and going to the Hill

The situation of the Mini Turkey is by the side of the Golden Horn. The Mini Bangladesh has been built within the compound of Bangladesh Radio Station, located in the Kalurghat area. It is situated in a place adjacent to Bahaddarhat, a famous intersection of Chittagong. At present it is called Bangladesh Independence Park. Since our guide Mr Ismail resides in Chittagong and understands the importance we gave to such artful artifice he took us to Mini Turkey with great interest. In Turkish language it has been named Minia Turk, i.e. Turkey in a miniature form. Buying tickets he took us inside and we saw that the location of Mini Turkey is in a delectable and charming place situated on the bank of a river.

The Mini Turkey covers several acres of land in a wholesome and attractive place. It was inaugurated on the 2nd May 2003. It is located on 6 lakh 50 thousand square feet. It accommodates 105 models or replicas of various establishments. These models are the replicas of various establishments that interspersed throughout the now defunct Ottoman empire including Jerusalem, Saudi Arab, Africa, Turkey and Europe.



Model of Masjidul Aksha

The Mini Turkey is comprised of 45 models from Istanbul, 45 from Anatolia and 15 from the Ottoman empire which is now out of the territorial boundary of Turkey. These are dotted in the vacant spaces of a blooming flower garden. But these models vary in size and bulk. Some measure 5 to 7 feet, some measure 10 to 15 feet and some models are bigger or smaller than these. These models are not as big as the models of Mini Bangladesh. I appreciate that there were no guide to explain or give a resume of the models. Instead, microphone devices together with the switch boards have been attached on each of the models. Each model contains several buttons with inscriptions of languages in which the buttons give resume. One can choose the button according to one's own choice of languages. The resume has been dubbed in several languages among which there are predominance of English and Arabic besides Turkish language. The sound track of this devices explain the motif of each model.

When the camels, horses and donkeys were medium of transportations in the world, the Sultans left extra-ordinary marks of distinction by introducing railway system as means of communication. During that age one could go to Damascus from Madina Munawara within 3 days and 3 nights. The railway transportation system during that age stretched from Baghdad to Istanbul via Damascus. The railway system also connects Jerusalem with Baghdad via Damascus. Since Istanbul was the capital there was no alternative to Railway communication system in order to maintain communication in that vast empire.



Model of Shakra of Minar in Mosque.

The Mini Turkey contains the model of railway communication system of the Ottoman empire of time. The models of the historic establishments of Jerusalem, Makkah Mukarrama and Madina Munawara have been accommodated in that Mini Turkey. Besides cloudy weather and biting cold, gusty wind was blowing nonetheless. We have been observing the models of historic establishments of Osmanli period together with the then famous models of the establishment of modern Turkey with great interest and patience for a long time. Thereafter, coming out from Mini Turk compound we set out for the Pierre Lotti Hill. In fact, 7 hills comprise the Istanbul city. Pierre Lotti Hill is one of them. Our mini bus began to move towards the Pierre Lotti Hill in the European part of the city. After we moved to a certain distance our mini bus began to ascend upwards in a circuitous way.



Model of Allama Rumi Mazar

The road has been built in such a way that one vehicle can move upward and another vehicle can come down at a time. We saw residential hotels and restaurants on both sides as the mini bus began to ascend the high heights for a long time. Further going up our bus halted in an open space before a restaurant. We were about to give in to shivering cold but here everything is expensive. Mr. Ismail Akbas served us a kind of Turkish drink mixed with milk since we dislike Turkish coffee because it is bitter in taste. This hill commands view of far distance of Istanbul city.



Partial view of European portion.

But our range of sight was restricted by deep fog. During the Byzantine and Ottoman era there were landmarks of religious vestiges like temples and mosques on all the 7 hills. This Pierre Lotti was a very renowned place of Istanbul. This hill stretches from European part of Ayubia to Golden Horn passing through Bosphorus.

The name Pierre Lotti has been given by French writer named Nabile Louven Mary Julien. She used to live in Istanbul. This writer used to come to a café in Ayubia neighbourhood and highly appreciated the sights of Golden Horn. She had great intimacy with the Turkish people. From here we went to the residence of an industrialist for having our dinner. He is a social worker and industrialist of Istanbul. His name is Mr. Cengiz. The sun sets at 8.20 pm. In Istanbul the local Turks eat their dinner before sunset. When we arrived at his house towards 7.30 or 8.00 pm, he received us. He entertained us with food prepared in his house. Turkish recipe is very attractive to me as it contains lesser quantity of oil, butter and spices. The food is tasty and healthful. Their food is up to my taste. Salad and curd are used in large proportion in their curry. Soup is served at the beginning. Invariably sweetmeat figures at the end of taking food. After dinner we said our dusk prayer. Then we returned to guest house with a tired state of mind and body.

A visit to the Topkapi Museum

I got chance to go to the Topkapi Museum for the first in June 2008 A.D. when I had the opportunity to go to Turkey. But I missed the chance to see this historic and famous Museum in a leisurely and minute manner. This time our guide Mr. Ismail Akbas has set programme to take the members of the entourage on Friday, 13th May 2011. We had scheduled our Juma prayer in the adjacent Blue mosque.



Prophet (S) used highly revered things in Topkapi Museum

Thereafter cancelling the breakfast at the restaurant of the guest house Mr. Ismail took us to Halitpasa Palace, situated in the Ayubia neighbourhood since we highly appreciated the standard of the food of this restaurant after having lunch in it yesterday morning. I find no excuse to comment adversely on the wholesomeness and cleanliness of the hotels and restaurants of Turkey.

They are all neat and clean and presents a healthful and smart look. The shopping malls, bus terminals, road, paths alike are neat and clean and present a cheery look where you will not find muck and dirt. The environment is healthy and solitary.

It was 11.00 past in the morning when we reached the Topkapi Museum after having breakfast in the restaurant of Halitpasa Palace. Our guide Mr. Ismail Akbas collected tickets for us, each ticket costing 20 Lira. Along with hundreds of visitors, we passed through the security and proceeded towards the palace in which the venerated reminders of Hazrat Muhammad (S.) have been preserved. After entering the stately gate of the Topkapi Museum we had the opportunity of seeing rare and highly revered things. One after another the holy hair, tooth, beard, wear, wares, sword etc. have been arranged in a nice array within glass boxes. But after lapse of several years the holy reminders are rearranged. Because of this it took time to determine where and in which case the respective revered things have been put in. But the staff of Hazrat Musa (A) has been kept in its original place without any shift of place.

It has been kept in its original place according to the previous order of placing. 4 to 5 feet in length and 1 to 2 feet in circumference (decimeter) the uncanny staff has been kept lengthwise in vertical position in a glass case. Calling the attention of fellow travelers Mr. Hasan, Mr. Khatib and Mr. Abbu, I indicated to them the myriad and miraculous stick of Hazrat Musa (A.). It is not understandable why there is no picture and description of the stick of Hazrat Musa (A.) in any brochure and booklet whatsoever although there are plenty of information, accounts and images of all other holy reminders preserved in the Topkapi Museum. So I requested Mr. Ismail Akbas to take a shot of the stick by his camera. He dared not taking a shot as it is prohibited.

In this palace of holy portents and reminders, there are the swords, clothes of the Amirs of the Khilafat, swords, clothes of the great companions including Khaled Bin Walid (R.), wear, sword, other articles used by other messengers and prophets Daud (A.) have been treasured with due sanctity and religious fervour. Here is also preserved Nazab & Rahmat collected at the time of the repair of the repair of the Holy Qaba, the cover of the Hazr-E-Aswad the residue of the door, after repair. The fragmented parts of the domes of Holy Qaba, Mosque, Madina Munawara and Jerusalem Mosque with great reverence have been kept with an ardent spirit. Although they are left over they are portentous. They are reminders of the Landmark establishments. The remains of the Gambuz-e-Shahara invariably stirs up the mind and exercises a rejuvenating effect.

In this world there are divergences of opinions about the authenticities of the reminders of Hazrat Muhammad (S.) and other venerated saints. Veracity of the claims of being, as such, is disputed. But in this world, there is no difference of opinion about the genuineness of the preserve and portents treasured in the Topkapi Museum. Even an evil maker will not dare utter a word contrary to this Calvin D believe.



Prophet's (S.) holy hair.

As because the Turkish Sultans during their hundred years of rule collected these mementoes with proper scrutiny, care and test the authenticity about the evidence collected under the auspices of the government is taken for granted. But the claim of potent truth about the things unofficially gathered leaves room for doubt and suspicion.

In this world the word museum connotes the image of a building, often gigantic in dimension or form in which rare artifacts and curios are preserved. It is natural that such a facility will be massive as in New York, London, Cairo, Delhi, Lahore, Calcutta, Baghdad, Tehran and even in Dhaka. But the Topkapi museum is quite exception to this rules. The palace of the Turkish Sultans has been converted into museum i.e. the museum covets.

The palace is located on 2 square kilometers of land. The situation of this palace complex is on a somewhat plain hill, almost 40 to 50 feet above the sea level by the side of the strait of Bosphorous. After entering the lion gate, the visitors discover the treasury on the right side that preserves the rare venerated reminders opposite to entrance. It is just in the end of the complex. The treasury contains precious contents such as gold jewels, diamond, silver and other rare valuable things. Adjacent to this, in another palace the Sultans used to live along with the members of the royal families. This palace is presently stuffed with cooking kits for 4000 people including the members of the royal family. Entering the gate one can find the palace which he Sultans used as residential quarters. This residential palace is called Haram. Haram has multiple meanings, such as honour, holy area, campus, premises, compound etc. Here Haram connotes area and premises.



Prophet's (S.) holy foot print

One has to spend additional Lira in order to enter this premise/compound/campus. The rooms/suites of this palace have been furnished with rare and exquisite pieces of furniture. The rooms are maintained in so manner that it will seem as though the Sultans and their family members had gone for outing and would return instantly. The visitors will be startled if they enter the rooms so deftly arranged. Each room is furnished with shiny and rare articles the sights of which cast a spell of enchantment. Although it is an age of science and tech, it is not affordable for people to get such rare pieces of furniture. They are surpassingly fascinating and eye catching. They are a rarity even at the present age; simply startling. They are not easily available and affordable. The palace bears testimonies of religious and venerated articles. There is a vast stage and vacant space before the front wall of this palace. The Sultans sometimes used to transact a lot of important state affairs here or give audience to the people. The treasury palace exists on the right hand side. It is on the right hand side from the entrance gate.

Here valuable, rare things and riches have been stored. The looted treasures of Delhi by Nadir Shah, the gifts of Turkey and the peacock throne offered by the foreign sovereigns and dignitaries have been kept here. The famous Topkapi Museum epitomizes the triumphs and commemorative landmark

of the Osmani Empire. This is the most sacrosanct venerated museum to the 130 crore Muslims of the world since this museum preserves many mementoes and remains of Prophet (S.). They are priceless and invaluable legacies of the Muslims. Many articles and wears of prophet (S.) and his endearing companions including the staff of Hazrat Musa (A.) have been preserved here. The personal effects of the previous prophets, apostles and messengers are stored in this museum. The belonging of the Prophet's (S.) companions and their companions in down and successive order are preserved here. Sultan Muhammad, the second, built this palace complex, i.e. the Museum in the European part of Istanbul on the shore of the strait of Bosphorous.

Designed in medieval style of architecture adding royal aura, It is exquisitely beautiful. The design engraved on it is simply captivating. It has been designed in an elaborate manner conceived on a grand scale. It presents a majestic look. Its dimension covers nearly an area of 7 lakh square kilometer. It is enriched with many architectural designs. It stands with its magnificent look and stately grandeur century after century.

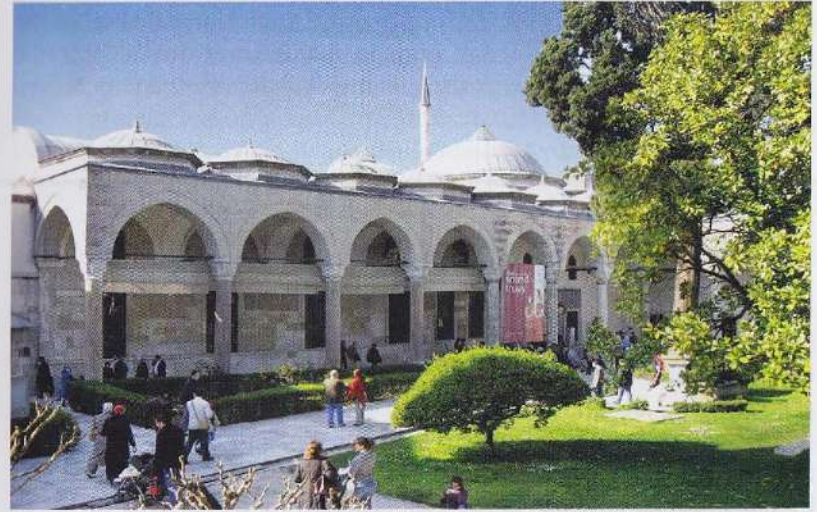
The museum incorporates among others big and small Durbar Pavilion, Mosque fount, park etc. as necessary adjuncts to the palace complex. It appears as if it is a miniature Istanbul within a vast Istanbul city. The walls of the palace complex was so strong that no cannon ball would have been able to make a dent or create crack in the wall. Topkapi is a compound word. It means cannon gate. The palace complex has stretched 2 kilometers towards the sea. It has Byzantine style of wall. The palace complex spans 1 kilometer towards the landmass. It is surrounded by 1400 meter long wall. The palace complex is braced by the sea on three sides. It is well fortified. The palace has a natural grace as nature serves as the backdrop of the palace. In all probability Sultan Muhammad, the second, chose this site as it possesses exquisite natural surrounding and more than this, strategic and geographical condition came to fore while considering the appropriateness of site selection.

Bayzid was the capital city of Ottoman empire after capture of Constantinople by Sultan Muhammad, the second, in 1453 A.D. At present there is no existence of Bayzid. At a later stage in the year 1467 A.D. the capital of the Ottoman empire was established in the Istanbul City. The capital was built together with the Topkapi palace. The capital was shifted there after its construction. Sultan Muhammad, the second, found the city suitable for the empire. Sultan Muhammad, the second, used to perform his official work there. But the members of his family used to live in the old palace. When Haram palace was added to the palace complex towards the end of the 16th century, the Sultan shifted the members of the royal family to the newly built palace complex or Topkapi palace.



Rod of Hazarat Musa (A.)

Until 1839, this palace was the administrative residential quarters. Later on, Sultan Abdul Majid built a new palace by the side of the strait of Bosphorus in view of existing situation during the climax of the magnificence and splendour. 4000 people including the members of the royal families used to reside in this palace. The main gate of this palace is rather near to the Haghia Sofia Museum. According to engraving on stone plate and hung on the top of the gate Sultan Muhammad, the second, during



Tabrukat Palace

his reign built this majestic gate in conformity with the grandeur and stateliness of the palace. It was rebuilt during the reign of Sultan Abdul Aziz. After the Esha prayer this gate was formally used to be shut and opened at the time of Fajr prayer on the following morning. It was a norm to shut the gate of the palace after Esha prayer and to open it at the time of saying the Fajr prayer. There was no permission for the commoners to enter the gate riding. They were used to be opened on horseback except the members of the cabinet ministers of foreign countries. In the interior of this palace there are 4 Durbar Halls of varying sizes and standard. The first Durbar Hall has its location between the first gate and the second gate in the middle of the first and second gate. This was somewhat considered as the reception Hall of the persons, seeking audience with the Sultan. The location of the second Durbar is in the interior side of the second gate. The next Durbar Hall is elaborately designed with marvelous pattern. On the top, an octagonal dome embellishes the Durbar in a fascinating way. Its grandeur and ritz are special. It was built in commensurate with the grandeur and éclat of the palace. The prime minister, important dignitaries and ministers from foreign countries were entitled to enter this palace. Entering the second gate they used to have audience with the sovereign Sultan. Further within the third Durbar hall the important ceremonies were used to be held under the auspices/at the initiative of the imperial authority; for examples, the coronation of the new Sultan, installation of new ministers and observance of religious functions. The 4th Durbar Hall was used to be geared up for the weekly cabinet meeting including the hosting of different state functions.

It can be said that among the different sections of the palace complex the Harem and the treasury blocks were the most important and fortified places. The quarters in which the members of the royal families lived were used to be called Harem. They are pompous and glorious. This Harem has remained arranged in the manner in which they were arrayed during the reign of the Sultanate. This has remained in tact according to the original dispensation. The lighting and heat control systems of that period is really a thought-provoking matter. The toilet, dressing, drawing, dispensation of that time and intricate designing of the of the royal suite simply astounded the visitors. The Harem contains more than one smaller complex. It seems the Harem has been sectioned into several blocks in order to facilitate the spouses and children of the Sultans to reside with full privacy and comfort. It is needless to say that the Sultans sometimes had more than one spouse in their Harem. In the Harem area of the Museum the location of the Lodge of the Chief Hekim is the Harem area of the museum and the residential facilities of the other Hekims or physicians. The block of the physicians also accommodates medicine, medical treatment and appliances including rare instruments.

On the map of the world, the library of the Osmani Sultanate was very rich. The advent of Osmani era began immediately after Khalaku Khan reduced Baghdad to ashes. As such, many rare things of the Abbaside dynasty fell into the hands of the Osmani Sultans of Turkish empire.

The Baghdad pavilion of the Topkapi Museum is very rich since a lot of rare things of the Abbaside period came under control of Osmani Sultanate. All the important things of the Abbaside period have been preserved and kept in this museum with utmost care and earnestness.

The well protected and well guarded treasury of the Topkapi museum is another worth-seeing sight. For some years, the treasury of the Osmani Sultanate was in the previous palace after the conquest of Istanbul by the Osmani Sultanate. After completion of all security and protective arrangements the treasury was shifted to the Topkapi Museum in 1478 A.D. During the reign of the Sultans 40 persons used to open and close this treasury with fanfare and gaiety. In the sixteenth century and during the reign of Selim, the first, this treasury was used to be regarded as the most rich and prosperous treasury in the world.

In different parts of the Palace the articles used by the member of the Sultans have been put to display in glass chest in an impressive way. In another block of the palace the precious and spectacular gifts offered by the foreign sovereigns and dignitaries have been arranged in an attractive manner. These rare gifts are really mesmerizing.

In another block of the palace, the bequests of prophet (S.), the previous messengers of prophets and the companions of Hazrat Muhammad (S.) have been kept with due solemnity and religious fervour. In another closet (room), cooking utensils and kits sufficient enough for entertaining several thousands of people have been kept and put on for display.

In order to enable the visitors to enjoy the spectacular and impressive scene of the sea from this palace a lot of arrangements have been made. The palace has been built on a place above the sea level; at least 50 to 100 feet above the sea level.

At present there are arrangements for plying of tram and vehicular traffic between the Topkapi Museum and the sea which is at a much tower level from the Topkapi Museum.

In view of the arrival of time for Juma prayer we hastily took a glimpse of the artifacts of the museum and dashed for the Blue mosque in order to say Juma prayer.

I know not whether I shall be able to go to Istanbul for the third time in my life. Probably at that time, I shall be able to see this museum to my heart's content.

The looted treasures of Nadir Shah in the Topkapi Museum

The palace that becomes visible after entering the Topkapi Museum is the treasury. If one advances forward after entering the Topkapi Museum, the palace that comes to the view is the Topkapi Museum, the treasury of the palace. There, the various ornamental articles that were used by the members of the emperors have been preserved in the glass chests.



The Peacock Throne

These much precious gold ornaments jewel, gem and diamonds have been preserved in glass boxes in more than one large rooms with great care. Together with them there are jewels and gems offered by Nadir Shah as gifts including the peacock throne. On almost all things stored in the Topkapi Museum, there are mentions of information as to where, how and in which year these articles were collected.

It is recorded in history that the attention of Nadir Shah fell on Delhi when he became a pauper while fighting for a long time. Occupying Delhi Nadir Shah plundered and took away 60 million gold coins, the peacock throne,

Kohinoor diamond jewels, gems and diamonds and precious stones. Occupying Delhi he acquired so much wealth that he distributed a lot of money among the soldiers and exempted the subjects of his Kingdom Persia for 3 years, Nadir Shah fought one or more than one battle against the Sultans of Turkey over one or more than one places of Persia.

Though the Sultans of Osmani Sultanate, sitting in the city of Istanbul reigned for hundreds of years over half of the western Europe, a vast part of Africa in the South, the Balkan in the North, the Arabian peninsula including Saudi Arabia in the South-East and Mulk-E-Sham, they encountered much verse and reverse while fighting against Persia for its occupation. The Sultans of Turkey failed to bring Persia under its effective and efficient control.

In the 4th expedition of Turkey against Nadir Shah a great and fierce battle took place although Nadir Shah became victorious in this battle. He became exhausted fighting all along his life. On the other hand, in order to avoid war with the vast owner of the Sultanate of Turkey he resorted to many practices. A peace treaty was signed on the 4th September 1746 at his own initiative. Nadir Shah signed a peace treaty with the ambassador of Turkey one year after his victory over Turkey.

Thereafter, after pause of 4 months he sent two ambassadors to Turkey on the 22nd January 1747 with the copy of the peace treaty. Mr. Mustafa Khan and Mehdi Khan, two closest comrades of Nadir Shah led the delegation. As gifts to the Turkish Sultan, Nadir Shah sent huge quantity of jewels, gold coins, gems and valuable stones together with the peacock throne.

Much of the precious gifts, offered by Nadir Shah are preserved in the Museum. There is no unanimity as regards the preservation of the peacock throne in the Topkapi Museum. Nevertheless most of the authorities believe that it was the real peacock throne, i.e. the seat of the king or emperor. The emperor of Delhi used to sit on this throne in the Durbar hall. In history, there are descriptions of thrones of multiple aspects. The peacock throne is one of such types of throne. It is thought as the most precious throne of the world. For this reason this throne occupies the prime position by surpassing all other thrones in the history of the world. It becomes the subject of discussion and resplendent with glory with its own intrinsic splendor.

The peacock throne is a unique example of Moghul craftsmanship. Two figures from the throne hinges on a design of 2 peacock-like figures from behind. Onyx, ruby, diamond and emerald encrusted on the out-stretched feathers of the peacocks create the illusion of 2 live peacocks in their exquisite form. Onyx carbuncle ruby, diamond emerald and gold have been encrusted on the outstretched feathers of the peacocks so nicely and exquisitely that it creates the impression and illusion of 2 live peacocks in their most exclusive form. In Persian language the name of the peacock throne is Takht-e-Taus.



World famous Jewels and Gems.

The name was the same in the Moghul empire and the rare Kohinoor was embossed then.

This throne was placed in the Durbar-E-Am of the Lal Killa, the royal palace within the red fort of Delhi. While traveling in Delhi in 1665 the French poet Jahuri gave a description of this throne. According to him, the length and breadth of the peacock throne was 4 x 6 feet. It was 20 to 25 inches high from the ground. It stood above 4 gold stands. It had crescent shape with awning/canopy on it from 4 sides. The railings below were braced with gem, diamond, emerald, onyx. In total, 116 onyx and 106 emerald stones have been used in this throne. The gems set on the 12 pillars were the most precious stones. The value of these stones at that time was 100 million or 10 crore rupees. There is much difference of opinion about the value of the throne. But according to History channel, the present value of this throne is US Dollar 100 crore, i.e. 1000 million Dollar, equivalent to 8000 crore in Bangladesh currency. The peacock throne has undergone changes of hands. At present it has found its lodge in the Topkapi Museum.

Although some historians opine that the throne that has been treasured in the Topkapi Museum is not the original or real peacock throne/Takht-E-Taus, it is unlikely that the Osmani Sultans would not counterfeit as the Takht-E-Taus or peacock throne would make a counterfeit for granted that the throne gifted to the Sultan by Nadir Shah is the genuine peacock throne or Takht-E-Taus. But in this regard, the Kohinoor has a different story. The East India Company took it away from India and gifted it to the queen of England. Hitherto, it is in the British Museum.



World famous Jewels and Gems.

From the time of the victory of emperor Babar in the battle of Panipath to the time of the plunder of Delhi, this Kohinoor for a long time was in the treasury of the Moghul emperor. Of course, during that time the Moghuls had in their possession greater diamonds in their treasury than the Kohinoor, the value of which exceeds four hundred thousand Taka as of that time. Nevertheless, the Kohinoor had a special value. The Moghuls possessed greater pieces of diamond than the Kohinoor. This Kohinoor was in the Moghul treasury together with other pearls, gems and jewels during the invasion of Delhi by Nadir Shah. In the royal treasury Nadir Shah found a big seized diamond during his plunder of Delhi. Its wonderful radiance and refulgence highly impressed him and he named this Diamond piece as Kohinoor, i.e. the hill of light. From then, it was known as Kohinoor. But it is not understandable why the Kohinoor was not with the gifts that Nadir Shah offered to Sultan as gifts. After the death of Nadir Shah, his commander in chief and later on through change of hands this Kohinoor came to the hands of Shah Suja. It is said that this Kohinoor many a time was seen in the areas of Shah Suja. During the time of adverse circumstances the spouse of Shah Suja as a token of benefaction gifted this Kohinoor to Maharajah Ranjit Singh. After the demise of Ranjit Singh the Kohinoor found its lodge in the Jagannath Temple when the control of the English was established there. It fell in the possession of East India Company which gifted it to Queen Victoria. Then the Kohinoor weighed 186 carat or 589 garrant or 321 rottee. In view of the unusual size of the Kohinoor, the Kohinoor was reduced to size and weight of 106 carat, or, according to differing opinion, to 102 by cutting it for 38 days. From the previous history of Kohinoor it is known that this large sized diamond weighing 787 carat was found in the mine of Golakunda of India.

Juma prayer at the Blue Mosque

There are not hundreds but thousands of mosques in this city. All the mosques present delightful spiritually rejuvenating sight. High minarets dominate sky scape.

The mosques of Istanbul are famous throughout the world specially there are some marvelous mosques which are thought to be the unique example of architectural excellence. The Blue Mosque is one of such sterling example of architectural landmarks. Its name is Sultan Muhammad Mosque. In other words it is known as Blue Mosque. The Turkish people believe that this is one of the most wonderful beautiful and majestic mosques of Turkey. Sultan Ahmed, the first, built this mosque. Then his age was only 20 years. Sultan Ahmed did not get satisfaction even after conversion of Haghia-Govina Sophia Church into a mosque. As a result, he built this mosque. Muhammed Agha, an eminent architect of Shishan, supervised and directed the construction works of this mosque. In view of the widespread use of blue tiles this mosque is also called the Blue Mosque.



Partial view of Blue Mosque

Sultan Ahmed, the first, used this mosque as a centre of the proclamation of the edict. The religious holidays were used to be observed in this mosques. The pilgrims for Hajj and Omrah used to start from this mosque. 6 minarets of this mosque are visible from a long distance.



Inner view of Blue Mosque.

The Sultan ordered the architect to built these minarets with gold (Gold plates). Appreciating the religious fervour of the Sultan, he built the minarets with precious stones instead of gold as he thought it an impossibility. The Sultan hung a metal chain as a symbol of his unbounded and profound devotion and submission to Allah. Every time the Sultan would bow down his head in humility and obedience when he passed through this gate riding on horse back in order to enter the mosque. The main chamber of the mosque measured 64 meter x 72 meter. The interior part of the mosque is converted with 30 small sized domes. In the open yard of the mosque, there is a circular fountain of special design. The 260 window of the mosque were glazed with coloured glass panes, The coloured glass of that time was very precious its light used to keep the mosque lighted with colour day and night. Blue-green chips and red carpet on the floor used to keep the carpet bright and radiant. Then the interior of the mosque looked very charming.

The main dome of the mosque is positioned at a height more than 43 meters or 130 feet. Not only that, the diameter of this dome is 24 meter, or more than 70 feet. Four pillars braced with marble stones have upheld the plated dome. Calligraphy i. e. Arabic geometrical design emphathizes the dome. The Mehrab (vaulted space) and the Mimber (pulpit) of Juma congregation have been built with white marble stone which can be said to be an imitation of that has been built in the Masjid-e Nababi by the Turkish Sultan. The wide yard in front of the mosque and the garden on four sides

have further enhanced the beauty of the mosque. There is no practice or rule of preaching, ambousing, exhorting or delivering sermons, either standing on the Mehrab (vaulted circular place reserved for the Imam and the pulpit) or sitting. In one side in a corner, a stage-like platform is maintained in order to deliver religious exhortations.

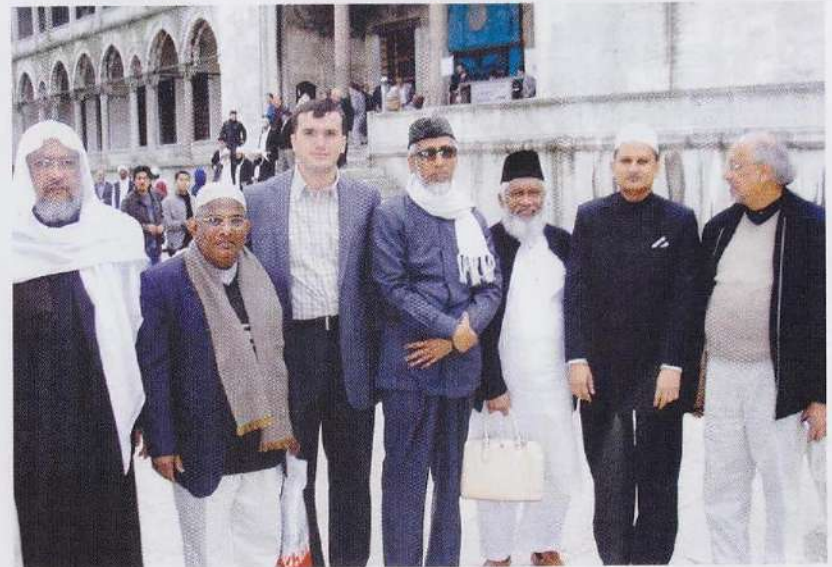
In like manner an erudite person (Alem) aging about 35 to 40 years was delivering admonition in Turkish language from podium, over the mike in the Blue Mosque. The deliberation of exhortation, it is obvious, was punctuated by quotation from the Holy Quran and reference to Hadith (practice & profession of prophet (S.)). The Turkish Imams don special raiment (cloak/smock), wear the Rumi cap, either red or green colour. The cap is braced with white sheet of cloth that looks like the headgear of our country (turban). The body is covered up to the heel with mantle/smock which looks like an overcoat or rain coat. In the closet of the Imam, there are more than such cap and mantle. Wearing Turkish dress, viz, pant and shirt he enters the mosque and dons cloaks and cap in order to lead the prayer. After leading he will change his dress for shirt and pant in this closet will go out with his normal dress. Then there is no scope to recognize him as an Imam (a doctor in theology). The Istanbul city is composed of 7 hills. As such, the mosques top on the hills and the tall minarets are visible from a long distance. It is unthinkable of a mosque in Turkey without a minaret. It is another matter if it is possible in view of adverse circumstances. In Istanbul, there are 7 to large sky souring mosque among them 2 are most famous.

They are two most prominent mosques in Istanbul one of them is Fateh Sultan Muhammad Masjid. Largely known as Solaiman Mosque situated on top of the hill and other is Sultan Ahmed Masjid, otherwise known as Blue Mosque, located very near to Haghia Sophia Church and Topkapi Museum. Our guide Mr. Ismail Akbas, asper schedule look in to the Blue Mosque on Friday morning the 13th May 2011, after visiting the Topkapi Museum. The time for prayer drew near before we could see the museum fully up to our satisfaction. But we were behind the schedule as such belated Mr. Akbas such set programme was a bit disturbed nonetheless we reached Blue Mosque. As a result we began to proceed towards the Blue Mosque without making a through visit of the Topkapi Museum. But scarcely had we reached the mosque when the delivery of the Khutba or sermon began. At first we had our seat in the compound of the mosque. Within a few minutes we have had chance to go inside the mosque. We could not see the deliverer of the Sermon since we were far away from the Khatib. Later on, we could know that the person who delivered the lecture was an African head of state who had come in order to take part in an international conference. The head of the state had come to participate in a summit participated by 48 countries belonging to undeveloped countries

sponsored by the U.N. The summit was conducted 2 or 3 days back. Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of Bangladesh, also took part in the summit of the least developed countries. After Khutba deliberation the honourable Imam led the 2 Rakat Juma Prayer. Since the Turkish predominantly belong to the Sunni Hanafi sect their Namaz correspond to our salat. As soon as the honourable Khatib turned his face from the right to the left after conclusion of salat the honourable Muazzin hummed the following invocatory hymn in loud voice over the mike centering round the Topkapi Museum of Istanbul. Topkapi Museum on an area around of 3 to 4 square kilometers can be called the nerve centre of Turkey where Haghia Sophia is situated.

This area accommodates Haghia Sophia Museum, Topkapi Museum many a park and numerous under-the-open sky restaurants. The Blue Mosque stands erect with its swaggering stature with its 6 tall minarates 2/3 or 4/5 storey star Hotels dot the area. The tourists move about throughout night and day in this area.

The non-Muslims can enter the historic mosques but their movement within those mosques is restricted to certain areas. We chanced to Mr. Salahuddin Kasem Khan, the honorary consul, general of Turkey in Bangladesh, as we came out of the mosque without entourage which was comprised of Mr. Hasan, Mr. Khatib, Mr. Abbu, Guide Mr. Ismail Akbas and he is the patron of our tour to Turkey. In order to participate in the L.D.C



In Blue Mosque circle, Mr. Khatib, Mr. Abbu, Guide Mr. Ismail Akbas, Writer, Mr. Sufi Mizan, Mr. Hasan and Mr. Khan (From left).

submit he has been to Turkey as a state guest. We also met Mr. Bayram who is the principal of the International Turkish Hope Schools in Bangladesh, reputed industrialist Sufi Mizanur Rahman, his spouse Jahanara Rahman, his son Amir Hussain. Mr. Bayram took us all to a restaurant, a huge building with 4 to 5 layers.

Special arrangement was made for us on the roof as we were foreigners to see delectable scenes around hotel during our lunch. Along with the hotel management, the members of the staff were particularly careful about us. Fish was served together with other items of food. Extracted from the Black Sea each of these fishes weighted to 500 gram to 700 gram. They somewhere tasted like the Hilsa fish. This fish is said to be fantastically high priced in Turkey.

After having lunch hosted by Principal Bayram Bay he took us to the nearby Bazar for the purpose of buying and seeing the sights. Later on in the evening, Mr. Fikret Cicek, president of Turkey-Bangladesh chamber hosted a dinner in our honour in an open restaurant. Having dinner we went back to the guest house. If one walks along the path of the huge graveyard of that hill one can come across with the graves of many celebrities, recorded in history together with the engravings of plaques installed in them. From it, it is evident how intensively the outstanding personalities of the state wished to have graves alongside with him.

Zerah of Hazrat Yahiya Effendi (R.)

Istanbul is a city of hills and hillocks. There are more than one hill and hillock on the shore of the strait of Bosphorus that has flowed through the city. On the one side of the strait is Europe and Asia on the other. On a high hill on the European side in repose is Hazrat Yahiya Effendi (R.). Yahiya is his main name and Effendi is a Turkish title. It means the honourable Janab Muhtaram etc. This great saint came to Istanbul with a view to preaching Islam after Sultan Fatih Muhammad, the second, conquered Constantinople in 1453. He is regarded as one of the eminent poets, savants and mentors in this capital of the Ottoman empire.

He was born in 1495 in Mulk-E-Shams. After obtaining education, in his early life, he became a mentor of a very high status or rank. Information as to his extraordinary scholarship erudition was known to all quarters.



Mazar of Hazrat Yahiya Effendi (R.)

The Sultan of Istanbul used to treat him with profound regard. Sometimes he would take advice from him. In his presence, there was always a concourse of people.

In fact, Hazrat Yahiya Effendi (R.) was born in Trabjan in the centre of Damascus of Mulk-E-Sham. In view of his birth in Mulk-E-Sham, the cradle of civilization, education and his learning in Istanbul began to flourish in an extraordinary manner. In view of the excellent relationship with the Sultan, the son of the Sultan sucked the milk of the mother of Yahiya Effendi (R.). There were many disciples and followers of Yahiya Effendi (R.). Many persons used to come to him from different parts of the empire in order to acquire knowledge from him. In the later stage of his life, he built a mosque on the strait of Bosphorus and passed the time in prayer and devotion. He was buried in that hill when he breathed his last at the age of 76 in 1571 A.D.

He obtained so esteem and high respect as a saint of high caliber that many high ranking officials of government and non-government offices in the history of Osmani Sultanate wished to be buried in that hill alongside with him.

As a matter of fact Istanbul has many places worth of offering Zearah. Although the grave of Hazrat Ayub Ansari (R.) is the prime attraction of Prophets (S.) of Zearah for all quarters. On returning home from abroad, I was informed that proximate to that neighbourhood there are many graves of the holy companions of prophet (S.), their companions and companions of the companions downward. As we expressed our wish to offer Zearah at the grave of Hazrat Yahiya Effendi (R.) our guide Mr. Ismail Akbas took us there in the morning on Saturday, the 14th May 2011 to the Mazar complex. We have had our breakfast at the guest house. Led by Mr. Salahuddin Kasem Khan, the honorary Turkish consul general in Bangladesh, our mini bus began to proceed towards the strait of Bosphorus where our fellow travellers were.

At around 10 am we began to move forward along the road by the strait of Bosphorus. Then we were observing the charming delightful scenes and sights of the Bosphorus on the one hand and on the other side of the road, on the slope the spectacular pictures of the houses, hotels, restaurants attached to the roads and the slope of the hill. After passing a few kilometers through such balmy and serene sights our mini bus began to ascend to the steep road attached to the hills. The road through the hill is so steep that there is a chance of great mishappening at the event of a break failure. The mini bus that carried us was a new one ritzy and glitzy with shine in fact. The driver too is a veteran one. As a matter of fact, In Turkey, it is hard to find a worn out vehicle.

Our mini bus moved towards the entrance of the Mazar and stopped after proceeding through ascending ways. Getting down from the mini bus we

entered the Mazar complex. Here prevails a secluded atmosphere exuding a heavenly aura applied our mind to offering Zearah on the top of a very high hill. It seemed the frame structure of the Mazar has been made with wood and steel joined together. On the one side Hazrat Yahiya Effendi (R.) is lying in repose and on the other side there are 7 to 8 graves.

The graves of Turkey are a bit steep in the middle and a bit high towards the head and a bit low towards the feet. Letters engraved in Turkish Alphabet are giving their names. In all probability the graves are of the persons near to Hazrat Yahiya Effendi (R.). The use of English in Turkey is very low.

It appears that among the Turks more than to 5 to 7 percent do not know English. In recent years, introduction of English learning process has been increasing very rapidly. Through the window of the Mazar the Bosphorus strait is conspicuously visible.

After Zearah offering we walked about the Mazar and the graves of 7 to 8 persons for 5 to 7 minutes or so in order to observe them. Side by side with Zearah we could understand a little bit of Turkish language inscribed on the graves in view of the close resemblance between Turkish and English language. Many graves of historically renowned persons caught our sight in the graveyard. In the mosque and Mazar Complex a lot of books and papers are available.

But they are all in Turkish tongue. Spending nearly an hour of Zearah and walking a certain distance descending the hill we went to a tourist spot in order to have tea and coffee. There is security railings by way of caution around the table. There are many chairs with parasol serving as canopy over them. There are many such spots for having bout of coffee after sauntering about on both sides of the Bosphorus strait. Everything here is exorbitantly high priced. All of us have had common coffee but since Mr. Khan is habituated to taking Turkish coffee, Turkish coffee was ordered for him. Turkish coffee is black, thick and bitter. None of us is inclined to have such coffee. It is natural, as such, for him to go to Turkey more than once a year. It is evident from this that many a thing of Turkey has entered his marrow and blood.

The temperature of Turkey has gone up much within a space of 2 days' time. Today the weather is less humid and temperate resplendent and shiny in sunlight. The atmosphere is salutary. The wind of the strait is not cold, rather it is cold tolerable. There is a beautiful mosque nearby this tourist spot. Some of us saw the mosque that contains, invariably dome and globe. Passing an hour or so, we enjoyed the exquisite beauty. We enjoyed the sight of the passing grant shaped cargo ship in the strait together with the multicolored yachts plying in the straight gracefully with tourists.

Towards the noon time we went to the famous headquarters of the NGO of Turkey as per our set programme.

Service oriented projects of N.G.O.

In Turkey, at the foot of a hill of Istanbul, a high storeyed building of 8 to 10 tiers headquarters an NGO of Turkey is named Kimse Yok Mu. The sponsors of the NGO have wanted to explain the purport/motif in the following manner : the cry of the poor or the cry of the children of the poor. A terrible earthquake jolted Turkey in the year 1919.

At that time some Turkish people came forward to help distressed people affected by the earthquake. The people who extended their helping hands in this calamity organized themselves and formed an organization benefiting humankind, the name of which was titled Kimse Yok Mu.

Today, in Turkey, the forming of a well organized NGO organization was made possible because of the dedication of some people whose service has spread throughout the world. Today one has to become wonder-struck on seeing their service oriented projects throughout the world. They are implementing their service oriented projects in many countries beyond their own national territorial boundaries. Not only that, but also they extend helping hands to people of developed country like Japan during the last Tsunami soon after disaster had affected it. Thus they extend the hands of cooperation in various sectors in Bangladesh. They are also conducting service oriented schemes in various sectors. Establishing a school in Galacipa of Barisal they are conducting the management of the school. 200 to 300 students attend that school. During the last Ramzan, they distributed food and clothes in the rural areas of the country. They donated 7000 heads of cattle to the poor people in the destitute undeveloped parts of the country during the time of sacrifice for consumption. On Saturday the 14th May 2011, we went, sometime around the noon to the headquarter of that NGO. Since we had programme there, prior to our departure Mr. Jalal Gul, the chief executive of that NGO, received us cordially. Mr. Ismail Akbas, our Turkish guide, introduced each of us to him. The chief executive Mr. Jalal Gul of that NGO took us directly to the conference hall. In the conference hall, we were entertained, took our meal and had exchange of preliminary ideas. Then Mr. Jalal Gul began to apprise us of the different schemes undertaken by this NGO. At a stretch for about 30 to 35 minutes, he apprised us of the different schemes undertaken by his NGO in English. Then the session of our asking questions began. 60 officials and workers work in this headquarter.



Headquarter of NGO

In Turkey 24 branch offices are working day and night with this purpose in view. 20 thousand enlisted volunteers both male and female, are engaged in the organization. Their service programme schemes spread throughout the world. But they work predominantly in the Balkan and African continent. At present they have undertaken schemes for the uplift of the poor women.

From 68 countries of the world they get a grant of 30 million dollar annually in order to finance their projects. They face no paucity of fund in order to work for benefit of humankind throughout the world. We completed our Johar prayer and were led to the dinning hall. 30 to 40 persons can dine together in that dinning hall. The officials and workers of that office take lunch in this dinning hall.

We also sat by the dinning table along with their female workers too on one side. Each of us was served with a large sized fish, salad and curd together with tea. The Turks, like the Iranians, love taking tea without milk while taking food. The management informed us that in order to acquaint us to their daily meals they did not add any additional item of food on that day.

In view of its location at the 8 to 10 floor at the foot of a hill from the ground floor to the third floor from the entrance, the three floors of the building are in the down floors. There are kitchens and arrangements for taking food. We spent 2 to 3 hours in their headquarter and then went out to attend our set programmes.

Foundation of Journalists and Writers

In the nerve centre of Istanbul plain land, a multistoreyed building stands, with gaiety. This is mainly an office of the forum of writers and journalists. The name of the body is Journalists and Writers Foundation. When around noon on Saturday, 14th May, we reached this office led by Mr. Salahuddin Kasem Khan, the high executive welcomed us there and our guide Mr. Ismail Akbas introduced us one after another to him.

Being the honorary consul general Salahuddin Kasem Khan visits Turkey regularly in his official capacity. In various places of Istanbul, he is very familiar and well respected.

It is almost same here. The high ranking officials of the writers and journalists forum led us to a specially large room below. In one side of the room a screen has been installed. On the wall on other three sides long sofa sets have been set with tables in front of them.

No fewer than 25 to 30 persons can sit on them even in the minimum. After exchange of ideas with the officiating personnel, as per Turkish practice of the writers and journalists foundation tea without milk and snack of dry items was served.

In Turkey, like our country, there is no practice of taking tea after having a glass of water after finishing food.

Invariably there will be tea drink in small tea cup side by side with food. Of course the tea is without milk. The Turks take tea in small quantity side by side with food. Once the tea is finished it is served again. Pouring of tea is repeated.

A high ranking official began to apprise us with the pictures projected on the screen of the schemes of the foundation after the end of the session of repast. As a matter of fact, the foundation is the of 8 to 9 journalists and writers' organizations founded in 1994. Mr. Fotteullah Gulen, one of the most eminent workers, was chosen as president of this foundation. Presently pre-eminent writer journalist Mr. Mustafa Yesin is its president. This foundation started its maiden journey on the 19th June 1994.

They wanted to make us understand for nearly an hour in Turkey that they are working for free and unhindered journalism and writing. During their briefing covering almost an hour they said the people of Turkey are getting



Journalists and Writers Foundation Office

opportunities to learn about Turkey and the outside world through their open and unhindered writing. Their publications and writings say that they are in favour of the freedom of speech. They informed us that 8 to 9 organizations of writers and journalists have formed the forum and they are united under that body. Through its patronisation they are expressing opinion in Turkey.

In view of this the Turks are learning and understanding a lot of things. The official also tried to make us understand that the journalists and writers have become targets of persecution and oppression while trying to express will and opinion freely. But freedom of speech and expression has been established today in Turkey. It seemed, through his one hour long deliberation, he endeavoured to give us an idea of the programmes of that foundation. Then he showed us their office through an intensive round up. On seeing the snapshots in different rooms it became conspicuous that the personalities of higher echelon of the government have visited the foundation time to time once or more than once.

Among them the president, the prime minister, the speaker, the ministers are some of the important visitors. Not only that, many famous foreign dignitaries are also among the people who have visited it. The present prime minister, Mr. Erdogan, has visited this foundation more than once.

Spending nearly 2 hours here we started to proceed towards the Camlica Hills.

A resort in hill

Seven hills comprise the Istanbul City. It is one of the famous tourist haunting hills among them.

In fact, Camilica today and the Pier Lotti hills that we visited the day before yesterday the people of our country will naturally call mountains.

It seems they will exceed the mountains and hills of Bandarban Area. The minibus that carried us began to ascend to the height in a circular way to the Camilica hills. Among the hills of Istanbul, this hill is the most attractive and fascinating. This hill was barred from the visit of the public during the long spell of military or military backed regime. Since this hill is as much charming as it is high, this hill has a special fascination in Istanbul.

Side by side with restaurant, residential hotels came to view in the slope of the ascending ways as the bus was moving ahead. The number was gradually diminishing. It became clearly evident that there are only a few residential hotels. After Tayef became premier the members of the general public got the right to visit this hill.

As a consequence thereof, the number of restaurants sharply rose up there.

When our bus reached the peak after ascending the snaky ways of the hill it was either 6 or 6.30 pm in Istanbul. Here it is replete with numerous men and women. The place is thick with innumerable people of both the sexes.

Sitting on long fixed chairs some are taking chips or peanuts. Again, on going to open or closed door restaurant some are taking tea, coffee and repast spending high amount of money. But for us it is a matter of wonder that no Turk was seen throwing the waste things rampantly in an indiscriminate manner except in dustbin or in a designated definite place.

Another noticeable thing is that surroundings around Istanbul are visible from here. The relevant authority bears the responsibility of maintaining the hill properly together with up-keeping the gardens of smaller size on it.



Garden on Top of the Hill.

The authority takes special care and attention on maintaining it as a detectable place. Turks are selling fruits of the rural area in an itinerant and moving manner. We savoured some of them spending some amount of Lira.

Side by side with interaction with Turks we were having tea, coffee and slight repast. In view of lesser cold today, we were not feeling much cold on top of the hill then. Weather was salubrious.

In view of the absence of fog a far distance of Istanbul came within the range of our sight.

We were touring Turkey only for 6 days according to programme set by the Turkish cultural centre. It exerted a little bit pressure on us. The relevant authority wanted to take us to the places as much as possible. Our guide Ismail Akbas was careful in maintaining the schedule of the authority although we could act as per schedule.

Mr. Khan felt uneasy at this. Here together with taking tea and repast, we looked at the detectable sights of Istanbul and engaged ourselves making pleasant gossip among us. When we insinuated, in a humorous way, to Mr. Salahuddin Kasem Khan, the honorary consul general in this regard, he dubbed Mr. Ismail a great general, meticulous in execution of orders,



Sunset view in European portion

giving a gleam of pleasant surprise and ventilated a loud laughter. He paid tribute to him for strictly adhering to the schedule from then on. We used to call Mr. Ismail Akbas a general.

In our country newly married couple goes to Cox's Bazar for honeymoon. The newly married couple frequents this hill leisurely moving about in a mood of elation and exorbitant joy.

The bridegroom is not easily recognizable because of his ordinary dress, conversely. The bride is easily distinguishable since she is dressed in her bridal attire. The couples shoot about in an exhilarated mood.

From this it is clearly understandable that it is the apparel of a newly married Turkish couple. Such newly married couples in large number frequent this haunting place. Pleasantly walking about the place, and spending 2 hours in this hill we set out for offering Zearah at the Mazar of Hazrat Yusha (A.).

Zearah of Hazrat Yusha (A.)

Hazrat Yusha (A.) lies in eternal sleep on top of a hill in the suburb of Istanbul city. The grave attached to the mosque is at least 30 feet in length. Nonetheless the graves attached to the graveyard are normal in size looking like the graves of modern days in size like the ordinary grave. Only this grave is an exception. This grave is covered with swathe of grass on four sides. A few feet away from the grave, there is a bound of wall with a grill fence on it. The Zearah offering people enter the compound and offer Zearah in a standing posture. A little bit below the hill, there is a parking lot. On the other side of the parking space, there are more than one restaurants and some shopping stalls, numbering about 8 to 10. This hill is on the strait of Bosphorus and at the shore of the black sea and the Bosphorus strait. Camalica is slowly coming down from the Camalica hills through the snaky ways. We reached the Asian part of Istanbul passing through the 6 lane suspension bridge, built over the strait of Bosphorus. Then we began to proceed towards the north through the road alongside skirting the strait.

After going forward a few kilometers we crossed the area of an 8 lane suspension bridge built in 1988 over the strait of Bosphorus.

The mini bus went on forward sometimes alongside the shore and sometimes through the road, a bit away from destination. While the bus was on the move we were seeing the Asian part of Istanbul. There was no dirt and rubbish amidst this busy town.

Wherever the eyesight fell everything such as restaurant houses, stalls of shops look spruce and deft. Everything is arranged in neat and clean order. Nonetheless it seemed the Asian part was a bit lagging behind the European part of Istanbul in respect of development. Our mini bus was proceeding on towards the north.

It seemed the destination is unendingly. After nearly an hour, we reached the outskirts of Istanbul, leaving the city behind.

Then turning towards the left from the road it began to ascend the hill. After going a little distance our mini bus stopped at a predetermined place. Then we ascended further higher coming down from the bus. We performed ablution and lavatory service in biting cold going to the nearby mosque. Then we attended to the task of Zearah after saying afternoon (ASR) prayer. Then it was nearly 7.30 or 7.45 pm.



Mazar of Hazrat Yusha (A.)

At the evening we observed many Turks among the Zearah offers. At the entrance of the mosque leading to the grave an inscription Yusha Hill and Yusha Prophet was found inscribed on the wall. There it is written that it is the highest hill on the strait of Bosphorus. The situations of the mosque and the grave of Yusha (A.) are on the top of the hill.

This hill has touched the Bosphorus strait in the west and the northern side of the hill has touched the Black Sea. To the Turks it is a holy place par excellence. Infact many important personalities including Selim, the third, came here to offer Zearah. Under the aegis of the Sultan this grave and mosque were renovated. It is said that the grave of Hazrat Yusha (A.) is 17 meter long. According to saints and sages, this is the grave of Hazrat

Yusha (A.) In fact, it is not a hill, but a mountain. He came here crossing the strait of Bosphorus.

We stayed in the mini bus after coming down from the hill on completion of Zearah. Then the bus speeded towards the city. On reaching we offered the mugrib prayer.

After proceeding for 30/35 minutes we reached the nerve centre of the Asian part of Istanbul. Mr. Yalcin, an eminent industrialist of the city of Istanbul, has condescended to host a dinner in our honour. The dinner was hosted at his residence. He is an outstanding industrialist of the Asian part. We reached there after 9pm. Through the mobile phone our guide Mr. Ismail Akbas ascertained the location of his house. Mr. Yalcin had been waiting for us from 7 pm after keeping the recipe ready for us. Immediately after reaching the residence he led us to the dining hall. The ladies took pains to prepare food. It is obvious that food has not been brought from the restaurant. They have been prepared in the household; they are home cuisine. I ate 8 to 11 types of cuisine together with sweet-meat. We proceeded towards our guest house at around 11 pm. From the Asian part we crossed over to the western part of Istanbul through the suspension bridge built on the strait. Then we began to proceed towards the guest house. Although there was some uproar and hit on both sides of the roads stillness of night prevailed in the city. It is easily perceptible that the people who were engaged in hectic and grinding tremendous hard work in the day are now steeped in sleep.

It is deep night in Istanbul. It is worth mentioning here that I offered Fateha at the grave of Hazrat Yusha (A.) in 1997 in Baghdad when I went to Iraq for one week or so. On the other hand, I could not offer Zearah at the grave purported to be the Mazar of Hazrat Yusha (A.) at that time since it was a bit away from Amman, the capital of Jordan. In view of this it is natural that there will be divergence of opinions as to what is the actual grave of Hazrat Yusha (A.).

However, it is true that one of the three graves is a genuine grave of Hazrat Yusha (A.) and other 2 graves might be the graves of some two saintly persons, dear to Allah (S.).

In the holy Quran, there are more than one verses about Hazrat Yusha (A.). In the exegesis it is mentioned that Hazrat Yusha (A.) is the son of Hazrat Musa (A.) and the son of the grandson of Hazrat Yusuf (A.).

Hazrat Yusha (A.) was buried in Hebron of Palestine together with Hazrat Ibrahim's (A.) mosque and Mazar. On the other hand, Hazrat Musa (A.) is lying in repose in a place on the way of Jerusalem-Amman road, 10 k.m. away from Jerusalem.

According to the exegesis Yusha (A.) together with Abraham (A.) is lying in Hebron of Palestine attached to the mosque and the grav- yard. All these are hypothetical.

Cruising in the Strait of Bosphorus

It has been scheduled that on Sunday morning, the 5th May, we will have a cruise in the strait of Bosphorus. Mr. Akbas, our guide told us the previous night that our breakfast will be arranged by a businessman on the Bosphorus in stead of our guest house.

By 9 in the morning we were ready according to Mr. Akbas's programme and accordingly we started by a mini bus, reserved for us, for the spot on the Bosphorus. Within 25 to 30 minutes we reached just in front of a restaurant on the Bosphorus. Mr. Bay Ram Saatei, the principal of some International Turkish Hope Schools in Bangladesh, received and welcomed us. Under the leadership of Salahuddin Kasem Khan, our group leader, we entered into the restaurant and took our seats. As we had previous acquaintance with Mr. Bayram, he was pleased to introduce Mr. Hasan, Mr. Khatib, Mr. Abbu and me to the owner of the restaurant. In this connection I should make it known to you that Mr. Sufi Mizan has gone to his own programme with his family.

In fact the owner of the restaurant is a friend of Mr. Bayram. Mr. Bayram's friend has invited us as he came to learn that we, some Bangladeshis, as guests and tourists, came here to a breakfast in his own restaurant. The name of owner of the restaurant is Mr. Celal.



Strait of Bosphorus.

There are hundreds of restaurants on both sides of Bosphorus. These restaurants are of high standard. These are decorated outside with beautiful gardens. The restaurant in which we have entered is called Kale-Café which is very famous in the city of Istanbul.

As soon as we took our seats, the waiters and bearers of the shop surrounded us and they began to serve various dishes. There are many types of coffee and tea in this restaurant. Over and above, there are various fruit juice and breakfast items. It has already been stated that the Turks use less spices and less oil in cooking. As a result, Turkish food is upto my choice. But due to gastritis I like to avoid fruit juice and raw salad. After finishing breakfast we left the restaurant to start for our cruise in the Bosphorus.

By government rules and arrangement there are many points to start cruising in the strait of Bosphorus. The Dolma Bahche boarding point is close to us there. As soon as we reached there a medium size ship berthed there. The name of the ship is Dan Dan. It looked fresh and clean and also seemed to be a new one. The ship is open all around. So it is convenient to look and observe outside scenes. This is two storeyed and it has a capacity to carry 20 to 25 persons.

But including Mr. Bayram and his friend we are, in total, only eight travelers. There is an assistant also with the pilot. Starting from the European side we were proceeding towards the Black Sea. At first we crossed the 1st hanging bridge and we passed the second one. Both the hanging bridges are built in such a high altitude that very big cargo ships even can sail under the bridges from the Mediterranean and enter the Black Sea via the sea of Marmara. Though the length of the Bosphorus is 32 kilometre, most portion of the strait of Bosphorus falls under the jurisdiction of the great city of Istanbul. That means, the city of Istanbul spreads on both sides of the strait of the Bosphorus.

There are hundreds and thousands of residences, palaces, mosques, forts, beautiful gardens and big hotels and restaurants etc. Due to these establishments and beautiful buildings etc., this city along with the Bosphorus is one of the most attractive places in the world.

The strait of Bosphorus has divided the Istanbul city into 2 parts. The meaning of Bosphorus is: The point of a channel where the cow crosses the water course and this name has been taken from legend.

Loa was very favourite to Zeus. But Hera, the wife of Zeus, was envious of Loa. Zeus converted Loa into a cow in order to protect her. But Hera sent a bee near the cow. This bee annoyed the cow so much that the cow was compelled to step in the water and went to other side, crossing the water channel.



On ship during visit of Strait of Bosphorus.

Bosphorus strait is the only water channel to pass to the Mediterranean Sea via Marmara Bay from the Black Sea. The length of the Bosphorus strait is nearly 32 k.m. Its breadth varies from 3 to 5 k.m. But the breadth of the narrowest point is 660 meter. Since silt does not fill the channel its depth is very deep nearing almost 70 meter. At some points of this strait, the depth is almost 100 meters. It has two types of flow, the upper flow of the water flows from the Black sea to the Marmara Bay. On the other side, at a level of 40 meter, the salty water flows from the Marmara Sea to the Black Sea. Consequently, the vast mass of glacial water of the Black Sea passes through the strait to the Marmara Sea. The Bosphorus strait is one of the great sources of revenue of Turkey. On both sides of the strait there are lots of hotel, houses, mosques, forts including other facilities. Many Sultans during their reign, were busy in fortifying this vital strait.

Together with it, they built multiple facilities including castle, palace, mosque etc. On both sides of this strait through this channel, innumerable vessels ply between the Marmara and the Black Sea. Centering this strait thousands of yachts remain afloat on the strait for the recreation of the tourists, the number of which is fantastically and incredibly high.

Apart from small and big sailing boats, massive vessels, both cargo and passenger, ply and float in this strait. The vessels are multi-tiered, reaching the proportion of 10 to 12 layered buildings.

The vessels are equipped and furnished with all modern facilities for the recreation and comfortable night spending of the tourists. The facilities begs description since the facilities are on an unimaginable dimension. It is varied as well as various.

The 2 bridges, built on the strait, are at such an attitude that the vessels can easily pass through them. We have had a glimpse of the sights on both sides of the strait by hiring a boat for cruise in the strait on Friday afternoon. The boat was of medium standard. We cruised about on the strait for one hour and a half to 2 hours with pleasant frame of mind.

Another palace called Kakukachee is situated in the Asian region of the Bosphorus strait. Sultan Abdul Mukeed built this palace as a summer resort in 1856. It was used by the Sultans as a summer haunt. Apart from this palace, on both the shores, there are both small and large sized castle-palaces. On the 50th anniversary of the Republic of Turkey, the first suspension bridge on the Bosphorus strait was inaugurated on the 29th October 1973. The German firm Hochtief and the British firm Cleaveland Bridge built this world famous hanging bridge, spanning over a period of 3.5 years. It stands on 2 pillars; the distance between the 2 pillars is one thousand 74 meters, i.e. nearly 3 thousands and five hundreds feet. The height of the 2 pillars is 165 meter, i.e. nearly 500 feet 64 meter above the water surface. This 6 lane bridge is 33.40 meter in breadth. It was the 2nd longest hanging bridge of Europe of that time. It is 5th longest hanging bridge in the world. This bridge occupies 5th position after Hamper Bridge of England, Verrazano Narrows of New York, Golden Gate Bridge of Sanfrancisco, Mackinac Bridge of Michigan. More than 2 lac vehicles ply daily regularly through this bridge. This bridge stands erect as one of the outstanding landmarks of Istanbul city. This bridge has bridged the European part of Istanbul with its Asian part. Innumerable vessels from the Black Sea ply to the Mediterranean Sea via the Marmara Sea through this bridge. Ingenuity and perspective of the Turkish engineers command esteem and appreciation.

The cowards get fear to cross the bridge as the bridge is so high from water level and the distance from one pillar to another pillar is very long. Seeing this bridge the former mayor of Chittagong city Mohiuddin Chowdhury took a decision to build a hanging bridge on the Karnafully river and naturally I support it.

Due to over pressure of the vehicles of both sides on this only bridge, the Turkey government built another hanging bridge on the Bosphorus Strait near the north side of Istanbul City. This bridge was inaugurated on 3rd July, 1988 after working 26 months at a stretch. And this bridge was named after "Father Sultan Muhammad". Turkey, Japanese and Italian firms built this bridge. It is 66 meters high from water level and the breadth in 39 meters. The distance between two pillars is 1050 meters. The total length of the bridge is 1550 meters.



Coast of Strait of Bosphorus

While we were in the cruise the assistant of the pilot of the entertained us with tea. In such a time light tea is very enjoyable. There is arrangement of tea etc. in this pleasure ship. After cruising for about two hours in the Bosphorus, we disembarked in our appointed spot. Salahuddin Kasem Khan, the honorary Consul General, went to Topkapi Museum and went to the Suleymaniya Mosque, the central mosque of Istanbul.

Suleymaniya Mosque (Central Mosque)

Istanbul, a city of mosques and the central mosque, is known as Suleymaniya Mosque. In commemoration of his historic conquest of Hungary in Europe on returning to his country, he built it. This mosque has been built in 1550-1557. This mosque is an important edifice of the Osmani Sultanat. Sulaiman, the first, decided to build this mosque on completion of his 3 years rule. This is one of the unique objects of Turkish architectural artifice. This mosque stands on one of the 7 hills of Istanbul. Barring the yard and the veranda, this mosque stands with a huge dome centering the mosque on this hill.

Academy, inns, hospitals, kitchens, bath etc. have grown up around it. Built with rare marble stone and granite of ancient times this mosque stands on 24 columns. This columns have buttressed up the dome from the outyard. On Friday, during Juma prayer, vast congregation of devotees used to assemble here.



View of Suleymaniya Mosque.

This mosque and the hill are situated in the European part of Istanbul. The situation of this mosque is not far from the Bosphorus strait, Blue mosque, Hagea-Sophea and the Topkapi Museum on the shore of the strait. In the gallery of this Suleymaniya Mosque, there was separate arrangement for women for performing Namaj even at that age and since then it continues. It has been built in such a way that the sound of the prayer of Imam and religious discourse can reach the devotees inside, outside and everywhere from the Mehrab of the mosque. (Mihrab-circular vented extension of the mosque at the front of the Imam). Under the central vast dome of the mosque hanging chandelier light has been set in such a way that it can prevent the spider. Since there was no electricity in the 16th century, hundreds of oil lamp used to light the mosque. The graves of Sulaiman, the first, and his famous Russian born consort Roxatine lie in domed tombs, attached to the mosque. The construction of this mosque came to a halt in the middle of work because of colossal amount of expenses. Due to this, the Sultan was much indebted, said in the outside world including Persia, although it is not admissible that the Sultan would fall into financial crisis in view of the vast empire of the Sultan. Khalifa Sulaiman, the first, was one of the most powerful Sultans among the Osmani Sultans. In his vast empire, he has made a lot of charitable works as well as religious works. Nonetheless, he lived an unostentatious life. Sultan Sulaiman, the 1st, was contemporary to Moghul emperor Akbar of India, Shah Ismail of Persia, Queen Elizabeth I of England, Charles, the 5th, of Germany, Francis, the 5th, of France. The Sultan felt a sense of complacency in being able to build this mosque. The graves of the important personalities of the Osmani Sultanat lie in the portion towards the direction of the mosque. At a little distance from the mosque on top of the hill, stand some shops of 'Essentials' including restaurant. Besides, there are flower arcades and towering trees. On all sides of the mosques, proper arrangements exist for sitting. It is notable that Sultan Mohammad Gouri built Muslim empire in India in 1112. Sultan Kutub Uddin Aibek ascended the throne of Delhi in 1206. Sultan Alauddin Khiljee is their successor.

He was installed on the throne of Delhi in 1296. In spite of distance it is natural for them to have contact with the Sultans of India. The first 7 to 8 of the Osmani Sultans were contemporaneous to the Sultans and kings preceding the Moghul rule. But the various installations including mosques that exist in the Indian subcontinent including Goura and Sonargaon are no match for the mosque, palaces and other installations built by the Sultans of Osmani Sultanat. Seated in Delhi from Babar to Aurangazeb 6 emperors ruled over India.

They were very powerful. During their rule they have built many establishments, mosques and forts in India including Bengal. The Juma Mosque of Delhi, the Badshahi mosque of Lahore included the famous

mosques of Indian sub-continent under no circumstances can be compared with the mosques built by the Sultans of the Osmani Sultanat.

On seeing the Topkapi palace as a museum I began to think where the establishments of the Sultans and Moghuls of Delhi are. In the Indian sub-continent the Agra Fort is regarded as the most rich. Then comes the Red Fort of Delhi. But all these can reach nowhere near the palaces of Osmani Sultanat, to say the least of comparison. The Masjid-E-Nababi is the most impressive and splendid religious establishment in the world now. From 1986 King Fahad over a stretch of 11 years has expanded the Masjid E-Nababi, spending thousand crores of Rial. This is the most spectacular and magnificent mosque. The Turkish engineers, technicians, workmen and helpers have built it. On top of this the religious Aura and mystique this mosque infuses are largely due to its unique craftsmanship. From 1988 King Fahad has expanded the Makkah Mukarram Masjedul Harem on the western side with the addition of 2 minarets. This expanded Harem was built by the Turkish people. That is to say, the Turkish people are much ahead of other people in the sphere of architecture. The Osmania Sultanat became defunct 100 years ago. Yet they have retained a very strong status in the world, the glaring example of which is the completion of the 2 Harem Sharifs.

It is unthinkable of a mosque in Turkey without one or more than one domes. Without dome one or two mosques may exist in the rural areas. I found many under-construction mosques in Turkey during my 10 days'



Inner View of Suleymaniya Mosque

stay in Turkey. These mosques are also being constructed in the style of the mosques built hundreds of years ago. It is easily understood.

Compound outside the mosque, the charitable complexes and the lines of shops were around these establishments. During our roaming we offered Fateha at the graves of the Sultans and other persons. My personal impression is that the Blue Mosque has been modeled on the model of Masjid-E-Nababi and stands comparatively on a plain ground, specially the Mehrab. On the other hand, this Sulamani though not exactly resemble the Jerusalem mosque, it closely resembles the mosque of Jerusalem. As like as the mosque of Baitul Mukaddes, this mosque also stands on one of the 7 hills. In 1997 I had the privilege to visit Jerusalem and Sulamani seemed to me that it closely resembled the mosque of Baitul Mukaddes.

The dress and movement of the people are as like as the people of Palestine. Even the features of body of the Turks are to a large extent like the physical features of the Palestinians.



Partial view of Istanbul Metropolitan city in Strait of Bosphorus

The Juma Masjid of Delhi and Baitul Mukarram of Dhaka have the aura and solemnity religious sanctity. This mosque in Istanbul has retained such religious sanctity and aura I believe. Although it is called Sulamani mosque in writing, it also called locally Sulaiman Fateh Ali Muhammad mosque, since the name of the Sultan is Sulaiman Fateh Ali Muhammad.

After finishing our cruise in the strait of Bosphorus we arrived at the world famous Solaiman Mosque. Off course I had the opportunity of visiting this mosque when I came to visit Turkey in June 2008. At that time massive extension and renovation work of the mosque was going on. Now this grand Mosque looks very beautiful and dazzling. Another famous mosque of Istanbul is the Blue Mosque which is also called Sultan Ahmad Mosque. It is not ornamented. It is just a big mosque. But the Sulaiman Mosque has wide and big complex. Mr. Hasan, Mr. Khatib, Mr. Abbu and myself, that is, we four said our prayers there and walked around for some time. As our guide Mr. Ismail Akbas went to Topkapi Museum to bring Mr. Khan, we four passed the noon time in going and visiting round about. When the car reached with Khan Sahib we started for our guest house.

Old City Konya and Allama Rumi (R.)

Holy and famous as a religious site of Turkey, in connection with the observance of its 9 thousand 400 years of history, really Konya is one of the most ancient cities of the world. Snow swirls over the city during winter. Off course during the summer it is too hot. Abundant rain also falls. Konya is noted for its historic, cultural and natural wealth. At all time of history it is a famed and important city and once it was the capital of Seljuk dynasty of Anatolia. The Aladi hill, mosque madrasa at Karati bear testimony to the time of that period, including vestige of many old complexes. The Turkish government effected much development of Konya for sure.

Konya prides in enchanting takes. Konya is one of the largest cities of Turkey. Many hills and hillocks sprawl the area. The hills ramble from the east to the west. The carolic mountain of the Bosdak range is at a height of 1919 metre. Idoch, the highest mountain is 3240 metres high at its peak.

The Mazar of Hazrat Shamsuddin Tabriyee, the mentor of Allama Rumi ® is only half a kilo metre away. His Shrine is in the anterior courtyard, attached to the mosque. The Alauddin Masjid is adjacent to this. This mosque is famed as the central mosque of Konya, although the Shrine of Moulana Rumi has a special feature. This mosque has been built by the



Outer view of Allama Rumi Mazar.

Sultan of Seljuk after 1116. The other famous mosque of Konya is on the summit of the hill. There are graves of the kings and emperors around its periphery. At a distance nearly about 1.5 to 2 k.m away stands the Shrine of Hazrat Syed Sadruddin Konovi. He died in 1274. The governor of Konya repaired the mazar and the annexure in 1874. It is said that “Wahdatul Ojud” chapter of Masnabi written by Moulana Rumi reflects profusely the philosophy of Hazrat Sadruddin Konovi. In fact, Allama used to regard Hazrat Sadruddin with great reverence. He also used to visit his Mazar imploring grace and benediction of Allah. A throng always converges to his grave. The hill of Alauddin Kaikobad is an enchanting haunt for the tourists in Konya. It is one KM away from the Shrine complex of Moulana Rumi ®. In the middle stands the huge mosque of Alaudin Kaikobad on a colossal hill.

On one side of it, the tombs of the former emperors stand as witness to bygone times. On other 3 sides of this imposing hill, flower green garden abounds in besides a few restaurants. This captivating hill is famous in Konya for evening jaunt. Tram and cars ply together with small and big buses in the city.

Weekly Sema assembly is arranged in Konya. Now one has to enjoy this Sema meet in exchange of 50 lira per head. In the premises of the Mazar, the annual Sema meet is held under the open sky. On the other hand, throughout the year, near the Shrine gate in a hall, in late noon, Sema assemblage is held twice or thrice a week.

During the life time of Moulana Rumi, there was an interior yard, Sema assemblage Hall outside the mosque, i.e. opposite to the Kibla-the direction. It seemed he used to hold Sema Mahfil in the Sema assemblage hall side by side with prayer and penitence in the mosque. Allama Rumi (R.) and his father's graves are behind the mosque i.e towards the direction of Kibla. The graves of Rumi (R.) and his father are covered with separate sheets of clothes, called Gilap.

Separate Rumi caps are set on the sides of the head. Behind the mosque in the direction of Kibla there are 20 to 30 graves. Every grave is covered with wraps and separate Rumi caps are on the side of the head. The graves are sloppy. Towards the head they are high and towards the feet they are low, i.e. in reclining poster.

The mosque and the Assemblage Hall are almost of the same size. It seemed nearly 70 to 80 persons can pray together in this mosque. The mosque, Sema Mahfil Khana, all the graves on the direction of Kibla, the graves on the left side—are all within the perimeter of the Mazar complex. Beside the Mazar, apart from these, there are 3 small sized Mazars. Among them, one is Murad Pasha (R.) and another is Hazrat K.G. Fatema Khatun Tobrize 994 Hijree, 1585. Hazrat Sinan Pasha (R.) Tabrize (R.) 981 Hijree, 1573 and Hazrat Khurram Pasha Tabrize (R.) 961 Hijree 1553.

Although the details of these 3 were not available, at first sight it appears, obviously, they would have been very close to Allama Rumi (R.). The compound stands as the centre of religious activity including Sema guest house.

Replicating the form of real man the manner of making bread and its baking has been shown vividly in order to give a comprehensive idea about the process. On seeing this one may form the impression that among the helpers of Moulana Rumi (R.) some are, till to day, making bread, some are baking the bread and some are serving as usual as if they were alive.

On their heads are set Rumi cap wrapped with turban, the room beside the kitchen is guest house. There Allama Rumi (R.) together with his 10 to 12 admirers are seen as they were eating food. At first sight one will not be able to realize that all these scenes are made of stones and artificially set. On the other side of the compound is the location of the museum of Allama Rumi (R.). There, a venerated memento of Hazrat Muhammad (S.) has been preserved. A hall attached to the museum exists where 50 to 60 persons can sit. There video is being shown all the time depicting the activities of Moulana Rumi (R.). On the other side of the museum there are more than one book stall where books written in Arabic, English, Turkish and Persian languages have been kept for sale.

All the above mentioned facilities are within the premises of the Mazar complex where one has to enter with ticket 2 Lira per head. There, one can stay from 9 a.m. to 7.30 p.m. Outside the Mazar complex, a big mosque surrounded by gardens on three sides exudes its religious sanctity and solemnity. In this mosque, men and women numbering about 3 to 4 thousand can perform their prayer. This mosque has been built according to the typical Turkish mosque in 1567-74. At that time in the month of June, the sun sets after 8 p.m. The mazar complex is in the heart of the city and on the plain land. On four sides around the Mazar complex there are many hotels including 5 star hotels. Within several hundred metres there are more than one restaurant including book stalls. Only religious books and articles are available in those stalls. The green dome on the Mazar and the towering minaret of the mosque command view from a long distance. In entire Turkey, Allama Rumi is succinctly called Moulana but there is difference in pronunciation. In English, it is MEVLANA.

As a matter of fact, Moulana Rumi (R.) is an inhabitant of Balkh of Persia. Balkh is now situated in Afghanistan although it was once a part of Khorashan province of Persia. He was born there in 604 Hijree. In genealogical order he is the offspring of Amirul Momenin Hazrat Abu Bakar (R). His great maternal grand father was Muhammad Khawarism Shah, the governor of Khorasan.



Partial view of Allama Rumi Mazar

Both Moulana Bahauddin, the father of Moulana Rumi (R.), and his grand father Moulana Hussain Balkhi were famous theologists and renowned saints. During his childhood, discord cropped up between Moulana Rumi's father Bahauddin and the then governor of Khorasan. Consequent upon this, Moulana Bahauddin left Balkh along with his family. At last, he began to live in Konya permanently.

Consequently, Allama Jalal Uddin, later on assumed the word Rumi after his name according to the name of his new living place. During his stay in Nishapur the then mystic and renowned poet Sheikh Farid Uddin Attar (R.) presented a piece of Asrarnam and predicted that the boy would become a celebrating throughout the world in course of time. Even in the midst of various adverse circumstances Moulana Rumi did not face any impediment to his education. His worthy father became careful of giving him higher education on Tafsir (Interpretation of the holy Quran), Hadith, i.e. saying and practice of Muhammad (S.), Jurisprudence, Etmul Kalam, philosophy, philology, poetry including many other subjects. He learned also Tasawuf from his father. On account of his uncommon power of memory and talent, he was very fervent of learning knowledge.

Subsequent to the death of his father, he attained higher knowledge on Tasawuf from the most competent Murid, i.e. disciple of his father, Hazrat Burhanuddin Muhakik.

Later on, Moulana Rumi joined in an institution in the Syrian capital Damascus and the university of Aleppo, a town of Syria and engaged himself as a votary of knowledge. At a further later stage, he held the post of professorship in Konya and became engaged in writing books and spiritual pursuits.

From thence forward, he rapidly emerged as a paramount Islamic personality in that region. Moulana Rumi's opinion, judgment and interpretation of subtle and complex Shariah law, polemics of philosophy and literature earned widespread commendation and esteem from all. Although during his early life, Moulana Rumi (R.) was a stickler of Shariah law, and averse to religious song-dance. An evolutionary change came to his life after he came into contact with his spiritual mentor Shams Tabrize. As a result of this, he became an ardent lover of religious dance and song, in spite of his early attitude to religion together with a recognition of a great poet. Not only that-Moulana-named Sema Community was established under his patronage.

The historic meeting between Allama Rumi and his mentor Shams Tabrize is very interesting and significant before his attainment of spiritual knowledge. Among the works of Rumi, Diwani Shams Tabrize, Masnabi and Rubiyat-a book of verse and Fihma-fih-a collection of letters addressed to his dearest disciple Moinuddin on religious ethical, social and spiritual topics leave traces of his deep argumentative attitude. Diwane Shams Tabrize contains nearly 2500 ghazals. The number of Moulana Rumi's Rabiyyat is nearly 16 thousand. These are rich with spiritual sentiments. Masnabi Sharif is Magnum opus. This has been composed with nearly 25 to 30 thousand verses in 6 volumes. It is said that he composed this book spanning a period of 43 years. At the later stage, he used to spend the whole night for composition of this book. Being swayed by sentiments he used to recite the verse. From the standpoint of literature and art 'Diwan' is all the more high in standard. But his Masnabi Sharif is the infinite sea of spiritual knowledge and the brightest gem of Sufism. Although Moulana Rumi had a mixture of Turkish blood in his vein and spent nearly the last 50 years in Turkish town of Konya he did not use even a single word of Turkish language in his literary works.

The great poet Firdousi's Shahnama, Hafiz Siraji's 'Diwan', Allama Sheikh Sadi's Gulistan and Moulana Jalaluddin Rumi's Masnabi are most popular Magnum of Persian literature. Their reputation and popularity are above all. A Turkish girl named Garhar is Moulana Rumi's first wife. He married again when Garhar died after giving birth two sons in his family.

This world reputed and great spiritual personality died on Sunday the 5th Jamadius Sani, 670 Hijree, the 17th December 1273, in Konya at the time of the setting of the sun.

From Istanbul to Konya

During our stay in Istanbul the appropriate authority has chalked out a programme for Sunday, the 15th May. We shall go to Istanbul from Konya on the evening and tickets have already been purchased for eight persons. The flight was scheduled to start at 7 p.m in the evening. Mr. Ismail Akbas will accompany us without fail. But we shall go from the new airport of the Asian Part of Istanbul.

Then after 5p.m in the evening we all set out towards the direction of the airport. Before our departure the bulky bag and baggage and the packets offered as gifts to us were kept in the guest house.

Our guide Mr. Ismail Akbas began to move towards the airport in the Asian part of Istanbul taking eight person with him. We began to proceed towards the airport through the meandering road of the European part road of Istanbul. Crossing the suspension bridge built over the strait of Bosphorus we reached the Asian part of Istanbul.

While vowing the spectacles of the city we saw the predominance of western way of living in the European part.



Istanbul Airport in Asian part



In front of Konya Airport

In contrast to this, the Asian part of Istanbul is all east. Somewhat exception to this i. e. somewhat conservative by companion at least, it appeared to us so, specially in respect of woman style cloth-in.

Crossing the Asian part of Istanbul we crossed to the suburb of the city. Located in the European part the Ataturk international airport is now to a large extent within the city at present. On the other hand, the international airport in the Asian part of Istanbul is somewhat outside the city.

From our guest house the distance of this airport is 60 to 70 kilometers away. We began to move forward leaving the Asian part of Istanbul behind. We saw the airport proceeding upto distance of 15 to 20 minutes on more. This airport looks like the Shahjalal International Airport of Dhaka.

It is in the style of Dhaka Airport too i.e. Arrival in the downstairs and departure is in the upstairs. Taking us the minibus proceeded towards the domestic departure counter located in the upstairs. Taking us with him, our guide Mr. Ismail Akbas went to the counter of Pegasus Airline. After verification of the passport and visa, we were given boarding card. The passport and visa of the foreigners are also thoroughly checked in Turkey.

The airport official prompted us to go quickly since the process of boarding the plane was on. Then it was nearly 15 minutes before 7p.m. Since we were in a state of ablution we offered 2 rakat Asr prayer (2 rakat Asr prayer permissible to the way farers). The area of the terminal of domestic flight is also vast. Turkey is nearly 6 times bigger than Bangladesh and the standard of living is also several times higher than it is in Bangladesh. Within Turkey there are 34 to 35 Airports. Among them 4 to 5 are international Airports and they are very hard pressed with brisk traffic. Hundreds of planes daily land and ascend from these airports. The airports in the Asian part too not less busy than the European part. It is as true in respect of domestic flight as in international flight. The name of the Airport in the Asian part is Sabiha Gokcen International Airport. Sabiha is Turkey's first woman pilot.

The airport is named after her. After Asr prayer we began to proceed towards Bridge the Boarding Bridge very fast. It seemed the boarding of the passengers was almost over. Entering the aircraft through the Boarding Bridge. We saw that the plane was filled with passengers. We got seats in the backside of the plane, the capacity of which is nearly 200. On a 700 km flight journey we were going to Konya from Istanbul. We were going towards the direction and landed on the Konya airport. We said our dusk prayer magrib on reaching the airport terminal. In view of loaded bags of some of in the plane we began to wait for their arrival. Then it was 8p.m in the evening. After arrival of the bags we set out for the Moulana University. Towards 10 or 11 at night we reached Moulana university area. Our accommodation has been arranged on the Moulana University. There were 7 to 8 sprucely and decorated suites and they were of premium quality.

A visit to the Moulana University as a guest of honour

In the outskirts of Konya the Moulana University came to a shape 2 years ago. This University was established in a hired super market of massiv scale. Although we pronounce Moulana, in Turkish its name is Mevlana. They utter it as such. This University has been named after a Moulana. The prominent industrialist of Turkey has donated the entire premises to the University authority after taking rent for some months. The industrial tycoon argued one should not let out a compound on hire/rent where students prosecute study.

Allama means a prodigy of learning. The Moulana had time to his sobriquet. We spent the night on Sunday, 15th May 2011 comfortably in the guest house of the university. It seems that 7 to 8 rooms of the university have been arranged in a luxurious manner in the event of the visit of some dignitaries from the developed countries.



Premises of Konya Moulana University

These deluxe suites are designed for visitors from the alien land. Like in Iran, there are excellent arrangements of spatial high commode and flat commode in the toilet. Turkey too, Towards 9a.m the following morning, we went to the dinning hall for having our breakfast. On behalf of the university, as a gesture of hospitality and courtesy, 10 to 12 items of food have been served together with tea, coffee and juice. After the end of the session of breakfast we reached the campus of the university. A professor in charge of public relation received us. He led us directly to the office of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor. The Vice Chancellor was in America on an official tour. In Turkey, unlike ours, the chief of the university is not called vice chancellor. Aged about 50, the deputy chief is a woman. She discussed with us nearly half an hour about the progress of the university of Allama Rumi. She showed her interest and inquisitiveness about the education system of Bangladesh. During morning breakfast, lunch and dinner there will be tea-arrangement.

In office or entertainment everywhere one will be invariably asked as to his preference of drink. One's interest is shown, one has to say what kind of tea or coffee one looks for. Barring our group leader Mr. Salahuddin Kasem Khan none among us wants to have Turkish coffee. This coffee is thick, black and bitter. As a rule, in our country tea and biscuits are served in official and other public places like trade firm. Of course, sometimes, some other things are served sparingly. In Turkey, it is otherwise.

In Turkey, side by side with coffee and tea, dry sweat meat, chocolate biscuit are served for the guest.

Spending some time with the deputy chief we went out and began to go round the premises of the university, specially the gymnasium, health center, student clubs, centre of career planning, GPC office, library, congress center cafeterias, canteen, campus laboratoriss with modern infrastructures. The campus at present stands on a land covering 30 thousand square meters.

Presently, there are 4 faculties. In all these faculties rapid expansion of facilities are taking place. Among the facilities computer engineering electrical and electronics engineering teaching English, medicine etc. are in operation at present.

We were wonderstrick when we went to the ablution block of the mosque. Going round the mosque we came to the ablution spot. Surprisingly it presented an exceptional look. Basin stretching upto long stretch has been installed at a lower level than ours. People can wash their faces, hands together with feet in these basins. On the other hand, the basins are installed



Discussion with a Dean of Konya Moulana University

our level of ours in Iran. People wash hands, mouth with the water of the basin. As per practice of Shiah sect, people are not required to wash feet. They only make a daub (a cleansing sweep/muses) of the feet. So the level of the basins is on a higher level in Iran. It is otherwise in Turkey. Then we came to a wide expansive space. The situation of the university is on a plain land. We spent nearly one half to two hours there and then set out for Zearah of Allama Rumi (R.).

Zearah of Allama Rumi (R.)

On Monday, 16th May 2011, our guide Mr. Ismail Akbas reached the Mazar area taking us with him. The weather was charming and temperate. While entering the Mazar Complex we saw that entrance and exist gates have been changed. While visiting the Mazar in June 2008, the entrance and exit from the Mazar complex was from the direction of the mosque. Now this has been changed and the entrance to and exit from the Mazar have been built from the opposite direction of the mosque. Since there is open space from that direction, it has been made convenient for the Zearah seekers.

Had there been exit and entrance from both the directions—from the direction of the mosque as well as from the direction of anterior side—it would have facilitated the Zearah seekers greatly. Although the mosque and the mazar are closely attached to each other, in view of the absence of access from the Mazar to the mosque we had to go to the mosque through a long detour in order to offer the Zohar (noon) prayer.



Allama Rumi Mazar



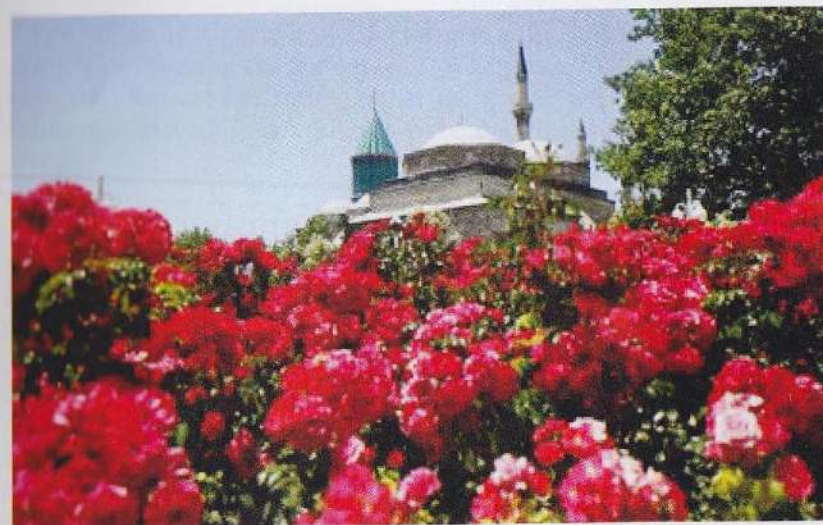
Premises of Allama Rumi Mazar

Mr. Ismail Akbas bought ticket and we entered the Mazar from the spacious road from the right side direction of the Kibla. After entrance into the Mazar, the professor of Moulana University gave us an idea about the Mazar for about 8 to 10 minutes in English.

Thereafter, he advanced forward taking us along with him, But all on a sudden our eyes fell on a picture. This reminded us of the Panorama in Istanbul. There, we hired a machine which exactly explained and narrated the history and significance of each picture. Thus it helped us to understand everything in a perfect manner.

Even if it is narrated by some other persons, it cannot be said that they are hundred percent true or correct. On entering the Mazar Sharif we first paid our attention to offering of Zearah. Some took off their shoes and sandals and carried them in their hands. Again some took polythene bags and stored their shoes and sandals into them.

After Zearah in 2008, I mentioned during my narration that after entering the vast premises of the mazar, one can easily visualize that Allama Rumi, together with his parents and posterity, is lying in repose in the direction of the mehrab, i.e, in the direction of Kibla from the dispensation of his mosque and mazar it can be easily surmised. Expanding these graves they have been taken right up to the left side of the mosque. In the past, the Zearah offering people used to offer standing either Zearah from the mosque or from the direction of the mosque.



Mazar of Allama Rumi surrounded by garden

The Mahfil Khana, the guest room, is opposite to the direction of Kibla. That is to say, it is in the opposite direction of the Verandah-open space outside the mosque. Here, except the graves, in order to make the movement of the Zearah offering people easier, the Holy Quran, valuable books and other articles of use have been preserved in a nice way in the glass boxes. Almost in the middle of the Mahfil Khana (Assembly Hall) in the glass box in a small box of valuable stone, there have been kept the holy beard of prophet (S.) with due solemnity and reverence.

Through the small chinks of those boxes as sign of miraculous power of prophet (S.) exudes fragrant and sweet smell even after a lapse of almost one thousand and five hundred years. The Zearah seeking people breathe in this scents. Approaching near the box we observed various articles of sacrosanct nature. Side by side with offering Zearah, we went to other facilities as well. Thereafter, we went towards the mosque through a detour route from the Mazar complex. Surrounded by gardens on 3 sides, this mosque has a capacity of accommodating 3 to 4 hundred devotees. It was built in the year 1567. On going to this mosque we offered Zohar prayer and took part in Zanaza Dua prayer. Then we went to see a kindergarten school in the suburb of the town. We have had our lunch there.

Visit to the School and Shopping Mall

We have had the opportunity to go to a school of Konya. According to our guide's programme we have had to go there. The School is in the suburb of the city school stands on a plain land in the middle of a residential area. Here in this residential area, housing has not yet taken a complete shape but this school has attained full development before completion of residential accommodation. This is an exception to our country. Generally, in our country, the residents first form an association and then take initiative to establish a school or someone comes forward to build a school. After that housing attains completion. This school is a 3 to 4 floored, it seemed. And it is on a land covering nearly 2 to 3 acres of land. Several hundred students attend this school, bearing close resemblance to our Kindergarten Schools of our country.

In order to transporting students from different parts of Konya the school maintains several buses. There are multiple arrangements behind the school for the amusement of the students.



View of a school in Konya.

There are so much facilities that I doubt the prestigious Kindergarten Schools of Dhaka in the posh area of Gulshan and Baridhara possess on such facilities for the recreation of the young pupils. Many modern facilities of modern type exist in the school for the proper learning of the students.

The Headmaster/principal received us when our mini bus that carried us, reached the gate of the school towards noon. Under the leadership of Mr. Salahuddin Kasem Khan, Mr. Sufi Mizanur Rahman, his spouse Tahmina Rahman, his son Amir Hossain, Mr. Abbu, Mr. Hasan and Mr. Khatib together entered the huge room of the principal. Myself became amazed on entering the room of the principal. A private organization is operating the school. They are not sparing any pains in order to develop the talent of their students. They are teaching different subjects in Turkish language and also teaching in English. On both sides of the corridor situated in the middle, the classes on both sides are neat and clean and equipped with multiple facilities. The corridor is 10 to 12 feet in breadth.

The multistoried building has a corridor in the middle measuring 10 to 12 feet in breadth. On both sides of this corridor, the class rooms are arranged in a deft and spruce manner.

The principal entered a class taking us with him. The children are aged 6 to 7 years. They were 20 to 25 in number. Without making any hesitation I rapidly began to ask questions. I asked if they had heard the name of Bangladesh and if they had heard where its location is. Some were wonderstruck and looked staring at me. Asking one to two questions we roamed about the campus and then entered the dining hall for having lunch. Lunch is served to the students, as well as the midday meals. There are superfluous or extravagant items of food. The food included a big sized piece of chicken, rice, salad and card. The most impressive matter is that the dining hall looks, cheery wholesome, neat and clean. The environment is absolutely hand-some and salutary, like of which, I believe, does not exist in our country even in the most aristocratic area. Spending almost 2 hours in going round the campus we came to the hub/nerve centre of the city. They present sprightly look.

There we went to the Mazar of Shamse Tabriz (R). He was the spiritual mentor of Allama Rumi (R) and we offered our Zearah there. Spending one hour or so there we went to see the Alauddin Kaikobads 1000 years old mosque. There we offered our afternoon (ASR) prayer. Situated on the hills, the 1000 year old mosque's foundation seemed to have become trail. This is a huge one storeyed mosque. It can be said that the proper authority has kept the mosque operative/workable through undertaking renovative work.



A park surrounded by garden

There are graves of the emperor of the by-gone days. The graves are attached to the mosque. Offering Zearah there we came to the compound of a huge super market mall of the city. It is located in the posh area of the city. Our programme on that was to start for Istanbul from Konya by 9.50 p.m flight.

On the following day we were to fly to Dhaka from Istanbul by night flight. Led by Mr. Khan we the four began to tell Mr. Ismail Akbas to allot us time to purchase some necessary things. Amidst the tight schedule he was not in a position to give us time to purchase necessary things. On reaching Istanbul on the first day we converted our US Dollar to Lira. One hundred Dollar amounted to 150 Lira. Today, Mr. Akbas gave us one hour to complete our purchases. We all entered the huge supermarket after getting off our minibus. It was a huge supermarket compared with supermarkets in our country.

It was a flashy and glittering shopping centre. Everything here is high priced in our estimation. It is so in view of high value of Lira compared to our currency.

The name of the Mall is Adese. It is a reputed shopping centre of Konya. In fact it is multistoried market complex. Purchasing our necessary things in a hurry, we returned to the parking lot from the market located in a aristocratic area in order to have our dinner.

From Konya to Istanbul

16th May, 2011. We were busy in Konya. After finishing our day's programs, our mini bus stopped in an aristocratic residential area. It is the house of famous businessman, Mr. Ilhan. Learning about a team, coming from Bangladesh, he arranged dinner for us with the guide. When we reached in front of his house, he welcomed us and took us into his house. In his guest house, we finished the prayer of Magrib and then we took our dinner. The items of food were likely made at his home.

Turkish people usually take soup as is served in Chinese food in our country. In soup, rice or peas dominate prominently. In soup, curdled milk, meat and other substances are added. Peas are produced abundantly in Turkey. Bangladesh imports peas from Turkey. The chicken dishes of Turkey are very famous. Side by side with it, the mutton steak is not less famous.

They eat fried fish without adding spices. Various types of salad mixed with curd are also served. Green tomato, cucumber, big and long sized hotless chillies are also served. Green leaf also is served together with food. Invariably olive oil will figure in the dishes. Olive oil is produced



A view of Konya Airport.

abundantly in Turkey. Pig tree grow in plenty. Like our country, sweat meat is served after rice and loaf bread. We were supplied in great measure. Sweetmeats are a routine item at the end of the feast. Wherever we have gone and houses we have visited, everywhere we have been offered gift as a gesture of goodwill and love. It seems that it is a practice of the Turkish people to offer some sorts of gifts to the guests at the time of departure.

Our flight is scheduled to start from Konya to Istanbul at 9.50 pm. On finishing our session of taking food hurriedly we boarded on the bus before 9 pm. Mr. Ilhan, his brother and his friend saw us off near the bus. We began to proceed towards the airport speedily. It seems that the Konya airport is not far off more than 8 to 10 kilometers from the city. Within 15 to 20 minutes we reached the airport. But we confronted problems in arranging our belongings and the articles of merchandise that we have bought during our shopping. Carrying more than one poly bags in two hands we entered the airports with some necessary things from the luggage bags. The necessary formalities being over, we boarded the plane. We boarded a plane of the same size of the same company with passengers numbering about 200 in the manner we did yesterday. Today, it is also filled with passengers. Our plane took to the air on way to Istanbul for a journey of one hour. We landed on the Sabiha Gokchen International in the Asian part of Istanbul after one hour's journey in our night flight.

We waited for 15 to 20 minutes for the arrival of the vehicle. Within few minutes the luggage came after we entered the airport terminal. During our stay lasting for 15 to 20 minutes we heard announcement on the mike that planes from the domestic routes that linked several parts of Turkey are landing on this airport. Out of the 7 to 8 belts, 3 to 4 belts are always busy in conveying the luggage of the passengers. We were hearing about domestic flights only in this area of the airport.

We were not hearing the announcement on the upstairs on the first floor at one side of the terminal. The announcement of the arrival and departure of internal flight as well as the departure of the domestic flights were going on, but those announcements were not audible to us. The Kamal Ataturk International Airport, which is situated in the European part of Istanbul, is several times more busy than this airport. We set out for the guest house when our minibus came. The condition was same like yesterdays. It seemed as though the distance was uncoverable. All of us were either in a state of slumber or in a state of torpor.

In the darkness of the night the bus was moving on. Our guide Mr. Ismail Abkas, seated beside the driver, was looking at us turning his neck behind. They, i.e. the Turkish people are sound healthy, strong and stout. In contrast of this, we are weak, feeble and victims of multiple diseases, weak in body and physique. The minibus that carried us began to move through the sanky road of the Asian part of Istanbul. By that time, many



A charming view of Vegetable Garden in Konya

of the shops and stalls were closed down. Moving for a long time we came at last near the suspension bridge built over the strait of Bosphorus. Crossing this bridge we entered the European part of Istanbul situated in the west of the strait of Bosphorus.

True to our idea, there was little more bustle and clamour in the European part of Istanbul than the Asian part of Istanbul even at dead of night. Hardly had we reached near the guest house than Mr. Akbas, our guide informed us that on the following morning we would depart from the guest house at 9 a.m. And we would have our breakfast elsewhere rather than at the guest house. Overcoming our slumber and exhaustion we became rather animated after entering the European part of Istanbul. When our guide, Mr. Ismail Akbas, informed us of the following day's programme Begum Sufi Mizan (Tahmina Rahman) lodged complaint with our leader Mr. Salahuddin Kasem Khan against Mr. Ismail Akbas as regards the stricture regarding our itinerary. Instantly, there was a volley of laughter. She intimated that she hardly could sleep at night because of tight programme lest she should be unable to maintain the schedule. In reply our leader Mr. Khan said, "I have told you beforehand that you have been trapped by a general, i.e. you have been subjected to a severe discipline".

Being guided by over punctuality, the guide subjects them to unendurable discipline and strictness. His behaviour unmistakably falls within the code of a strict Army General. Amongst ourselves, already there was a humorous discussion about Mr. Ismail Akbas for his imposition of rigor. This complaint further reinforces the idea about him. Towards 1 a.m at night we reached the guest house.

An audience with a patron of learning

In the Span of last 10 to 15 years, Turkey has made rapid progress and advancement in the economic field. The rate of unemployment has come down to 7%. Side by side with the government, many industrialists, talented and benevolent persons have come forward for the benefaction of the country. They contribute their merit and might for the benefit of the people. Not only that, the Turks have extended their hands of co-operation to the international arena as Europe, America and Japan. On the 17th May, Sunday, we had programme to have breakfast elsewhere other than in the guest house.

Last night we returned to Istanbul from Konya at 1 a.m but we got ready by 9 a.m on the following in order to keep the appointment in time. Our guide, Mr. Ismail Akbas, went to another place taking us with him, proceeding on and carried us past through the European part of Istanbul and got on the suspension bridge.

From this we did not feel to understand we were going to the Asian part of Istanbul. Our condition demanded that we take the breakfast in the guest house and take rest in the morning in view of our physical exhaustion. We have come to Turkey on invitation as guests. We know that the relevent authority wants us to see as many things as possible within this limited time although many of us fell uneasy. We responded to their demand. The minibus is a pretty, florid and new bus and it is busy day and night with us. Over and above, Mr. Ismail Akbas was all along with us. God knows how much Lira the authority has placed at his hand for the visit. He was defraying money as the situation called for. We were annoyed with the guide. He was taking us to a far place without hosting breakfast in the guest house. After proceeding nearly for an hour, the bus stopped by the side of the strait in front of a hospital.

"Sema Hospital" is inscribed on the hospital. Here, we saw Mr. Bayram, the principal of the Hope Schools in Bangladesh. On seeing him we became somewhat puzzled.

We could understand that he has chalked out programme for our arrival here. Together with him, 2 executive officials of the hospital welcomed us there. Then we entered the interior with him. We were carried to the top most floor of that gigantic building with the lift. There the owner and



Receiving gift from famous Turkey Social Worker

chairman of the Hospital Mostafa Ozcan received us and we entered the conference along with the Principal. He got himself introduced to us one after another including Mr. Salahuddin Kasem Khan, our leader. Arrangements for refreshment has been made for 15 to 20 persons at one side on a table with a capacity of seating for 25 to 30 persons.

Tea and breakfast items were served immediately. After we were seated the introduction session with us was going on with the chairman while we were eating breakfast. We finished breakfast. Then we had chat with him for about 2 hours on various aspects of Turkey.

Mr. Mustafa Ozcan, infact, can be called as one of the most outstanding rich men of Turkey. In different big cities of Turkey he has 6 to 7 such big hospitals. Named Khedmat Hismat this organization has been spreading light of education throughout the world transcending its national border. This body is operating 2000 schools throughout the world. Among them most of the countries are in Asia, Africa and in the Balkans. I was repeatedly asking questions and he was pleasantly answering to all my queries. As a result, the length of our discussion lengthened out. I am in the realm of writing. On returning home I would write about the tour. On tour of different countries around the world I remain eager to ask questions on different matters.

On other hand, I felt hesitated to ask questions as my fellow travelers do not like asking too many questions. In reply to a question he further informed me that they have 130 schools in the Balkans.

The students are taught English, Turkish and local languages, he informed us. In the aftermath of the disintegration of the then Soviet Union, 6 Muslim countries have emerged as independent countries. In view of this Turkey has given preference to these countries for the education in these countries. Those countries are seeking the help of Turkey in spreading Turkish language in view of their being Turkish speaking people. In their activities there is no excess on religious matters. As regards observance of religion they believe, the students will be guided by their own scruple and understanding. In reply to one of my questions they informed us that in the schools, numbering 2003 operated by them, no additional prescribed syllabus do exist there on religion in those schools. The other branches of their organization lavishly distributing relief materials in famine stricken countries of Africa including Somalia. In reply to my another question, he informed, at present 80% people of Turkey are more conscious than the previous time. They are leading life leaving freakish manner aside and adopting one's own sense of discretion. Although observance of religion has received a fillip in Turkey, there is no excess about religion. In this context he referred to a Hadith of prophet (S.). He admonished: Do not make excess comment on religion.

He (Prophet) (S.) has forbidden people to make any excess about religion. We pleaded on behalf of our country for enhancing the member of Turkish sponsored school and raising the rate of scholarship. It is worth mentioning here that, in Bangladesh, there are 8 Turkish Hope Schools-6 in Dhaka, one each in Chittagong and Bogra. Our delegation leader Mr. Khan invited him to visit Bangladesh. This was agreed upon and he assured us of visiting Bangladesh in an appropriate time. This gentleman is aged above 60. In his parley nearly for about 2 hours he has an idea about Bangladesh from 8 of our compatriots. By the time, he went somewhere leaving us for four to five minutes and then returned. In the meantime, the official brought for us valuable presents which include, among other things Diary of the hospital magazines etc. dry fruit packets, embossed in Turkish language, the calligraphy of the holy text of the holy Quran, sayings of prophet (S.).

Apart from this, they brought dry packets of sweetmeat. Over and above, they contained much valuable Turkish calligraphy of the verse of the Holy Quran, holy Hadith, Ghazal (Litany) etc. They figure as show piece measuring one and half to 2 feet in length. These rare show pieces evoking religious fervour seemed to us to be of immense religious artifacts. It was almost 1 p.m when he bade us 'Good bye'. We roamed about this giant modern hospital and, later on, came downstairs through the lift.

A visit to the Fateh University

The Fateh University stands with all its gaiety and éclat on a vast campus of Istanbul. In Istanbul City there are 6 non-government and 15 government universities. This is too a non-government university. But the level of its standard and management has reached such extent that other universities have become eclipsed substantially in comparison with it. In fact, health and service foundation has built this university.

This university was opened on the 18th November 1996. Numerous structures of multistoreyed of high caliber situated in a lathe and lissome environment comprise this university. Every nook and corner replete with gardens. From this open dance of garden the mentality and taste of the Turkish people have found adequate reflection.

Among the different faculties and departments, there are faculty of engineering with 9 departments, faculty of economics and administrative sciences with 7 departments, faculty of laws, faculty of education with 2 departments, faculty of science with 21 departments. Besides, there are faculties of medicine. Faculty of theology has several attached institutes. They are School of nursing, vocational School of justice, Istanbul vocational School with 8 departments, Ankara vocational School with 10 departments, vocational School of medicine with 4 departments, institutes with 4 departments. Under the leadership of Mr. Salahuddin Kasem Khan, crossing the midway of the city we came down slowly from the academy hill, located in the Asian part of Istanbul and then went over to the European part of Istanbul through the suspension bridge built over the straight of Bosphorus. Entering the European part and proceeding through wandering we came to an open and salubrious environment. Mr. Ismail Akbas, our guide, always maintains channel of communication through the mobile phone with the appropriate authority. Entering the huge open gate of the university our minibus stopped in front of some massive buildings of the university. The relevant authority welcomed us.

They got seated first in a room furnished with sofa set and capable of seating 25 to 30 persons. They served snacks and tea as soon as we entered the rooms, according to the norm of Turkish hospitality.



Premises of Fateh University

Immediately, the professor in charge of coordinating our programme got himself introduced to us. He became introduced, one after another with Mr. Hasan, Mr. Khatib, Mr. Sufi Mizan, his wife and son, Mr. Abbu including myself.

Then he gave us idea about the university for about 15 to 20 minutes on the history, heritage etc. of the university. In reply to certain questions he apprised us that they do not face any financial crisis whatsoever. Not only that, among the students 40% students are stipend/scholarship holders. He informed us that there are 5 Bangladesh students among the students. He further informed us that the students who have passed from this university are given distinctive service in various countries in view of its being a university of international standard.

Then he introduced us with the head of the university. We spent nearly one hour there and, afterwards, he got us into the minibus. We began to go round the university with our minibus. While going round the university we were wonderstruck on seeing no filth, trash or untrimmed path of jungle in the university campus. The mammoth structures of the university are hemmed in by soothing and balmy sights of garden. Nowhere there are sights of dereliction or abandonment. Everything is smug and looks smart and cheering the Turkish example is worth emulating.



Partial view of Fateh University

Our government universities encompass vast area of several square kilometers with both large and small buildings. If the authorities desire they can enhance the beauty of the campus by raising flower gardens in the otherwise idle land. The aesthetic sense of the Turkish people is very high and the environment is truly beautiful. Here, the primary consideration is not money but aesthetic pleasure.

The primary objective is to cultivate the habit of cherishing wholesome outlook and culture of the aesthetic sense instead of keeping the unused place unclean, dirty and filthy. We should use, them profitably which is conducive to the satisfaction of our craving for aesthetic beauty. The cultivation of such garden is very easy in our environment favourable for culture of flora and fauna. On going round the university intensively we returned to the guest house towards the evening.

Islamism and Pan-Islamism:

The most widespread ideological force in the Ottoman Empire during Abdul Hamid years was Islamism, calling for a return to the fundamental values and traditions of the civilization of which the empire was the most modern manifestation. Though encouraged and used by the sultan, this movement transcended him in both time and scope. It began in the late Tanzimat period, mostly in reaction to the manner in which millions of Muslims were being treated by the Russians as well as the newly independent Balkan states. Stories of persecution and savagery from the Crimea to Belgrade and Sarajevo were mingled with accounts of oppression from India to Algeria and contrasted with the toleration and good treatment provided for non-Muslims in the great Muslim empires, including that of the Ottomans. The Tanzimat movement also was accused of undermining the ulema and abandoning the basic ideals, traditions, and institutions of Islam by imitating European ways. The Ottoman financial plight, which included European use of the Capitulations to destroy the traditional Ottoman industries and the debilitating dependence on high-interest loans, added to a general feeling of distrust. The French occupation of Tunis followed by the British occupation of Egypt confirmed the feeling. The last straw was provided by the press and politicians of Europe, who seemed to resurrect medieval religious fanaticism by clamoring over the deaths of a relatively few Christians in the sultan's empire while ignoring the large-scale massacres of Muslims in the Balkans and Russian Central Asia. Namik Kemal and the other Young Ottomans therefore preceded Abdul Hamid in reacting to European bigotry with an Islamic emphasis, becoming as critical of Western influences and foreign penetration as were some of the most reactionary of the ulema. Reacting in particular to Ernest Renan's claims that Islam was the enemy of science and philosophy, Kemal cited the tremendous advances that had been made in all aspects of culture and civilization under the great Islamic empires of the past. Soon these feelings were translated into a movement to establish contacts with all the oppressed Muslims of the world, including those in British India and Egypt, Russian Central Asia, and French Algeria and Tunisia, with the aim of forming a union of Muslims to help defend them and their ways against the inroads of the West.

Abdul Hamid thus only took over an idea that was already popular among all classes of his Muslim subjects and used it to strengthen his hand against enemies both at home and abroad. Under the leadership of his palace musir, Gazi Osman Pasa, the resources of the state treasury as well as of the sultan's own privy purse were used to build up the Muslim schools

None of us was able to arrange luggage smoothly. Dry fruit, sweet chocolate, diverse books, various show pieces and articles of our shopping posed a great deal of trouble while we were arranging our luggage. Notwithstanding, we somehow arranged our luggage and got into the minibus.

Our guest house is in the European part of Istanbul and from there, our minibus began to proceed towards the Ataturk International Airport located in the European part of Istanbul. In view of the approach of dusk, we wanted to go to the airport direct without attending our dinner programme, but our guide Mr. Ismail Abkas took us to the residence of an industrialist saying on the pretext of this or that near the airport. His name is Mustafa Kakar. He resides in Dhaka along with the members of his family for a considerable period of the year. He has a carpet mill in Mymensingh.

In the residential area, in the compound of a two storeyed luxurious building Bayram Saalci, principal of 8 Turkish Schools in Bangladesh along with Mr. Mustafa Kakar welcomed us.

In a previous article it has been mentioned that the sun sets at 8-20 p.m in Istanbul. Within a short while after the sunset we entered his house. Saying Maghreb prayer we set down for the dinner. Although before meals soup was served, his wife did not spare any pains to show utmost hospitality in order to prepare cuisine in the styles of Bangladeshi recipe. The housewife did not leave any effort untried to apply in preparing food in the manner they are prepared in Bangladesh. She has applied whatever Bangladeshi recipe she has learnt in preparing food while staying in Bangladesh. She has cooked rice mixed with Ghee (Butter oil), spice and butter oil mixed with fish and meat side by side with those prepared according to Turkish recipe.

For the first time we have had last of Bangladeshi food. Even then Turkish dishes are preferable to me as they are easily digestible, tasty and less sizzled. As a matter of fact, as like as the Iranian dishes the Turkish dishes are prepared using lesser measure of butter oil, spices and oil. This kind of recipe is quite in contrast to the food of the sub-continent. They cooked in such a manner as not to destroy the protein of the food. Through excessive heating leaf and vegetables are either eaten raw or through half-boil parboiled.

Oiled loaf of bread, nun varieties of cooked meat etc. are never served as breakfast items as like as it is in Bangladesh. Breakfast items of Bangladesh are nowhere noticeable.

They will eat various types of Bun, doubled with butter, bread with jelly, cheese, honey etc. which are rich in protein and easily degestible. As much as and as like as in the dinning table, both in Iran & Turkey, small sized tea cup (glass) as well as olive oil, contrary to us, they will take milk. Sugarless tea are taken by them. Like us, they do not drink water.

It can be justifiably repeated that they are far advanced than us in respect of manner, cleanliness, consciousness about health, character and inclinations. After having a hasty dinner we started for the airport again. Mr. Bayram Mr. Mustafa, Mr. Salahuddin Kasem Khan saw us off. Along with us the four Mr. Hasan of Maizbhandar Darbarsharif, Mr. Khatib of Anderkilla Shahi Jume Masjid, Mr. Abdul Bari Chowdhury (Abbu), myself, Mr. Sufi Mizan, his wife Tahmina Rahman and their son Amir Hussain are returning to the country with the same Aircraft. Our guide Ismail Akbas will return later on. Along with us, chief of the Turkish Hope School of Bogra Mr. Belal is also coming to Dhaka. Mr. Salahuddin Kasem Khan would go to America on the following day on a separate programme.

After 9 p.m in the evening we set out for the airport again. Here I would mention one thing: there is a lot of difference between the driver of our country and the driver of vehicles of Turkey. During our stay in Istanbul for 5 to 6 days this mini bus was all along busy in transporting us. Never had we to wait for him as to call him through the phone. Whenever we went to keep invitation and spent there 2 to 3 hours the driver all along sat in the bus. Either he sleeps or spends time eating things like pea. It seems that they should sit in the vehicle all along since his business is with the vehicle. If he does not find any space for parking near the place of our stay he parks the vehicle at some distance away with prior permission of the guide. The drivers are accustomed to sitting in the vehicle all along the time. Even they stay within 2 to 3 hours at a stretch, some times even for a longer period.

This behaviour is worth emulating for the chauffers of our country. They must become accustomed to shoulder responsibility sitting all along within the vehicle. In addition to that, nowhere we have seen the driver feted. It seems feeding the driver is not a practice in Turkey. The driver is performing duty in exchange of money. This seems to be the norm during our stay in Konya. For 24 hours a luxurious bus like this was placed at our service. There, too, we saw the driver shouldering the responsibility in the same manner i.e. the driver never moves about leaving the vehicle.

At the same time, no driver is feted side by side with the guests. The driver is never called for feting. We, the eight persons, viewing the shining and magnificent sights of Istanbul City proceeded forward for 15 to 20 minutes and moved towards departure lounge of Kamal Ataturk International Airport. The Turkish drivers are literate as well as the people. Everything of the airport is at their finger's end.

Taking us the driver moved to the Turkish airline Terminal of the airport where our flight for Dhaka would fly. In view of the absence of Mr. Ismail Akbas, the chief of the Turkish Hope School in Bogra Mr. Belal helped us with an open heart. He gave us all kinds of cooperation. With the luggage on the conveyer belt when we moved to the Karachi-Dhaka flight counter

of the Turkish airlines then we found the counter completely vacant. The passengers have entered within after proper check-in. It seemed we were the last passengers of that flight. Towards 11 p.m. we handed over our luggage and received the boarding card. The counter might have been closed down had we been a little bit late.

Thereafter, going on the other end of the Terminal we offered our Esha prayer on finishing the immigration process. We boarded the Turkish Air Line Plane in view of the announcement of the time of departure. The plane is full of passengers including Pakistani and Turkish passengers. The plane took off for a flight of almost 5 hours flight duration. The plane was bound for Karachi for a journey of 5 hours.

The air hostesses of the Turkish Airlines were supplying items of breakfast at a brisk pace. The monarchical Arab countries (such as Saudi Airlines, Emirate Airlines, Kuwait Airlines, Ettehad Airline, Gulf Airline, Qatar Airline, Oman Air line etc.) bring crew and air hostess from abroad in order to manage and operate their air lines. Unlike these, Iran and Turkey manage and operate their airlines by their own personnel. The Iranian and Turkish women serve in their national Airlines. Although the Uniform of the Turkish Airlines are not as modest and decent as the Iranians, their uniforms are not as forward and brazen as the dress of the air hostesses of the developed western countries.

Infact, within the space of 5 to 10 years, surprisingly and rapidly decency and decorum have returned to the style of living of the Turkish women. Prior to the present line, the women were compelled to follow the western style of living through official pressure and compulsion. It has been mentioned more than once in my book written earlier. Like the Iranian women, the Turkish women were compelled to follow and cultivate western ways of life, manners and etiquettes for a long spell of time, albeit against their will and proclivity. But under the able stewardship of Imam Khomeini the Iranians have witnessed a new renaissance and reawakening. The women too regained their modesty, decency and decorum. Decency has supplanted obscenity. Their own measure of decency has staged a comeback. But this newly gained freedom of choice and Franchise are not as fanatical and bigotic as has been imposed on our women by the extremists of our country. The women of Iran have, no longer, to remain behind the curtain or solitary confinement unlike in this subcontinent. Although the Iranians are belong to Shia and have maintained different interpretations of the tenets of Islam, one cannot but be impressed and happy on seeing their decency and decorum. The mothers and sisters of that country are absolutely free under the protective shield of Purdah. They drive their own cars; some are working in hotels and restaurants and again some are in the banks, in trade and commerce and in service.

In every sphere of life, the presence of the Iranian women is noticeable but they are within the fold of decorum. In the state and non-government Airlines the Iranians work both as crew and hostess. Without let or hindrance Purdah has given them security and sanctity. It cannot escape the eyes. Although the Turkish air hostesses of the Turkish airlines are not as modest in dress as the Iranians decency in dress and style of living are returning slowly. Their style of living and mode of clothing were unbecoming and repulsive even 5 to 10 years ago. Decency and decorum have returned to a large extent. Vulgarly and obscenity are repulsive and revilling now.

But once it was becoming and approving transformation is slow but pervasive. In June 2008 I toured Turkey and in May 2011, I toured Turkey again. In between this space of time conspicuous change has occurred in the mode of clothing. Now mode of dressing is much more modest and approvable than what it was only 3 years ago. Istanbul being contiguous to Europe, compared to other parts of Turkey, the western idea and influence were once predominant there. Now the residents of Istanbul are slowly reverting back to old style of clothing. Once nudity and obscenity ruled supreme. A rapid transformation is going on in respect of dress. Turkish women wear trousers and shirts in recent days. They are seen wearing scarfs on their head. Some others called forward and progressive modern women wear vest instead of shirt. Their number is not insignificant. The menfolk wear pant and shirt. Some keep beard, too. Again, some wear doming cap on head. On the whole, Turkey is undergoing a slow but steady transformation in respect of mode of clothing. Like in Europe, women of Turkey smoke openly but those who are sensible and susceptible and sensitive to public feeling feel shy of smoking publicly although they have the habit of smoking.

I was thinking and churning about these trends while eating breakfast, supplied by the Turkish airlines. Within a short while it was dawned. Then we said our Fazar prayer. Toward 8 a.m of Pakistan local time the plane landed on the Karachi Airport and most of the passengers got down there. The Turkish Airbus plane almost became vacant. The pot bellied Airbus plane took to the air. Lunch with us for journey of 3 hours, was served in the plane. After 1 p.m the plane landed on the Shah Jalal International Air Port. Mr. Fatih Celik, the director, Turkish Cultural Centre, welcomed us when we entered the Airport Terminal of Shah Jalal International Airport. After completion of the necessary formalities at the airport the co-travellers went to their respective destinations. Some of our fellow travelers set out for Chittagong on domestic flights. I set out for Chittagong after passing a day or two at the residence of my daughter Salma at Bariadhara D.O.H.S, Dhaka.

Sultan Abdul Hamid II

Introduction:

The President of the Zionist Congress Chaim Herzkog with members of the Zionist Movement offered financial support to Turkey the “Sick man of Europe” if Sultan Abdul Hamid II agreed to the establishment a “Jewish Homeland” in Palestine which was under Osmanli Empire. Sultan Abdul Hamid replied that as the Khalifa of Islam Palestine belonged to the Ummah and not to the Sultan and he could not give even an inch of land to the Zionists. However, if the European Powers were successful in their plans in dismembering the Osmanli Empire and divided it into pieces by them they would have their Zionist homeland. After World War I when Turkey was defeated with Germany, the British Government implemented the “Belfar Declaration” promising to set up a Jewish Homeland in Palestine as a sign of gratitude for Zionist support using World War I. This also led to the dismemberment of the Osmanli Empire by the British and French leading to the creation of Israel in 1948. The prediction of Sultan Abdul Hamid thus came true. And the Osmanli Empire was divided between the British and French under the secret “Sykes Agreement” Belfar Declaration.



Sultan Abdul Hamid II

Islamism and Pan-Islamism:

The most widespread ideological force in the Ottoman Empire during Abdul Hamid years was Islamism, calling for a return to the fundamental values and traditions of the civilization of which the empire was the most modern manifestation. Though encouraged and used by the sultan, this movement transcended him in both time and scope. It began in the late Tanzimat period, mostly in reaction to the manner in which millions of Muslims were being treated by the Russians as well as the newly independent Balkan states. Stories of persecution and savagery from the Crimea to Belgrade and Sarajevo were mingled with accounts of oppression from India to Algeria and contrasted with the toleration and good treatment provided for non-Muslims in the great Muslim empires, including that of the Ottomans. The Tanzimat movement also was accused of undermining the ulema and abandoning the basic ideals, traditions, and institutions of Islam by imitating European ways. The Ottoman financial plight, which included European use of the Capitulations to destroy the traditional Ottoman industries and the debilitating dependence on high-interest loans, added to a general feeling of distrust. The French occupation of Tunis followed by the British occupation of Egypt confirmed the feeling. The last straw was provided by the press and politicians of Europe, who seemed to resurrect medieval religious fanaticism by clamoring over the deaths of a relatively few Christians in the sultan's empire while ignoring the large-scale massacres of Muslims in the Balkans and Russian Central Asia. Namik Kemal and the other Young Ottomans therefore preceded Abdul Hamid in reacting to European bigotry with an Islamic emphasis, becoming as critical of Western influences and foreign penetration as were some of the most reactionary of the ulema. Reacting in particular to Ernest Renan's claims that Islam was the enemy of science and philosophy, Kemal cited the tremendous advances that had been made in all aspects of culture and civilization under the great Islamic empires of the past. Soon these feelings were translated into a movement to establish contacts with all the oppressed Muslims of the world, including those in British India and Egypt, Russian Central Asia, and French Algeria and Tunisia, with the aim of forming a union of Muslims to help defend them and their ways against the inroads of the West.

Abdul Hamid thus only took over an idea that was already popular among all classes of his Muslim subjects and used it to strengthen his hand against enemies both at home and abroad. Under the leadership of his palace musir, Gazi Osman Pasa, the resources of the state treasury as well as of the sultan's own privy purse were used to build up the Muslim schools

to enable young Ottoman Muslims to compete successfully with their non-Muslim counterparts. Pensions, salaries and other revenues paid to the ulema were increased. Mosques and other religious monuments were repaired and restored. Islamic holidays were emphasized once again, and their public celebration was officially encouraged. The use of Western translations of Ottoman and Arabic terms on public buildings and street signs was discouraged. Lessons in Islam and the Arabic language were added to the curriculums of the secular schools. The use of Arabic as a language of culture and even administration was encouraged, though Sait Pasa did divert the sultan from his desire to raise it to equality with Ottoman Turkish as an official language.



Sultan Abdul Hamid II

Arabs from Syria and Lebanon were brought in to serve in high positions of government, often in preference to their counterparts from the Balkans. Abdul Hamid sought to establish a role as caliph of all Muslims. He began to use his long standing right to appoint religious officials in former Ottoman territories now under foreign rule in order to maintain his influence among their Muslim populations. He thus personally selected and

appointed kadis, teachers, and other ulema sent to Egypt, Cyprus, the Crimea, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Bulgaria. The ottoman government protested and intervened officially whenever there was news of misrule or oppression of Muslims no matter where they lived. Influential Muslim leaders from all over the world were brought to Istanbul for extended visits to establish contacts that later could be and were used to extend the sultan-caliph's influence. The British, Russians, and French were warned, with some vehemence, that aggression against the Ottoman Empire or their own Muslim peoples might lead to a united Muslim uprising against them with full Ottoman support. Islamism thus became an ideological weapon wielded by the sultan to counter the imperialism of the Western powers as well as the minority nationalist movements that threatened his empire.



View of Mazar during time of Turkey, but it's now a history and memory

The sultan was remarkably successful in this endeavor. Despite all the complaints about his regime, his own person and the institution of the sultanate-caliphate were highly revered by the mass of the subjects. Despite their subsequent professions to the contrary, Islamism also did intimidate the Powers. They took the movement very seriously at the time treating every Muslim visitor to Istanbul from outside the empire and every Ottoman visitor to the Muslims of their own empires as dangerous spies who threatened to undermine the stability of their rule. The fact that European aggression against the Ottomans mainly stopped after the British occupation of Egypt and that the imperialist rivalries of the powers

were diverted from military to economic competition during the remaining years of Abdul Hamid long reign can be attributed at least partly to the success of his use of Islam as a weapon to ward off the aggressors.

Question of Islam:

Abdul Hamid believed that the ideas of Tanzimat could not bring the disparate peoples of the empire to a common identity, such as Ottomanism. He tried to formulate a new ideological principle, Pan-Islamism; since Ottoman sultans beginning with 1517 were also nominally Caliphs, he wanted to promote that fact and emphasized the Ottoman Caliphate.

Abdul Hamid usually resisted the pressure of the European powers to the last moment, in order to seem to yield only to overwhelming force and to appear as the champion of Islam against aggressive Christendom. Pan-Islamism was encouraged; the privileges of foreigners in the Ottoman Empire, which were often seen as an obstacle to effective government, were curtailed. Along with the strategically important Istanbul-Baghdad Railway, the Istanbul-Medina Railway was also completed, making the trip to Holy Makkah for Hajj more efficient. Missionaries were sent to distant countries preaching Islam and the Caliph's supremacy.

Abdul Hamid's appeals to Muslim sentiment were not very effective due to widespread disaffection within the Empire. In Mesopotamia and Yemen disturbance was endemic; nearer home, a semblance of loyalty was maintained in the army and among the Muslim population only by a system of deflation and espionage. After his rule began, Abdul Hamid became fearful of being assassinated and withdrew himself into the fortified seclusion of the Y Id z Palace.

Religion:

Sultan Abdul Hamid II was a practitioner of traditional Islamic spirituality, or Sufism, of the S Tariqa. He was a disciple of the Libyan Shadhili Madani sheikh, Muhammad Zafir al-Madani whose lessons he would attend in disguise in Unkapani before he became Sultan. Abdul Hamid II asked Sheikh al-Madani to return to Istanbul after he ascended the throne. The sheikh initiated Shadhili gatherings of remembrance (dhikr) in the newly commissioned Y Id z Hamidiye Mosque; on Thursday evenings he would accompany Sufi masters in reciting dhikr. He also became a close religious and political confidant of the Sultan. In 1879 the Sultan excused the taxes of all of the Caliphate's Madani Sufi lodges (also known as zawiyas and tekkes). In 1888, he even established a



View of Minar of holy Jannatul Baki, but it's now a history and memory.

Sufi lodge for the Madani order of Shadhili Sufism in Istanbul, which he commissioned as part of the Ertu rul Tekke mosque. The relationship of the Sultan and the sheikh lasted for thirty years until the latter's death in 1903.

Poetry:

Abdul Hamid wrote poetry, following on the footsteps of many other Ottoman sultans. One of his poems translates thus:

My Lord I know you are the Dear One (Al-Aziz)
 ... And no one but you are the Dear One
 You are the One, and nothing else
 My God take my hand in these hard times
 My God be my helper in this critical hour

Personal Life:

- ❑ Sultan Abdul Hamid II was born on 21 September 1842.
Topkapi Palace, Istanbul
- ❑ Reign : 31 August 1876 – 27 April 1909
- ❑ Sword girding : 7 September 1876
- ❑ Died : 10 February 1918 (aged 75) Beylerbeyi Palace, Istanbul.

Attempt for conquest of Istanbul and some martyrs fallen in the endeavour

Prophet (S.) before his demise, has stressed on the need to conquer Constantinople i.e. Istanbul. In view of this, during the Khelafat Amir Muabia, the Muslim, strived to capture Istanbul. Information as to the participation of many companions of the prophet (S.) and successive disciples of the companions is available to people through historical accounts.

On my return from Istanbul after almost a week's visit to Istanbul and Konya the honorary consul general of Turkey Mr. Salahuddin Kasem Khan gave me a book on the 1st May 2011 A.D.

This book of 320 pages has mainly thrown light on the participants of that campaign in that book, side by side with the Turkish language. There are brief accounts of the campaign/battle both in English and Arabic. When the name of the book is translated into English the title of book appears as



Great Companion Hazrat Kab (R.) Mazar

follows : Companions of prophet Muhammad (S.) in Istanbul. The book has been published in English from Istanbul in 2006. Dr. Needet Yilmaz and Dr. Coskum Yilmaz are joint authors of that book. It has been mentioned that during the caliphate of Hazrat Muavia and many companions of prophet (S.) and disciples of the companions took part in the campaign for capturing Constantinople. It is also mentioned that prophet (S.) sent an invitational letter to the Byzantines for accepting Islam. Showing great contumacy / dudgeon / blatant / flagrant disregard and disrespect/spurn they declined to accept Islam and utterly rejected the proposal. On the southern side of the Byzantine, they were much alarmed at the rise of Islam. So they tried to put it down through military power. During the time of prophet (S.), military conflict took place more than once with the Byzantine. By comparison, the Byzantines were more powerful militarily. Prophet (S.) predicted that once his adherents will conquer Kustunbinia i. e. Constantinople finally.

In the middle of the desert of Arabia as the chief of a small realm the great prophet (s) offered a great message / predicted significant event that once upon a time Constantinople / Kustunbinia will be conquered, ran the prediction. Blessings / praises are upon them who will conquer Constantinople / Kustunbinia. He invoked the benediction of Allah on the Muslim forces or and their commander in chief. At this, the companions became inspired to occupy the city. Not only that innumerable number of the companions became interested in the attempts to conquer the city. They showed great ardent desire in it. Many companions embraced martyrdom in the campaign to conquer Constantinople. Enthusiasm gripped them to assault on Constantinople. Many companions laid down their lives.

All of them were buried beside the massive wall that was built around the city. Through extraordinary gallantry and unique strategy, at the age of 21 year Muhammad, the second, conquered Constantinople and renamed it Istanbul after winning the victory. The soldiers of the Sultan, i.e. the Ottomans laid great importance on the recognition and identification of the graves of the martyred great companions and their disciples who embraced martyrdom almost about 7 hundred years ago and perform remembrance ceremony in honour of those martyred soldiers who were buried there. The ceremony was designed to implore Allah's grace and mercy on the departed souls. After identification of the graves, they were encircled with a wall. By way of showing reverence to them at a later stage, Mosques and Mazars were built there. Not only that, they formed funds in order to maintain these mosques and mazars and built houses and pockets where many companions had built their camps and stations during the waging of the holy campaigns. This reflects respect and regards to the Turkish Sultans, the members of their families and the ministers of their cabinet. Situated in Istanbul among the Mazars of the



Great Companion Hazrat Edam (R.) Mazar

companions, the mazar of Hazrat Abu Ayub Ansari (R) is the most famous. He was termed as Ayub Sultan by the Turkish Sultans. Through this, they wanted to prove that he was spiritual Sultan of the Turkish Sultanate. Till today, this great companion of Hazrat Muhammad (s) is known as Ayub Sultan. Very few Turkish people know his real name. His grave has become a historic place. A nation's image is formed by the system of government it creates for itself and the ceremonies and festivities celebrate. The sword as a symbol of sovereignty has become the standard of Islam to the Ottomans. It is a symbol of transfer of power and change of the power of sovereignty. The maiden change of sword and the sovereignty started from the Mazar of Ayub Sultan (R.). This Mazar has turned into an Islamic heritage. So this, the cradle of Islamic tradition-Ayub Sultan Mosque-became the hub of state ceremonies and sovereignty.

The famous Sufi Aksem Uddin, the spiritual mentor of Sultan Fatih Muhammad, the second, had the sword to his waist as a symbol of Sovereignty. During the inauguration of his Sultanate at the Ayubia Mosque the ceremonial pageantry also started from. This-the Ayubia Mosque-became the hub of state function. This tradition was practiced till the last Sultan Bahauddin of the Usmanli Sultanate. The destination of the pageantry was the Ayubia Mazar. It is celebrated on the 2nd or 7th Day after the inauguration of the rule of a new sovereign. The Sultan along with the councilors used to go by boat up to the Golden Horn and return to the Ayub Sultan through land route. He went through land route.



Great Companion Hazrat Abu Darda (R) Mazar.

He used to return through waterways on it. This gesture act was an expression of his sovereign power both on land and sea. The new Sultan used to lead an ostentatious procession to Ayubia Mazar. As per old usage, the Sultan used to get down from the horse back after reaching there. Then he used to move with great humility and humbleness towards the Mazar. Surah Fateha used to be recited first before the Sultan was invested with the sword through invocatory chant, seeking divine benediction. Before receiving the sword the Sultan used to offer 2 Rakat Nafal Namaz (optional) prayer. The newly coronated Sultan used to select such sword in line with his avowed policy dictation taking into account the previous perspective of the state affairs. Usually the Sultans used to use the sword of prophet (S.) or the sword of Hazrat Omar Faruq (R.). Again, some Sultans used to carry the sword of Khaled Bin Walid. Yet, some other Sultans used to carry the sword of any of the following personalities viz. Fatih Sultan Muhammad or Sultan Osman Ghaz Selim.

The religious personality that used to invest the Sultan with the sword had a pre-eminent image of a Sufi having widespread renown and fame because both political and symbolic significance was very important. As per choice of the Sultan the highest religious personality Shaikhul Islam or any the descend only of prophet (S.) in any prominent Sufi Sheikh used to tie the sword to the Sultan. Respect and reverence towards Hazrat Muhammad (S.) and belief in acquisition of power through his acquiescence united the Ottoman empire. On account of his being a prominent companion of the prophet Muhammad (S.), Ayub Sultan is

thought to be the highest religious authority to give validity to the political power to the Sultans. After ascension to the throne the new Sultan used to come to the Holy Mazar of Ayub Sultan ® and the Sultans were invested with sovereignty from here with the sword tied to his body as a symbol of sovereignty and supreme authority.

In the Ottoman, i.e. Osmani Empire, this mazar is considered as the highest and most important and spiritual and religious culture.

In fact, it proves that the power of the new Sultan will remain in force in this empire so long as he carried the favour and patronage of Ayub Sultan, the main representative of the Islamic tradition of this city. The noble companions who embraced martyrdom and those who have been buried in Istanbul are playing an import role in giving this city a historic and spiritual and religious identity to this city. The residents of Istanbul always think that only these noble and great companions of the prophet (S.) are the real authority and spiritual guardians and mentors. On account of this, Hazrat Abu Ayub Ansari (R.) is honorific Sultan, who is generally known as Ayub Sultan among the Turkish people.

This grave and these seats have become the most favourite haunting places to the officials as well as to the people. The Sultans could not identify many of the graves of the noble companions in view of the gap of more than 700 years of time. For this reason, the Sultans always expressed regret



Great Companion Hazrat Abdus Sadek Amir Ibn Samay (R.) Mazar



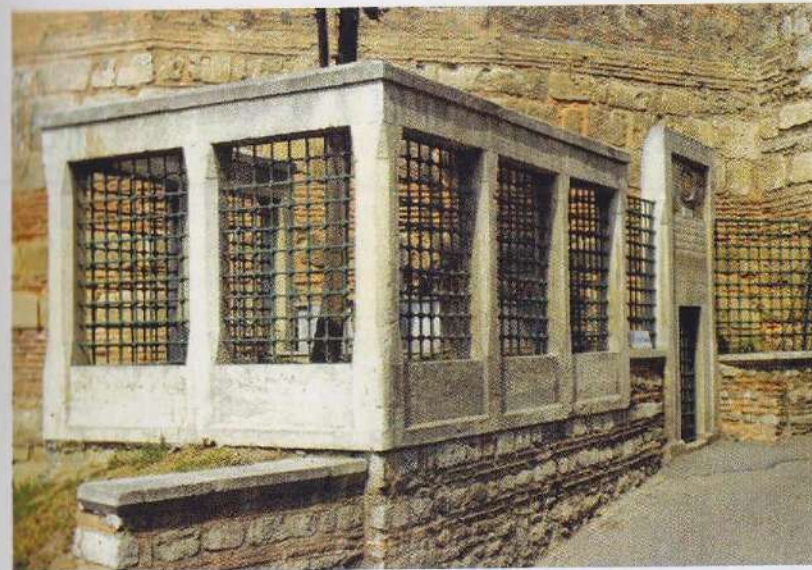
Great Companion Hazrat Jabir Bin Muhammad Al Ansari (R) Mazar.

During the caliphate of Amirul Muminin Hazrat Usman (R), he wrote to the Muslim Soldiers participating in the campaign of Antatusia that those who will conquer Kustuntinea (Constantinople) after conquering Antatusia will become the partakers of the reward of heaven. As a matter of fact, during the caliphate of Amir-E-Muabia (R.) in Hijree 48, i.e. 668 A.D. Muslim legionaries under Ibne Ubaid came to Kadisia. There they spent the winter. Thereafter they occupied smaller towns. In the following year i.e. 49 Hijree a troop of Muslim Soldiers under a Yazid Ibne Muabia (R.) advanced forward in order to strengthen the Muslim forces and to increase their fighting capability. Many companions took part in this campaign. The assault on Constantinople continued till the summer but winter set in again before conquest. As a result, the offensive became futile. Consequent upon this, Muslim forces came back towards Damascus. Another campaign was waged towards the end of the Amir Muabia (R.)'s caliphate. This campaign lasted 6 years, i. e. 54 to 60 Hijree i.e. 674 A.D to 680 A.D. Hundreds of companions were martyred in this battle.

They were buried around the city wall of Istanbul. Many graves and the location of these graves have remained unknown. Those whose graves and the situation of the holy graves have been identified are as follow :

Hazrat Imam Hussain (R) versus fascist

Since there was the campaign for the occupation of Kustuntunia in Nabi Pak (sm)'s prediction Hazrat Imam Hussain (R.), a maternal grandson of



Great Companion Hazrat Hafir (R) Mazar.

prophet (S.), took part in this campaign for the conquest of Constantinople. It is stated in the book titled Hazrat Imam Hussain versus fascist.

A seat or a post has been erected or built on the spot where Hazrat Imam Hussain (R.) stayed during the time of military operation and this seat or post is attached to the Mustafa Pasha Mosque. In order to preserve the memory of Karbala many Sufi devotees and adherents to the doctrine assemble in this mosque on the 10th of Muharram. It is pertinent to mention here that after martyrdom of Amirul Momenin Hazrat Ali (R.) at Kufa, Hazrat Muabia (R.) signed a treaty with Hazrat Imam Hassan (R.) and through this treaty Hazrat Muabia (R.) become the undisputed Amirul Mumenin, i.e. chief of the believers of the Muslim world and the pact remained in tact till his demise. The difference of opinion to a large extent remained hushed.

As a consequence thereof, it is easy to say that it was very natural for the highly dignified and noble / high minded holy companions including Hazrat Imam Hussain (R.) to take part in the conflict for conquest of Constantinople that rested for 6 years in a relatively much more calm period.

Hazrat Abdullah Ibne Omar (R.): The son of Amirul Mumenin Hazrat Umar Farooq (R.) is a prominent companion of Hazrat Abdullah (R.). This famous noble companion is famous as Hazrat Abdullah Ibne Omar (R.). He is the narrator of a lot of Hadiths (practice & precept) and a very highly exalted companion. He participates with the Muslim forces in the battle for conquest of Istanbul. He expired in Makkah Mukarrama at the age of 85.

Hazrat Abdullah Ibne Abbas (R.): The son of prophet Muhammad (sm)'s uncle Hazrat Abbas (R.). The companions of Hazrat Muhammad (S.) used to treat him with special reverence and regard him for his uncommon and unparalleled knowledge. He came along with the Muslim forces in order to conquer Constantinople. He expired in Tayef at the age of 70.

Hazrat Abdullah Ibne Zubaire (R.): He was extraordinarily brave. Establishing Caliphate in Makkah Mukarrama, he ruled a part of the Arabian peninsula in Mulke Sham. At the age of 69 he suffered at the hand of Ummaya forces and embraced Martyrdom in the Holy Makkah area. In the Jannatul Muallah graveyard adjacent to mother Asma (R.)'s grave, he is lying in eternal rest. He is the son of Ummul Momenin Hazrat Ayesha Siddique's (R.) elder sister. In order to render service contribution for the conquest of Constantinople he took part in the battle alongside the Muslims. Here it is worth mentioning that the great prophet Hazrat Muhammad (S.) has highly extolled 3 Abdullahs by name. They are as follow :

1. Hazrat Abdullah Ibne Umar (R.), 2. Hazrat Abdullah Ibne Abbas (R.) and 3. Hazrat Abdullah Ibne Zubaire (R.).

These 3 noble Abdullahs took part in the battle of Constantinople. Of course, in respect of account about 3 Abdullah in some accounts there are mentions of Abdullah Maswud (R.).

Hazrat Fadal Ibne Ubaid (R.): He is one of the companions of the Ashab-E-Suffa, attached to the Masjid-E-Nabbi. He took part in all the campaigns undertaken by prophet Muhammad during the reign of Amirul Momenin Hazrat Muabia (R). He was the chief justice of Damascus. When Amir E-Muabia (R.) went somewhere abroad he used to officiate as an acting Amirul Momenin. He acted as a substitute for Amire-Muabia. He directed naval operation in the Mediterranean Sea against the Byzantines. He is the first chief among the commanders of the Muslims who came to Istanbul as commander in chief. This great companion expired in Damascus in Hijree Year 53. Amir-E-Muabia (R.) carried his holy dead body on his own shoulder.

Hazrat Abu Al Darda (R.): A prominent companion was an inhabitant of Medina Munawara. Except for battle of Badar, he took part in all campaigns undertaken by Hazrat Muhammad (sm). He is the narrator of many Hadiths and was a savant of a very high caliber and an outstanding preceptor (Mentor). He expired in Hijree year 32. Till today, his 3 battle positions have been marked out in Istanbul.

Hazrat Ka'ab (R): In all probabilities Hazrat Ka'ab (R.) Ibne Malek or Hazrat Ka'ab Ibne Zubaire (R.) might be the another companion with the same name. He took part in the battle of Istanbul. His grave is thought to be in Istanbul but it might be his seat or post of stay.

Hazrat Abu Shahifa Al Khudbo (R.): He was the foster brother of prophet (S.). At age of 90, he took part in the battle of Constantinople. He embraced martyrdom in this campaign. A troop of soldiers buried him beside the wall of Constantinople.

The position of the grave was ascertained after the conquest of Constantinople and Sultan Muhammad, the second, built Mazar on his grave. A noble soldier, Ibrahim by name, took up the charge of his Mazar after the conquest of successful campaign against Constantinople. Ibrahim played a very momentous role in that expedition. In this area, many companions are lying in eternal rest. The next Sultan Bayzid, the second, granted financial aid for the preservation of this Mazar. Not only that, the Osmanli Sultans and the premiers helped in the proper management of the shrine. They played prominent role in this respect. Like the Mazar of Ayub Sultan, the tomb of Abu Shaiba Al Khubi has remained still a sacred place of religious pilgrimage.

Hazrat Hamdullah Al Ansari (R.): He is a noble and high minded companion of Medina Munawara. He embraced martyrdom in the battle of Constantinople. After victory the location of his grave was ascertained. Then Sultan Muhammad, the second, built Mazar on his grave. The graves of Hazrat Hamdullah Al Ansari (R.) and Hazrat Abu Shaiba Al Khudri (R.) have been surrounded by a wall.

Hazrat Ahmad Al Ansari (R.): He is a noble companion of Madina Munawara. Participating in the campaign against Constantinople, he embraced martyrdom. After conquest of Constantinople the grave of this noble companion was determined and it is very near to the graves of Hazrat Abu Shaiba Khudri (R.) and Hazrat Hamdullah Al Ansari (R.).

Hazrat Muhammad Al Ansari (R.): He is a noble companion of Medina Munawara. He had great intimate connection with Hazrat Abu Ayub Ansari (R.) and he went to Constantinople accompanied by him in order to conquer Constantinople. He embraced martyrdom in this expedition. After the fall of Constantinople, his grave was identified by Sultan Muhammad, the second, who built shrine on his grave.

Hazrat Zaber Ibne Abdullah Al Ansari (R.): He is the most famous companion of Medina Area. He is the narrator of numerous Hadith. He took part in 19 expeditions with prophet (S.). He expired in Medina Munawara in Hijree 78. This great and highly dignified companion took part in the great expedition against Constantinople. A seat on a landmark was built where he stayed during the prolonged duration of war.

Hazrat Abu Zar Al Gifari (R.) : He is among the first five companions who embraced Islam. He is a companion of a very high stature. He has narrated many significant and momentous Hadith. He expired in 653 A.D. in Medina. This highly dignified and noble minded companion took part

in many important campaigns. He took part in the expedition against Constantinople. A post or landmark has been constructed in the post where he stayed during the campaign. Subsequently, in Hijree 1128, i.e. 1716 A.D. prime minister shaheed Ali Pasha built a Mausoleum over the grave of the great companion as a token of his profound respect for him. Mother of a Sultan rebuilt a mazar on the seat of this grave with stones.

Hazrat E-Amir (R.): He took part in the campaign of Constantinople. It is not mentioned whether he is a companion or a pupil of a companion. His mazar is in Istanbul. In 1790, this Mazar was renovated. As a matter of fact, it is not mentioned whether it is a grave or a landmark post.

Hazrat-E-Hafir (R.): He is son of the sister of Hazrat Abu Ayub Ansari (R.). Taking part in the campaign against Constantinople with his maternal uncle, he embraced martyrdom. The location of his grave is near the Edabi Edarikafi Tower.

Hazrat Abdullah Al Khudri (R.): He is a highly dignified companion of prophet (S.). He is esteemed highly. He also took part in the campaign against Constantinople. His mazar in Istanbul was rebuilt many times but it is not specifically mentioned whether it is a grave or a landmark seat.

Hazrat E-Shuba (R.): He is an exalted companion of prophet (S.). Many a person mentions him as being a Tabee (an indoctrinated people) of a companion. He embraced martyrdom taking part in the campaign against Constantinople. After the historic conquest his grave was unearthed (identified). Sultan Muhammad, the second, built a grave a tomb on his grave.

Hazrat Husham Ibne Abdullah Al Ansari (R.): He is an inhabitant and helper of Medina Munawara.

The name Husham is mentioned in different histories. Probably his name was Hashim. With a view to taking over Constantinople, he took part in the campaign and courted martyrdom. After conquest of Constantinople a shrine was built on his grave.

Hazrat Jafar Ibne Abdullah Al Ansari (R.): An inhabitant of Madina Munawara is one of the highly exalted companions of prophet (S.). He used to work as a carrier of water of Hazrat Abu Ayub Ansari (R.). He embraced martyrdom in the campaign against Constantinople. After conquest of Constantinople in 1453 his grave was identified by Sultan Muhammad, the second. The Sultan built a mosque attached to the grave in Hijree 1251, i.e. 1835 A.D. the Mazar and the mosque were rebuilt.

Hazrat Hasan and Hussain (R.): At first sight, their name will create the impression that they are maternal grandsons of prophet (S.) But actually it is not so. They are in reality the companions of Hazrat Muhammad (S.). Most probably they are congenital brothers. They came to Constantinople in company with Hazrat Abu Ayub Ansari (R.). They entered Constantinople

after seeking permission from the Byzantine King. But they fell to a surprise attack. Their graves are on an open space.

Hazrat Wahab Ibne Hussaira (R.): He participated in the campaign against Constantinople. He embraced martyrdom. It is not mentioned in the book whether he is a companion or a pupil of a companion. His grave was discovered during the reign of Sultan Murad. The prime minister Mustafa Pasha built a mosque there and mobilized fund for its management.

Hazrat Sufian Ibne Uaina (R.): It is said that he is a Taabeyee (a pupil or a disciple indoctrinated by a companion. He was born in Kufa of Iraq. He was a mentor and theologian of a very high stature. He was well versed in Hadith, i.e. an informed and authority on precept and practice of prophet (S.). He took part in the campaign for conquest of Constantinople. A seal or landmark post has been built there in commemoration of his deed.

Hazrat Abdur Rahman Al Shami: He was an ideal care carrier of Hazrat Abu Ayub Ansari (R.). He took part in the expedition of Constantinople. His mazar is in Istanbul.

As a matter of fact, in the book Companions of prophet Mohammad (S.) in Istanbul the above descriptions are found. On reading these accounts, one may fall into a quandary. But it is palpably clear that, with in view to occupying Constantinople, during the rule of Amir Muabiya (R.) expeditions were twice undertaken to Constantinople. Towards the later period of his rule, the 2nd expedition against Constantinople lasted for 6 years, i.e. 54 to 60 Hijree.

Therefore, it can be said that besides people from Damascus-Mulk-E-Sham it is quite natural that the companions from Makkah Mukarrama and Medina Munawara took part in that campaign. The pupils of the companions took part in the campaign. It is also a natural corollary that the companions and their disciples who laid down their lives there were buried there.

In the light of the little knowledge that I have gained in Istanbul of Turkey through the study and skimming of books, articles and historical records, nowhere I have discovered such accounts as recorded in the said book.

Osmanli Turkish people ruled over half of Europe, North Africa, the Arabian peninsula including Mulk E Sham and a great part of Asia for 6 to 7 hundred years. It is quite natural for the Arabs to take part in the campaign for capture of Constantinople. A prediction of an impending victory in this regard from Hazrat Muhammad (S.) stirred the inauguration of the warlike Arabs. As such, during the rule of Amir E-Muabiya (R.), the Amir twice undertook expeditions against Constantinople of which the last one lasted for 6 years. After elapse of almost 700 hundred years Sultan Muhammad, the second, occupied Constantinople through a decisive

The railway communication system, in the meantime, has been established in the world including India by that time.

The Ottomans, towards the end of their rule, were confronted with much financial crisis and adverse political conditions. They were determined to build up a railway communication system throughout their empire. With this end in view, they took financial and technical help from the European countries. Since it was their avowed policy, barring Hejaz Railway, they took outside help for implementation of railway project in other parts of the empire. Because of the building up of railway communication system, the various parts of the empire including Europe, came under the Ottoman railway communication network. All important places in Europe came under its jurisdiction. Among the important places Berlin, Paris, Vienna and Sophia figure prominently.

In hope of earning huge profit in the business of railway the foreign investors came to the Ottoman Empire with their finance and expertise. The business was a joint venture and it involved a risk.

The Ottoman regime thought that Railway Communication would help strengthening communication authority, control of the far flung regions with the centre and consolidated their rule in the outlying reams of their empire. Among these regions Hejaz Damascus, Baghdad, Mosul Aleppo, Anatolia etc. are the most prominent but most remote places.

Sultan Abdul Aziz reigned 15 years (1861-1876) and he began ground work in order to build rail link between Istanbul and Anatolia during the Ottoman era.

This railway line stretched upto Cadillac beginning from Asian part of Istanbul. Later on, it was further extended up to Izmir. In view of financial exigency the Ottoman regime divided the right of share with a British Company in 1880 in respect of operation. During the later period of his reign Sultan Abdul Hamid took care in running the empire with a firm hand. Side by side, he gave great importance to railway system. He ruled for long 33 years.

In view of threat of foreign invasion and internal condition, he gave top priority to Railway communication. The Beirut-Damascus- Apion-Koniya, Istanbul-Ishkeshah-Ankara, Adana-Baghdad and Adana-Damascus, Madina Munawara line projects were implemented by Sultan Abdul Hamid, the Second, during his reign. Side by side, he started the countruction work of Jeddah-Makkah- Mukarrama railway line.

On the other hand, European rail network was started in 1874. Due to the completion of the construction of this network railway communication with Europe became expanded. That is, to say that with European finance, the Ottoman empire built nearly 8434 k.m railway line from 1856 to 1922.



View of Pilgrim passengers

In building this vast railway network two thirds of the total expenditure came from foreign capital investment. Railway line was built by the post-Ottoman empire regime, i.e., the republican regime. The construction of Hejaz rail line was as much problematic as it was useful from different points of view.

As a matter of fact, the idea of the construction of Hejaz railway stemmed from the consideration of communication between Makkah Mukarrama and Medina Munawara with the purpose of ferrying Hajj pilgrims between those 2 holy places. Towards the beginning of the twentieth century, it was a momentous event. The railway authority undertook the task of building railway track from Istanbul-Holy Madina-Holy Makkah up to the Red Sea (Jeddah) via Damascus. Infact, the idea of building a railway line in Hejaz originated in 1864. In that year, an American Dr. Jimfel by name, an engineer, proposed this grand proposed idea of such a massive railway network in 1864. The Ottoman empire did not concede to the implementation of this project in view of the colossal expenditure for constructing such network on such a big scale. Sultan Abdul Aziz was not in a position to implement the proposed plan at a time at such a huge expense.

During the rule of Sultan Abdul Hamid, the second, subsequent to the reign of Sultan Abdul Aziz, this plan, which was stalled but not abandoned, was granted for implementation. Sultan Abdul Hamid, the second, was the last great emperor of the Ottoman empire. Erap Ijjat Pasha, the pious Turkish governor of Jeddah, placed the best pragmatic and feasible proposal for construction of railway link.

That is to say that he placed before the Sultan the proposal of construction of Hejaz railways. He laid emphasis on the importance of implementation of such a proposal. He also briefed that such a railway link will discourage foreign aggression and internal intrigue.

He also mentioned that the proposed railway would facilitate the pilgrims, create favourable condition for conducting the state affairs and would create favourable political situation.

When Sultan Abdul Hamid, the second, took up the reign of rule, adverse situation was prevailing in the empire. Notwithstanding, he played a laudable role in implementing such a railway project of great significant. He approved the plan and, on the 2nd May 1900, he declared an official decree for inauguration of the implementation of the proposed Hejaz Railway. It was a royal declaration.

It is really a matter of great surprise that the pious Sultan, instead of keeping the railway under the ownership of the empire, declared the proposed railway as wakf asset. It has been already mentioned that although the Sultan implemented the other railways of Sultanate with the finance of European countries, in respect of the implementation of Hejaz railway project finance from the state treasury, subscription from the rich Turkish people, donation from the public and subscription from the Muslim world would be sources of the financing of the project. This railway was built by public subscription from among the donors. Many members of the public donated money for construction of this railway. Donations from this subcontinent were sent to emperor with this end in view. The Sultan also donated 50,000 thousand Lira from his own personal treasury. The contribution of the empire was substantive too. The Ottoman regime together with railways built post office at every station.

As a result of the building of the railways, the traveling of thousands of pilgrims became ensured. The people of the northern part of the Arabian peninsula were advanced but they remained insulated so far. Railway link broke the barrier by making communication easy, comfortable and safe. At that age, camel was the only means of communication and transportation. It would take at least 40 days to reach Makkah from Damascus, riding on horse back. This journey was all the more troublesome during the adversities of nature, such as snowing, heat, cold and rain.

On top of that, the armed Beduins (Nomads) used to make this journey more threatening and bitter. They used to put life and property at a jeopardy. They used to waylay travelers. The wondering armed Beduins ruled supreme at that time. They used to raid the members of the public as brigands. It posed a preened problem. The distance between Damascus and Madina Munawara is 1464 k.m. As a result of building railways one could reach Madina Munawara from Damascus within 3 days and 3 nights. This ensured safe and comfortable journey of the people as well as the pilgrims



View of Nomads (Beduins)

from the former stress and strain. During the journey by one train, congregational salat was arranged in a compartment of the train. Every train had bogey which was used a mosque. A paid Imam (cleric) used to lead the prayer on the whole train journey which added a landmark in history and made the journey un-imaginably pleasant and comfortable.

After opening of the railways, during 4 years from the 1st Sept. 1908 to the year 1912, Railway has carried 30 thousand pilgrims from Istanbul to the holy city of Madina, situated in a remote area of the Ottoman empire. In view of adverse communication system, only a small number of people numbering merely 1 lakh (0.1 million) used to go to the pilgrimage, according to the statistics of the railways. Besides pilgrims, 3 lakh people (0.3 million) have traveled by train through the Hejaz Railways. In order to make train journey safe the Osmanli Sultan have built fortified forts in all places in order to guard the railway line from the forays and raids of Beduins. Thus the menace of the armed brigand was tackled. Pockets of guards were placed in several places to guard the railway from armed gangs. In fact, Sultan Abdul Hamid, the 2nd, on the day of his 33rd year of ascension to throne arranged a ceremony in order to build the railway from Damascus to Dera on the 1st September 1908. The Sultan was famous for his piety.

Within 3 years, this construction work reached Amman. On the following year, the railway link reached Aiwan. Operating body was established for renning up to this point and transportation of passengers and goods commenced on the 1st September 1905.

Next year, this railway was extended upto Madain Saleh. At length, this railway line ended up to Madina Munawara by 1st to Sept. 1908. This line was made of 1.05 gauge line. The implementation of the railway cost more than the estimated amount.

The local armed Bediuns put severe impediment in the way of implementation of the project. Except for Hejaj railway all other networks of railway are operated by foreign companies. Hejaj railway is an exception in the history of the railway administration system of the Osmanli Sultanate. Hejaj Railway project has been implemented by the Turkish workers since Hejaj Railway is linked with the holy city of Madina.



View of Pilgrim passengers pray before starting journey for Pilgrim

The Turkish engineers and workers built the Hejaj Railway upto a distance of 300 k.m. in the north from the holy city of Madina. The Hejaj line bore the mark of the craftsmanship of the Muslims. It was the design of Sultan too. The Iraqi and the Syrian labourers also took part in the construction of Hejaj Railway. The Sultan wanted the Muslim engineers and workers acquire greater experience of construction.

From the main armed forces of the Ottoman empire a select force of labourers was formed. It was a task force of 5000 soldiers. By comparison, the construction of Hejaj railway confronted most adverse condition in the entire Ottoman empire. The extremity of climate change, paucity of water and surprise raid of the armed Beduin bundles are some of the formidable problems encountered by the builders of the railways.



Pasa of Hejaz Sharif Hossain

The vast expanse of the land at some places was so soft that it was not suitable to work there. Again some places were rocky and sandy. Paucity of water posed a serious problem to the labourers. Yet again, heavy rainfall used to inundate the building site. Flood washed away many bridges.



View of Transact Rail line between Damascus and Holy Madina

It used to abort all the construction work. It washed away the track. Notwithstanding these formidable challenges, the work went on without any cessation. In this railway track there were hundreds of bridges and tunnels. On the 1st Sept. 1908 and on the 33rd anniversary of Sultan Abdul Hamid's ascension to the throne. A very ostentatious ceremony was arranged on that day. Formal inauguration was announced. With this railway trunk line, there are 2 branch lines-one runs to Beirut at a distance of 174 k.m. and another to Khaifa City of Palestine at a distance of 168 km. are linked. The Hejaz railway system further consolidated the Ottoman rule in this region. At that line, the governor of Makkah Sharif Hossain was a very powerful personality. In order to establish his rule he rebelled against the authority of the Ottoman empire, taking advantage of the adverse condition of the empire. He was fermented and frilled by the imperialists to raise the standard of rebellion. This Hejaz railway was seriously affected due to the insurrection of the separatists. During the 1st world war, taking advantage of precarious condition of the Ottoman empire and disorder in the aftermath of defeat of the Turks, the Arab countries seceded from the Ottoman Sultanate. The Hejaz railway totally lost its capacity when Abdul Aziz and obscurantists occupied Madina and established Saudi Arab. As a result, Hejaz railway became paralyzed. It now lies in shambles. The Madina railway station and Arabia, one k.m. west from the Holy City of Madina, still stands as an evilness to the Hajaj railway fiasco. The station is still extended 20 to 30 years back, there was a bus terminal. The Holy Madina railway station is a concrete dirge of a dead noble effort of the Ottoman Sultans.

On the other hand, the Osmanli Sultanate started construction of Jeddah-Holy Makkah railway. The envisaged plan of the Sultanate was to link Holy Makkah with Madina. After completion of the construction of Jeddah- Holy Makkah railway the distance between Jeddah and Makkah is 75 k.m. With this end in view, the pious brave Sultan Abdul Hamid, the second, proceeded with courage and determination. The avowed aim was to compel the construction work of Holy Makkah - Holy Madina railway line by 1913. By the way of implementation of the stipulated plan the Jeddah Holy Madina Railway construction work was going on. On the other hand, the inauguration of the construction of Makkah Mukarrama and Madina Munawara railway line was in the offing. But as the situation was deteriorating the first world and its aftermath resulted in the secession of Arab states from the Osmanli Sultanate. In the subsequent event, the Arab states totally dead- locked and stalled the work of Hejaz railway. Thus the pious hope of the pious Sultan was aborted by foreign legated saboteurs. Since the dismemberment of the Islamic Sultanate, the pilgrims and the people have become deprived from easy, comfortable and safe journey. Almost 100 years have elapsed since the Saudi Arabia emerged as a kingdom.

But the plight of the pilgrims and the people have remained unalleviated. The founder of Saudi Arabia King Abdul Aziz occupied Riyadh in 1902, coming from Kuwait. Soon after occupying Holy Makkah in 1924 he brought holy Madina under his occupation. By 23rd Sept. 1932 King Abdul Aziz united the vast areas under his occupation and issued a royal decree declaring the territory as Saudi Arabia and declared the country as a monarchial kingdom.

Almost 80 to 90 years have passed since Monarchy was established in Saudi Arabia. The oil revenue has made them rich. It is an age of science and high tech there.

In the world the railway service was first introduced nearly 200 hundred years ago in the backdrop of undeveloped and almost insurmountable impediments. By that time the Usmanli Sultanate established railway up to Madina Munawara. During the Sultanate, only one lakh people (0.1 million) people used to live in Holy Makkah and its suburbs. On the other hand, during that age, approximately one lakh people used to perform pilgrimage. At present, 20 to 30 lakh pilgrims (2 to 3 million) converge to Holy Makkah and Holy Madina, besides the local populace.

Yet, furthermore, throughout the year thousands of people throng to Makkah Mukarrama and Madina Monowara in order to perform Omrah and Zearrah. It is heartening to note that Saudi Government has, although belatedly, undertaken the task of construction of Jeddah-Holy Makkah-Holy Madina railway. If implemented, it will redeem the pledge of the Sultans and help alleviate the suffering of the pilgrims and the people. The envisioned plan, when implemented, will make the journey easy, comfortable and safe. Simultaneously, it will usher in a new era of progress and prosperity.

The Turkish Sultans as staunch adherents of Prophet (S.)

Turkish love, affection and dedication to prophet (sm) are phenomenal. A retrospect of the account of the history of Ottomans gives us an insight into their profound love, unwavering loyalty to the prophet (S.) and unflinching faith and submission to the will of the almighty. Hejaz region, i.e. holy Makkah and Holy Madina of present day Saudi Arabia, was under the control and rule of the Turkish Sultanate for hundreds of years.

The Turks have ruled for hundreds of years over vast realm spanning over the world in the midst of insurmountable geographical barriers. Notwithstanding, they have ruled in accessible and inhospitable territory with meticulous precision in the past.

Besides, Hejaz, Cairo, Jerusalem, Damascus, Baghdad etc. are very famous among the places ruled by the Ottoman emperors. These famous places of the Muslim world have been ruled deftly by Turkish Sultans.



Holy Madina during Turkey period

Losing the former vast empire modern Turkey has become limited to an area of 10 lakh one thousand 5 hundred sq. kilometer, a chunk of territory which is nearly 6 times bigger than Bangladesh.

But, till today, these monumental and much venerated cities, built by them, bear testimony to their selfless sacrifice, dedication, religious zeal and deep sense of commitment to the cause of Islam. The present mausoleum of prophet (S.) and the original Masjid-E-Nabbi have been built by the Osmanli Sultans.

The Masjid-E-Nabbi that existed

Since the beginning of the time of holy prophet (S.) and right up to the times of Hazrat Osman (R.) it has been rebuilt or renovated in an expanded form by the Osmanli Sultans of Turkey on land as existed since then.

Thereafter, keeping the seat of the caliphate of Amirul Momenin Hazrat Abu Bakar Siddique (R.) and the seat of Hazrat Omar (R.), located a bit further north vacant, the Turkish Sultans expanded the holy Masjid-E-Nabbi towards the north.

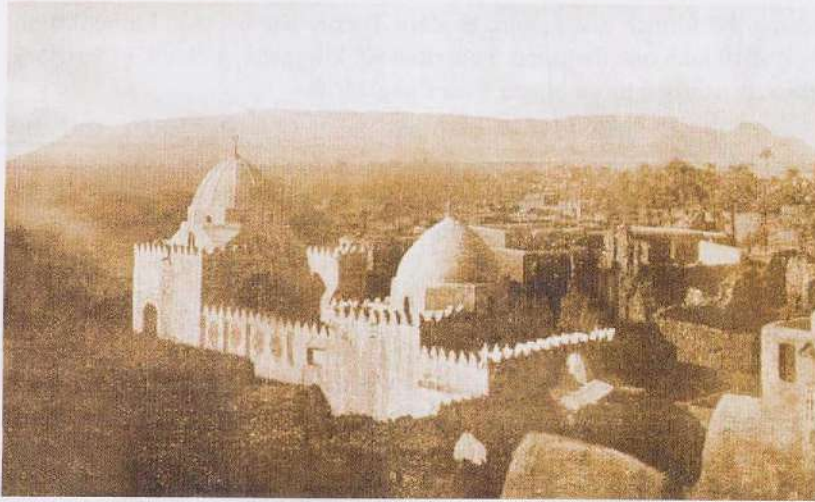
King Abdul Aziz kept the land of prophet (S.) built by Turkish Sultans intact and the land of prophet (S.) and Hazrat Osman (R.) undisturbed, further expanded the Masjid-E-Nabbi further in the north. While doing so he demolished some of the old structures built in the north.

Although a portion of the structures built in the northern side has been subsequently been dismantled the replica of that demolished portion has been kept in the Topkapi Museum. They distinctly bears the hall marks of Turkish masonry craftsmanship.

King Fahad, the 4th son of King Adul Aziz, undertook the task of expanding the mosque towards the west east and northern direction in 1985. It is an ultramodern and most impressive edifice. This detectable mosque was completed in 1995. The present king Abdullah, has undertaken the task of further expanding the Masjid-E-Nabbi in a splendid and magnificent manner.

At the present age, Saudi Arabia is a major oil and gold exporting country in the world. Even since 50 to 60 years ago, people of Saudi Arabia used to come to our country in hope of financial assistance. Within a space of only half a century, a lot of changes have taken place there.

It will not be exaggeration to say that in view of the heavy income of revenue from oil export hundreds of members of the royal family are living in effete luxury. In view of wonderful and enormous income from oil revenue the amount of income has surpassed billions and trillions of dollar.



Masjid-E-Kuba during Turkey period

It is, as such, not at all difficult to spend a huge amount of money in order to expand and renovate Holy Qaba and Masjid E. Nabbi for the Saudi Monarchy but the Turkish Sultans, in the face of extreme financial crunch, built and renovated the Holy Qaba and Holy Masjid E. Nabbi from its own meager income. In this respect, they did not spare any pains in order to built and renovate the two holy mosques. Not only that, they also built 1450 km railway line from Damascus to the Holy City of Holy Madina. They laid the railway track through the intractable and unsurpassable desert terrain. They worked with diligence, perseverance and dogged determination to bring the entire Arabian peninsula under the railway network.

They dared taming the desert through railway network. They established railway communication between holy Madina and remote interior parts of Arabian peninsula and the places beyond the Arabian desert preparations were afoot to build railway link between Jeddah and Makkah Mukarrama and from Makkah Mukarrama to Madina Munawara.

But, for the 1st world war and takeover of Hejaz by King Abdul Aziz the scheme ended in a big fiasco.

The actual enclosed place in the holy Madina are confined within 7 to 8 square kilometers. Within this enclosed place only Muslims can move and work freely.

The places beyond this place is accessible to people of all other faiths and creeds. There the non-Muslims are free to move and work. The forbidden

perimeter is very narrow in space. The sound of the call for dawn prayer from the Masjid-E-Nabbi at dawn exceeds the forbidden limits i.e. crosses the limits of the inviolable place. Beyond this point all Muslims can reside and work freely. But the Ottomans while laying railway track did not allow to work within 300 km around the holy city of Madina. This territory within was kept closed to the non-Muslims in order to promote the cause of manpower development and expertise. The Turks encouraged technology and expertise among the Muslims. It was designed to help develop modern technology. The Osmanli emperors built 300 km long railway track by mobilizing and training personnel from Turkey, Damascus, Baghdad and Arabian peninsula. This step emphasizes that instead of taking into account 7 to 8 km territory as an inevitable place, the Turkish Sultans as a mark of deference and reverence for the prophet (S.) thought of an exclusive zone for Muslims spanning 300 km around, side by side with renovation of Masjidul Haram of Makkah and holy mosque of Masjid-E-Nabbi in Madina Munawara.

The Turkish Sultans raised domes on the graves of the inmates of the house of prophet (S.) and saintly companions of prophet (S.) of Jannatul Baki and Jannatul Muallah as a mark of respect by way of showing regard to the departed souls of the virtuous and devout companions according to the doctrinaires of Hadith.

It is not admissible to build shrine and dome on the graves. As a matter of fact, the forces and adherents of King Abdul Aziz put down the domes and reduced them to rubbles after King Abdul Aziz seized Hejaz in 1924/1925 A.D.

But according to the present elderly and scholarly doctrinaires of Deoband erection of domes on graves and their demolition are unpardonable acts. According to hearsays passed from versions, formal writs were issued forbidding construction of the domes when opinions were sought from Deoband authority. At that time many learners and Arab students from Hejaz used to come to Indian subcontinent including Deoband in order to acquire higher studies on theology and other subjects.

Soon after conquest of Istanbul in 1453 the Turkish Sultan Muhammad, the second, built many impressive and magnificent mosques. Istanbul is called the city of mosques. Sultan Ahmad Mosque, alias Blue Mosque, and Mosque built on top of the hill, are famous all over the world. Sultan Ahmad Mosque is situated in front of the famous Topkapi Museum. The Turkish Sultan left no stone unturned to manifest their wonderful craftsmanship while building the magnificent and soothing mosques.

While building these 2 mosques they followed the craftsmanship and artistry of Holy Mausoleum of Muhammad (S.) and the Masjid-E-Nabbi and adorned the wall with (artistic) calligraphy of the holy verses of the text of the holy Quran.

The famous Blue Mosque of Istanbul

The Mehrab, the haters' tower of the Blue Mosque, have been meditated on the holy Masjid-E-Nabbi. The designing and patterning of these 2 mosques have been borrowed from the Holy Mausoleum of prophet (S.) and the Masjid-E-Nabbi attached to the Mausoleum of prophet (S.). The calligraphic inscription has also been followed from the earlier form of pattern of the Rouza Pak and the Masjid-E-Nabbi. In a word, the calligraphic adornments has derived their inspiration from the Rouja Pak and the attached mosque. A museum in common parlance signifies an imposing edifice of antiques.

The complex preserves various antiquities of various nature, such as, they exist in Dhaka, Kolkata, Delhi, Tehran, Egypt, Baghdad, Sana, London, New York, Toronto etc. But the Museum established in Istanbul is diametrically opposite to these museums. This is uncharacteristic of a museum. This Topkapi Museum is comprised of several palaces covering an area of nearly 2 km. This museum is a sanctum place to 130 crore Muslims all over the world since, in one of the palaces, the reminders of the holy prophet (S.) have been preserved with great reverence and respect. Among the portents of prophet (S.) the holy tooth, thread of beard, sword, clothes, seal of prophet (sm). have been preserved with utmost veneration and reverence. This Museum also contains the miraculous staff of Musa, clothes of mother Fatema (S.), wear and wares of the 4 leaders of the Faithful, personal effects of several holy companions and the spectacular sword of Khaled bin Walid and several personal effects and belongings of a few messengers and opposites.

They have been arranged in a most impressive way in several chambers of the palace. From the accounts shown against each reminder it is easily perceived and comprehended that each antiquity has been selected under the auspices of the authority of the sovereign crupling and verification after proper scrutiny. As such, they possess authenticity and general plausibility. Although Topkapi Museum contains much precious antiquities worth seeing, the main focus of attention and interest are the remainders of prophet Muhammad (S.). The Turkish Sultans introduced the practice of the recitation of the holy Quran 200 years ago as a mark of respect and veneration of the holy antiquities.

Till to day, through recitation of the holy Quran the Qaris through their mellifluous voice go on reciting the whole text of the Quran both day and night without any interruption and thus they have kept the tradition alive through the centuries. One cannot but become enchanted on hearing the modulated voice of the Qaris while listening to the qirat of the Holy Quran. The uninterrupted recitation of the holy Quran is a rarity on the annals of recitation. It bears evidence to the fact that the Turkish Sultans were the genuine followers of prophet (S.). They were real votaries of Islam and staunch followers of the prophet (S.).

Hazrat Abu Ayub Ansari (R.)

Hazrat Abu Ayub Ansari (R) expired after illness. While he was on an expedition to Constantinople along with the Muslim forces he undertook the expedition when Amir-E-Muabia undertook a campaign against Constantinople. He was one of the most outstanding and venerable companions of prophet (S.).

He was at that time an octogenarian grand campaigner. Since embracing or courting martyrdom was his avowed principal he is treated as a martyr. Till the time of his death, he was participating in a campaign of holy war. The eminent Islamic idealogues have called him a great martyr. Since the time of his death he was in action against the foes of Islam. After conquering Constantinople in 1453 A.D Sultan Muhammad, the second, felt that one of his fundamental tasks was to identify the graves of the great companions and the pupils of their companions lying buried in the surrounding area of Istanbul and to preserve them with due sanctity and religious fervour. The Turkish Sultan Muhammad, the second, demonstrates his utmost respect to Hazrat Abu Ayub Ansari (R.) by construction of tomb on his grave, building mosque in the vicinity of his shrine and building up many sanctuary facilities around his grave. Thus the Sultan installed Hazrat Abu Ayb Ansari (R.) as the supreme head of spiritual hierarchy of the Turkish Sultanate. Not only that he was vested with the appellation of Ayub Sultan till to day. Hazrat Abu Ayub Ansari (R.) bears the honorific Ayub Sultan. Very few Turks know his real name. The image of a state reflects through the ceremony by which a new ruler assumes power and the attendant rites and retails associated with the process of coronation or investiture. The sword is a symbol of sovereignty in Islamic tradition. The sword has become an Islamic insigma. It is an insigma of honour too. Leadership in spiritual hierarchy is his exclusive preserve. The sword is an insignia of Transfer of power, possession of sovereignty and transfer of sovereignty.

Sultan Muhammad, the second, first enacted his (maiden) sword procession and arranged his investiture ceremony at the precincts / premises of Hazrat Abu Ayub Ansari (R.). Since then, it has become the venue of change, take over and transfer of power. As such, the sword has become an Islamic insignia and the ceremony an Islamic tradition.

At the premises of his shrine, a revered cleric clarified the sword to his hip as a symbol of his being a sovereign. This practice was in fashion up to the last sovereign of the Ottoman empire. Prophet Muhammad (S.) was the nearest and the dearest to the Ottoman Sultans. Any one associated with the holy prophet is regarded with utmost reverence and respect. Such a charismatic personage is a legacy of the Muslim Community and his entity is a bequest of prophet Muhammad (S.). Muslims in general and the Turks in particular are mentally and psychologically drawn to such a revered person. He symbolizes the altitudes of prophet (S.). In view of this, the Muslims are naturally inclined to nourish great reverence to such a person who holds such a great tradition. Under this circumstances, the Osmanli Sultans have installed Hazrat Abu Ayub Ansari (R.) as the spiritual monarch or sovereign process of the Ottoman empire. As a matter of fact, such acts of reverence reflect a nation's abiding faith in Allah's dispensation and unwavering faith in Allah and unflinching love and respect for prophet (S.).

Hazrat Abu Ayub Ansari (R.) is a bequest to the Muslims from Muhammad (sm). He is both a spiritual guardian and guardian for the Muslims. It is a reflection of regard and attachment to prophet (S.). Hazrat Abu Ayub Ansari (R.) epitomizes the attributes of Hazrat Muhammad (S.). Quite reasonably Hazrat Abu Ayub Ansari (R.) holds the reign of spiritual heirarchy in Ottoman empire by virtue of his innate faculty and subservience to the prophetic love. Prophetic love is perpetually vibrant and ever- radiant idea and in this tradition Hazrat Abu Ayub Anwari (R.) is an ever-lasting luminary. In him, we find of our love for the prophet (S.). Our hearts reverberate with profound respect for Hazrat Abu Ayub Ansari (R). He acts, as such, as substitute for our prophet (S.). So he has been invested with the highest spiritual stature in Ottoman Sultanate. It is indeed a grand reflection of a nation's profound love and devotion to a prophet who is the redeemer of mankind The subservience of the temporal head to the spiritual head is properly secured through the rites and rituals of the coronation of the Turkish Monarch. It has become a sacrosanct practice. The holy companions of prophet (S.) are abstracts of the virtues and attributes of prophet (S.). The pageantry connected with the coronation and commemorative service

associated with it reflects abiding faith in Islamic tradition and this tradition is historically linked to prophetic love through ritualistic observance of that tradition. The Osmanli Sultans demonstrated their unflinching and unflinching faith in Islamic love. We humbly solicit Allah's benediction in this holy month, on the departed souls of the Sultans of the Ottoman empire who became hierarchy for their love and respect for prophet (S.).

The customary rule of succession was celebrated or observed in the following manner.

They took out joyous procession in celebration of the coronation of emperor. The Mazar premises were the hub of celebration i.e. the celebration got divine sanction and the approval came from the religions authority/or hierarchy headed by Hazrat Abu Ayub Ansari (R). The system was a human institution instituted by Sultan Muhammad, the second, but emanated from the deep regard he held towards Prophet Muhammad (S.) both temporal and spiritual hierarchy during his life time. But after his demise the spiritual hierarchy fell into the hands of those who upheld his tradition best. In connection with Ottoman Sultanate it can be said that the Sultan held real temporal authority. But Sultan Muhammad, the second, thought, it seemed that he was not competent enough to mete out religious authority and sanction. Who could hold it best? The obvious choice is Hazrat Abu Ayub Ansari (R.) since he was the reigning spiritual leader in the Ottoman empire, besides being the best upholder of prophetic tradition. Abu Ayub Ansari (R.) was dictated by Sultan Muhammad, the second. Total and unqualified regard and respect for prophet (S.), charisma and humanity trickle out perennially from the holy presence of the prophet (S.). Let love and regard for him pervade our hearts.

A Publishing ceremony of a book named "Turkey: An Osmanian Empire"



The Honorable Ambassador of Turkey Mr. Vakur Erkul (in the middle) unveiling the book at an occasion in presence of honorable dignitaries. On his left writer Mr. Ahmadul Islam Chowdhury and on the right Mr. Salahuddin Kasem Khan.

I have had a chance to Travel and Zearah in Turkey from 11th June to 22th, 2008 A.D. In the travel we reached Istanbul from Tehran by Turkish Airlines. We had gone to Allama Rumi City from Istanbul via Ankara. From there we reached port city Marchin. Then we arrived in industrial city Gazi Entab from Marchin. After that we went to Urfa. From this city we again came back to Istanbul and reached Dhaka.

Finally, I wrote a book of 128 pages titled "Turkey: An Osmanian Empire". The prominent industrialist late A.K. Khan's son and a religious minded person Mr. Salahuddin Kasem Khan extended his helping hand for publishing the book. He serves as honorary consul general of Turkey for a long time. The Honorable Ambassador of Turkey Mr. Vakur Erkul came to Chittagong after some days of printing this book. During his visit on Saturday evening, the 31st March, 2011, the publishing ceremony was held at A. K. Khan Banglow (the residence of Salahuddin Kasem Khan) on Batali Hills in the city of Chittagong.

The Honorary Consul General of Turkey Mr. Salahuddin Kasem Khan presided over the meeting and Mr. Vakur Erkul was present as a chief guest. the Principal of International Hope School Mr. Bayram Saatci, the President of Bangladesh-Turkey Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Fikret Cicek,



An occasion of unveiling of the book: Speech delivered by Mr. Ahmadul Islam Chowdhury (writer). On the stage from left, the principal of International Hope School, Bangladesh, Mr. Bayram Saatci, Honorable Ambassador of Turkey in Bangladesh, Mr. Vakur Erkul, Chairman of the occasion and Publisher of the book Mr. Salahuddin Kasem Khan, Chairman of A. K. Khan Group of Companies Mr. Shamsuddin Khan and the president of Bangladesh-Turkey Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Fikret Cicek also present in the program.

the Chairman of A. K. Khan Group of Company Mr. Shamsuddin Khan were also present in the program. Writer (Ahmadul Islam Chowdhury) delivered speech on importance of publication of the book. About one hundred prominent citizens of Chittagong city attended the ceremony.

In the program, the honorable Ambassador Mr. Vakur detailed about the relation of brotherhood between Bangladesh and Turkey. He also remembered the relation between Chittagong and Turkish Sultans, ship building at Chittagong Port and many other communications. He requested Mr. Salahuddin Kasem Khan for translating the book into English.

On the evening of the 27th March 2014, the publication (English version) ceremony was held at A. K. Khan Banglow (the residence of Salahuddin Kasem Khan) on Batali Hills in the city of Chittagong. There the English version of the book "Turkey: An Osmanian Empire" was unveiled by Honorable Ambassador of Turkey in Bangladesh Mr. Huseyin Muftuoglu. The honorary consul general of Turkey Mr. Salahuddin Kasem Khan and book writer Ahmadul Islam Chowdhury were present the unveiling program. The writer of the book delivered speech on different issues contained in the book.

After closing ceremony of unveiling of the book, the dinner session was held and the dinner was participated by Professor Anwarul Azim Arif, Vice Chancellor, University of Chittagong; Mr. Abdus Salam, Chairman, CDA; Professor Dr. Jahangir Alam, Vice Chancellor, CUET;



Before unveiling of the book, speech delivered by writer Ahmadul Islam Chowdhury. On the stage Honorable Ambassador Mr. Huseyin Muftuoglu and Mr. Salahuddin Kasem Khan.

Mr. Somnath Halder, Assistant High Commissioner of India, Chittagong, Bangladesh, Professor Emirats Alamgir Muhammad Sirajuddin, former Vice Chancellor, Chittagong University, President of Bangladesh-Turkey Chamber of Commerce Mr. Fikret Cicek, famous businessmen, political leaders and social workers.



After unveiling of the book (from the right) Mr. Salahuddin Kasem Khan, Honorable Ambassador Mr. Huseyin Muftuoglu and writer display the book.

(Attachment)

A publication ceremony of a book written about Turkey



Before unveiling of the book, speech delivered by (from the left) H.E Ambassador of Turkey Mr. Devrim Ozturk, Honorary Consul General Salahuddin Kasem Khan, writer Ahmadul Islam Chowdhury.

The Honorary Consul General of Turkey, who is also the publisher of this book, Mr. Salahuddin Kasem Khan chaired. Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey his excellency Mr. Devrim Ozturk was present as a Chief Guest of the function. In the ceremony former Chief Justice Mr. K.M. Hasan, wife of the Turkish Ambassador, Mrs. Farhat Khanum, Indian Assistant High Commissioner, Honorary Consuls of Germany, Italy, Newzealand, Trade Commissioner, Thailand and renowned businessmen, industrialists, educationists and other respected persons were present.

Being author of the book I have tried to speak after the lecture of honorable Chief Guest and Chair of the function that Bangladesh has a long long brotherly relationship with Turkey which was very much deep during the period of Ottoman Sultans due to Chittagong Port. About 70 (seventy) articles written by me have been published in newspapers in Bangladesh, describing the fascinating, charming and attractive Islamic Heritage and Architecture of Turkey.

There is a proverb that a man has only two eyes but a writer has so many eyes. Even a famous man when he sees some remarkable and fascinating things keeps it in his mind. But a writer when he observes and sees, such attractive things, can bring it to the knowledge of thousands of people by his writing.

At the end the Chief Guest uncovered the book along with the Chair of the function.

About the Author...



The author of this book Mr. Ahmadul Islam Chowdhury is a multi-facet and talented personality. He is a researcher, islamic thinker, columnist, social worker, organiser as well as the patron of learning. He was born on the 18th January in 1950 at Banskhalī, Chittagong. He is a descendant of Great Hazrat Syed Abdur Rahman Siddiqi (R.) who came to this part of the world with a view to propagating the eternal message of Islam from the Holy land of Arabia. His father Amirul Hajj Khan Bahadur Badi Ahmad Chowdhury was a member of parliament for twice during the British period. He was a famous gentry and a widely respected renowned person.

Till now, Mr. Ahmadul Islam Chowdhury has written 29 books. Besides those, several books are under publication. About thousand articles on various issues and subjects have been published in various newspaper and periodicals.

To this day, he has established and associated with 14 religious and charitable organizations. He is involved with many organizations of the country which are working for social upliftment and public benefaction.

Travelling extensively in the countries of Asia, Europe, Africa and America, he has gathered much knowledge about place, people and their culture.