

# Turkey

An Ottoman Empire

Türkiye & Osmanlı İmparatorluğu  
ওসমানিয় সাম্রাজ্যের দেশ-তুরস্ক  
*Ahmadul Islam Chowdhury*



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## The translator's note

Mr. Ahmadul Islam Chowdhury, deeply entrenched in Islamic history and culture, has a flair for travelling. His travelogue entitled Turkey: An Osmanli an Empire' is highly interesting, especially to the Muslims because of their affinities with Turkish People. Mr. Ahmadul Islam traces the history of the rise and fall of the Ottoman Empire in a Vivid and vibrant manner. The Ottomans are now in history and cemetery. But their memory and monumental achievements survive. The Ottomans have left indelible legacies in history Mr. Ahmadul Islam illustrates them in his own diffusive and discursive way. The Ottoman, molded in Islamic matrix, has a tolerant attitude to other people, irrespective of creed, clime culture and colour. Their rule was based on popular will, however, this great Empire disintegrated Because of the inexorable law of the world we feel a strong sense of identity with their values and heritage. Together with the history of Ottomans, Mr. Ahmadul Islam throws light on Modern Turkey. It is interesting as well as thought provoking. We watch with interest how they lead the tenor of life and leave their own mark.

The translator endeavored to render this book into English verbatim but, he was handicapped by paucity of synonyms, phrases and idioms in English. It is a formidable challenge to the readers, since the book depicts a different culture and creed Nevertheless, the book presented in English Version will prove charming as well, I believe.

**Prof. Golam Nabi**

Omar Gani M.E.S. University College, Chittagong.



## Honorary Consulate General of the Republic of Turkey Chittagong



**Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim**

### Message

As Consul General of Turkey for nearly 25 years, I feel myself fortunate to be the publisher of such an interesting book containing many rare pictures of Turkey. The book "Turkey - A country of Osmanali Empire" by the author Mr. Ahmadul Islam Chowdhury, a renowned Islamic Scholar contains various Historical Information, particularly the short history of Turkey and history of different cities like Istanbul, Ankara, Konya, Mersin, Tarsus, Gazi Entebbe Urfa.

At the Publication Ceremony of this book originally in Bengali at the Consulate General of Turkey in Chittagong on 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2011 H.E. Mr. Mehmet Vakur Erkul, Ambassador of Republic of Turkey had observed that it would be a good idea if it was translated into English. The author Mr. Ahmadul Islam Chowdhury has undertaken this task and within 06 (six) months has translated it into English, which will ensure a wider readership not only in Bangladesh but also in Turkey.

We should recall that the historic relations between Bangladesh and Turkey transcends nearly 5 centuries. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century Osmanali Sultan of Turkey had his Naval fleet constructed in Chittagong in preference to the shipyards of Alexandria. It is heartening today that ship building is again being renewed as an export-oriented industry after nearly 500 years.

2010 will be a historic year for Bangla-Turkey relations. H.E. Mr. Abdullah Gul, the President of Turkey visited Dhaka on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2010. I had the privilege of meeting him in Dhaka and requested on behalf of the Citizens of the Port City the following:

- (1) Renovation and restoration of the Shahi Jame Masjid in Anderkill, Chittagong
- (2) Establishing of Turkish Bank Branch in Bangladesh

The visit was followed by the visit of H.E. Mr. the Prime Minister of Turkey, Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdogan, on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2010 to Dhaka. I had the opportunity to meet his Excellency and I made two specific requests:

- (1) Establishment of a Turkish SEZ (Special Economic Zone) in the Port City Chittagong
- (2) Setting up a Turkish Institute of History, Language Culture and Economy in the Chittagong University

It is heartening to note that the first proposal for Renovation and Restoration of Shahi Jame Mosque has been accepted by the Turkish Government subject to the approval of GOB and we hope that the others proposals will follow in due course. Inshallah, this will restore the historical and spiritual bonds between the brotherly peoples of Bangladesh and Turkey particularly with the port city of Chittagong, leading to greater trade and investment and socio-economic cooperation.

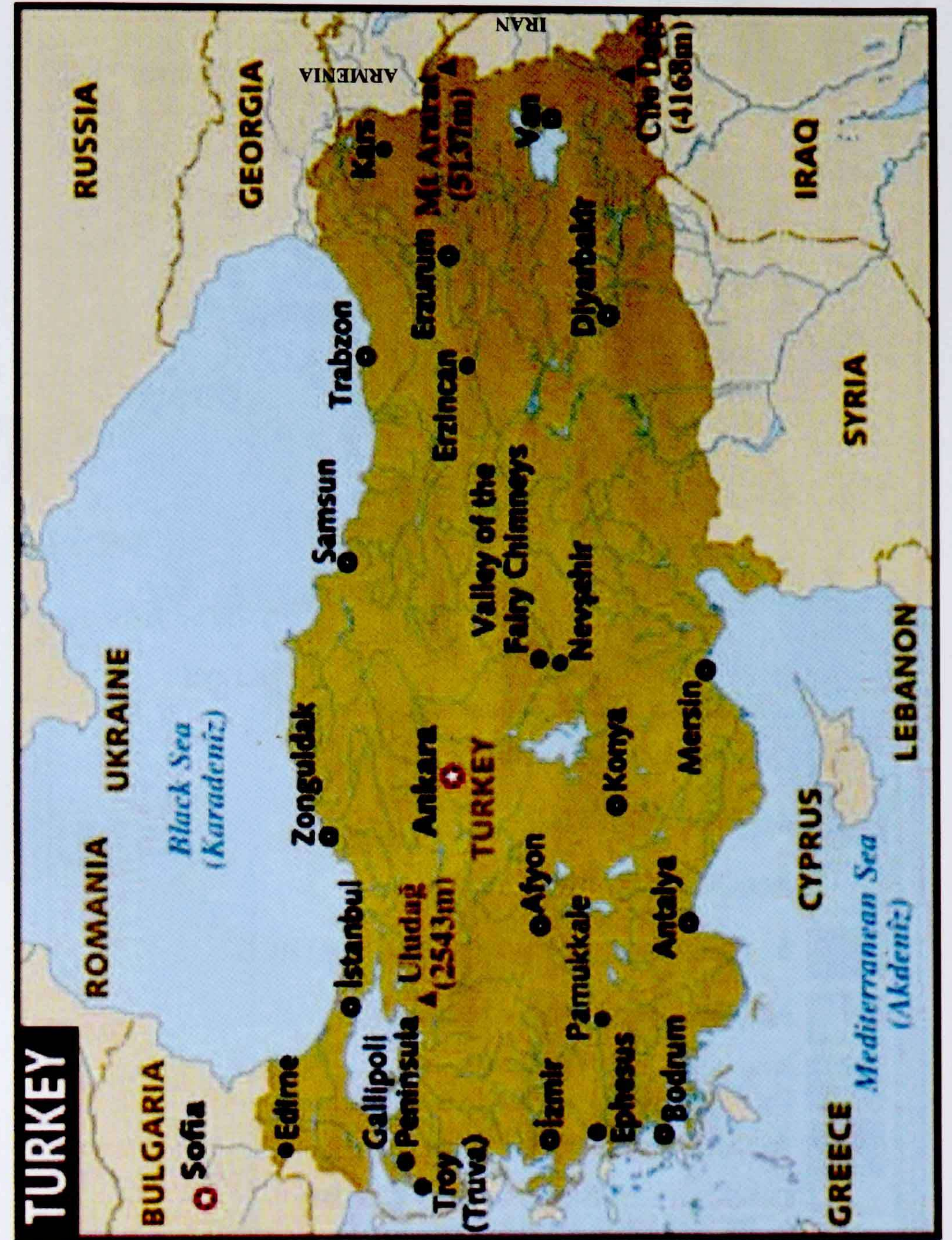
*Salahuddin Kasem Khan*  
1st Jan, 2012

Salahuddin Kasem Khan  
Honorary Consul General  
The Republic of Turkey  
Chittagong

Dated: 01<sup>st</sup> January 2012

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### Books published by the author :

- Tawaaf and Zearah, 1998  
8<sup>th</sup> Edition 2011
- A Look Back into time yore, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> Volume 1999
- A Look Back into time yore, 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Volume 2001
- Pilgrimage and Zearah 2002
- Chief Mentor ® of Garangia 2003  
2<sup>nd</sup> Edition 2004
- Discourse about Chittagong 2004
- A Look into time yoke 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> 2004 A.D.Edition
- Maktubate Hamed-E-Mazidi 2004
- Garangia Choto Huzur Smarak ® 2004
- Holy Remembrance, 2005 A.D. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition 2006
- Travel & visit if Mazar in Pak-Bharat 1<sup>st</sup> Edition 2005
- Shan-E-Waisi ® 2005
- Hazrat Shah Saheb Chunati ® 2007  
2<sup>nd</sup> Edition 2008  
3<sup>rd</sup> Edition 2009
- Shan-E-Wasi ® (published from India) 2007
- Visit of Ancient human habitation, 1<sup>st</sup> Volume 2007
- Hajj: Omrah, Zearah 2007
- A sight into the past 7<sup>th</sup> edition 2009
- Turkey: An Osmanian Empire 2011
- Aina-E-Darbar-E-Garangia 2011
- Discourse on religion 1<sup>st</sup> Volume 2009
- Miracle mystique and magnetism of Merry of the Universe  
(published by Islamic Foundation), 2011
- Travel and Zearah in India 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition

### To be published

- Kashmir-A soulless Heaven of the world
- From Persia to Iran
- A Rambler in Istanbul & Konya (In Bengali)
- A Rambler in Istanbul & Konya (In English)
- Chittagong- A seat of Heritage
- Travel and Zearah in India 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition
- Visit to ancient places of Habitation: Yemen 2<sup>nd</sup> Volume
- The famous Saints of West Bengal (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)
- A treatise on religion
- A sight and view of the post 8<sup>th</sup> Volume
- Chittagong and famine of 1943
- Humanity
- 68 days in Europe, America

## OSMANLI İMPARATORLUĞU & TÜRKİYE

Araştırmacı yazar ve İslam düşünürü Ahmadullah Islam Chowdhury, Chittagong'da asil bir ailede 1950 yılında doğdu. Dini, sosyal ve eğitim alanlarında birçok sosyal yardımlaşma faaliyetinde bulundu. Aynı zamanda birçok kitap yazdı. 10 yılı aşkın süredir ülkenin saygın gazetelerinden Purbokhone'da haftalık yazılar yazmaktadır.

Renkli hayatında Asya, Avrupa, Amerika ve Afrika'da ziyaret ve seyahat maksatlı birçok gezi düzenledi. Türkiye ve İran'a jüt ticareti yapan Shakawat Hussain Beyefendi ve eski Chittagong Büyükşehir Belediye başkan vekili Emdad Ullah Beyefendi, İstanbul, Konya, Mersin, Tarsus, Gaziantep ve Urfa'ya yapılan gezide Ahmadul İslam Chowdhury Beyefendi'ye eşlik ettiler. Bu şehirlerde birçok dini mekana ziyaret gerçekleştirdiler. Bu şehirlere yapılan ziyaret yazarımıza bir kitap yazma fikrini ilham etti.

1. **Türkiye Eski Tarihine Bir Bakış:** Bu bölümde yazar, Türkiye'nin eski tarihinden 2. Dünya Savaşı'na kadar olan uzun bir tarih periodu üzerine odaklanmaktadır.
2. **Türkiye ve Mustafa Kemal Paşa:** Bu bölümde yazar, Mustafa Kemal Paşa'nın yönetimi sırasında yaptığı yeniden inşa faaliyetleri ve ülkeye katkılarından bahsetmektedir.
3. **Türkiye'ye Doğru Yolculuk:** Yazar bu bölümü, Türkiye vizesini alma aşamaları ve İran üzerinden Türkiye'ye geçişi ile çerçeveliyor.
4. **İstanbul'a Varış:** Bu bölümü yazar, İstanbul'a varışı, özet bir İstanbul tarihini de katarak detayları ile tasfir ediyor.
5. **"TOPKAPI" – Dünyanın En Ünlü Müzelerinden Biri:** Güneşli bir sabahta yazar, İran'dan İstanbul'a gelir. İstanbul'da bir otele yerleşip akşamda bir müzeyi gezer. Aynı bölümde yazar, müzenin tarihini resmediyor.
6. **Topkapı Müzesi Gözlemi:** Bu bölümde yazar, müzeyi nasıl ziyaret ettiğini anlatıyor. Aynı zamanda müzenin çok sayıda değerli parçalarını resmediyor.
7. **Hz. Muhammed (SAV) 'in Topkapı Sarayı'ndaki Kutsal Emanetleri:** Topkapı Sarayı'nda Peygamber Efendimiz (SAV) ve geçmiş bazı peygamberlerin emanetleri bulunuyor. Aynı zamanda bazı sahabe, tabiin ve tebe-i tabiininde emanetleri, müzenin ayrı bir bölümünde sergilenmek üzere muhafaza ediliyor. Yazar, o çok değerli parçaları da ziyaret etme şansı yakalıyor ve bu bölümde onları resmediyor.

8. **Fatih Sultan Mehmet Camisi:** Topkapı Müzesini ziyaretinden sonra yazar, Fatih Sultan Mehmet Camiisini ziyaret eder. Bu bölümde yazar camiinin ayrıntılarından bahsediyor.
9. **Ebu Eyüp El-Ensari'yi Ziyaret:** Meşhur sahabe Hz. Ebu Eyüp El-Ensari'nin (RA) türbesi, İstanbul'da bulunmaktadır. Yazar, 13 Temmuz 2008 Cuma günü bu türbeyi ziyaret ediyor. Bu bölüm, yazarın türbeyi ziyareti ve türbenin tanıtımından oluşuyor.
10. **İstanbul'da Cuma:** Ebu Eyüp El-Ensari türbesini ziyaretten sonra yazar ve 2 arkadaşı Cuma namazını kılmak için Sultan Ahmet Camisi'ne gittiler. Bu bölümde yazar, külliyenin tanıtımı ve camideki Cuma namazı tecrübesini anlatıyor.
11. **Meşhur Müze Ayasofya:** Cuma namazından sonra yazar, ünlü müze Ayasofya'yı ziyaret eder. Bu bölüm yazarın müzeyi ziyareti ve müzenin tarihi hakkındadır.
12. **Yerebatan Sarnıcı:** Ayasofya'yı ziyaretinden sonra yazar, Ayasofya'nın hemen yanındaki yerebatan sarnıcını ziyaret eder. Bu bölüm yazarın, sarnıç ziyaretinde yaşadıklarından oluşuyor.
13. **İstanbul Boğazı ve Yat Gezisi:** Sarnıç ziyaretinden sonra yazar, İstanbul Boğazı'na giderek 2 saatlik harika bir ikinci gezisi yaptı. Bu bölümde yazar gezide yaşadıklarını, boğazın güzelliğini ve 2 asma köprüyü anlatıyor.
14. **Ankara Üzerinden Konya'yı Ziyaret:** İstanbul'da 2 gün ve 2 gece kaldıktan sonra yazar ve 2 arkadaşı, 14 Temmuz 2008 Cumartesi günü Ankara üzerinden Konya'ya gittiler. Bu bölüm yazarın Konya ziyareti, Türkiye'de otobüs işletmeciliği ve İstanbul-Konya anayolunun güzelliğinden oluşuyor.
15. **Konya & Mevlana Celalettin-i Rumi (R) Türbesi:** Yazar bu bölümde Konya'nın tarihini ve türbenin tanıtımını yapıyor.
16. **Hız Mevlana Celalettin-i Rumi (R) ve Türbesini Ziyaret:** Burada yazar, Mevlana Celalettin-i Rumi'nin kısa biyografisi hakkında bilgi verip türbe ziyaretinden bahsediyor.
17. **Konya'dan Liman Şehri Mersin'e:** Yazar Konya'da 2 gün kaldıktan sonra Mersin'e geçiyor. Yazar burada, dağ ve tepelerden geçerken yolculuğu sırasında yaşadığı çeşitli tecrübelerden bahsediyor.
18. **Tarsus'ta Ashab-ı Keyf Ziyareti:** Küçük fakat tarihi bir ilçe olan Tarsus, Mersin'e 35 km uzaklıkta bulunuyor. Burada birçok ziyaretgah var. Yazar 17 Temmuz 2008'de Ashab-ı Keyf'i ziyaret etmek için Tarsus'a gidiyor. Bu bölümde yazar Ashab-ı Keyf Ziyareti ve Ashab-ı Keyf'in tarihini anlatıyor.

19. **Tarsus ve Mersin Ziyareti:** Yazar ertesi gün Mersin'e geri döner. Orada Peygamber Hz. Danyeli (AS) ziyaret eder. Aynı zamanda orada Kloapatra Kapısı, Sahabi Hz. Bilal Camii'si, Aziz Paul Kuyusu ve Roma Tuvaleti'nide ziyaret eder. Bu bölümde tüm kutsal yerlerin tanıtımı yapılıyor.
20. **Üç Bayanla Sosyal Ve Dini Bir Mevzuuda Yüzyüze:** Yazar, Mersin sahilindeki bir restoranda öğlen yemeği sırasında 3 kadınla sosyal ve dini içerikli bir görüşme yapıyor. Bu bölüm, bu görüşme hakkındadır.
21. **Mersin'den Adana üzerinden Gaziantep ziyareti:** Mersin'de 3 gün kaldıktan sonra yazar, bir sanayi şehri olan Gaziantep'e 19 Temmuz 2008 Perşembe sabahı yola çıkıyor. Burada yolculuk sırasındaki doğal güzellikler anlatılıyor.
22. **URFA – Hz İbrahim (AS) 'in Doğum Yeri:** Suriye sınırına çok yakın bir şehir olan Urfa, Hz İbrahim'in doğum yeri ve O'na peygamberliğin verildiği yerdir. Yazar, burada bunlardan bahsediyor.
23. **Urfa'da Bir Gün:** Yazar 21 Temmuz 2008 sabah Gaziantep'ten Urfa'ya yola çıktı. Akşama kadar Urfa'da ziyaretlerde bulunup akşam tekrar Gaziantep'e döner. Bu bölüm, bu ziyaret hakkındadır.
24. **Gaziantep'ten İstanbul'a:** Yazar, 22 Temmuz 2008 günü Gaziantep'ten İstanbul'a yerel bir havayolu şirketi ile gider. Bu bölüm, yazarın Türkiye'deki iç hat uçuşlar hakkındaki tecrübelerinden oluşuyor.
25. **İstanbul'dan Dakka'ya:** 22 Temmuz 2008'de yazar, İstanbul'dan Bahreyn aktarmalı Dakka'ya yola çıkar. Ertesi gün Dakka'ya ulaşır. Yazar, bu yolculuktan bahsediyor.
26. **Bugün Türkiye:** Bu bölüm yazarın, Türk insanını bugünkü yaşam tarzı, doğası, karakteri, sosyal hayatı vb. hakkındaki izlenimlerinden oluşuyor.

Translated by: **İsmail Akbaş**  
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## **Hittite civilization in Asia Minor**

From prehistoric period Asia Minor was a crossroads between Europe and Asia. Asia Minor is north west of Mesopotamia. It points towards Southern Europe. Just as Phoenicia and Palestine were parts of a natural route between Egypt and Mesopotamia as Asia Minor lay between Europe and the rest of West Asia, Asia Minor experienced one invasion after another like all countries on natural routes of travel and migration. Wandering tribes and armies moved East and West through this route. Not only soldiers but also hustling traders from Mesopotamia entered Asia Minor, bringing their wares as well as new ideas.

About 1700 B.C. the leading people in Asia Minor were the Hittites. They had come from a part of Southern Europe near the Black Sea. They united Asia Minor in a great Empire (1400-1200 B.C.) at the height of their power.

They conquered parts of Mesopotamia and Syria. Military hand book shows that the Hittites were highly skilled in military matters. About 1200 B.C., however, their Empire collapsed before new invaders.

In their location at the crossroads between Europe and Asia, the Hittites were able to affect the ways of living of nearby peoples. Like various tribes from the areas around the Caspian and Black Sea, the Hittites were great horsemen. Horses roamed the grassy plains of central Asia. Doubtless it was these herds, brought Southward by wandering horse-taming people, that supplied the Hittites with their horses. At first, horses were furnished with harness and tied to two-wheeled chariots which were used in warfare and for hunting. These uses were quickly adopted by the older peoples of Mesopotamia, Syria, and Egypt.

Later, other people from the north brought to the West Asia the custom of horse-riding. The Assyrians, for example, used cavalry or mounted troops in their armies.

The Hittites introduced the Age of Iron far more important than the use of horses was the Hittite use of iron. Advances were made by the use of copper and bronze. But copper and tin from which the bronze is made, were comparatively scarce. Iron, on the other hand was available in many places. The mountains in north eastern Asia Minor contained much iron ore.

To the best of knowledge, the inhabitants of this region were the first to learn how to refine iron ore into steel. Harder and tougher steel was turned out. Charcoal was used to make a hot fire, and lime stone was added to the iron. Then when the molten iron was pulled out and partly cooled, the impurities were beaten out on an anvil. The purified iron was then reheated and rehammered until it became harder and tougher than bronze.

Under the Hittite rule, iron production became important and the knowledge of iron working spread widely. Between 1200 and 1000 B.C. all the peoples of the West Asia and many in South Eastern Europe began making tools and weapons of iron. Better products could be made with iron tools and troops with hard iron weapons had a great advantage in battle over an equal number of soldiers whose weapons were of bronze. The Iron Age had begun.

### **The Hittites engaged in trade and agriculture.**

In the Empire of the Hittites were many large cities that were famous for their well-constructed buildings. In these cities were many busy craftsmen. But the Hittites also paid a great deal of attention to farming and in particular to raising bees. This last occupation was important in ancient times, for honey was used rather than, cane or beet sugar.



Ideas from Mesopotamia influenced the Hittites. The Hittites influenced other peoples and in turn picked up customs and ideas from nearby peoples. For example, the results of Hittite contacts with Mesopotamia. The Hittites worshipped their own gods, but they adopted such old Sumerian religious stories as the ones about the creation of the world. They also used the Babylonian system of cuneiform writing along with their own system of signs. They were influenced by Hammurabi's code, but developed a collection of their own laws which considerably form it. These laws, along with lists of historical events arranged by years, copies of treaties, royal decrees, and documents of various sorts were collected in the libraries of the Hittite kings.

## **A sight into the ancient history of Turkey**

Turkey is one of the ancient seats of human civilization. The Turks are basically the posterity of the Tartars. The Tartars were the closest kith and kin of the Mongols. The Turks fanned out to the central Asia before the 6th century A.D. Ever since then the high land of central Asia is known as Turan or Turkistan.



Islam made an in road to Turks during the regime of Khulafa-E Rashedin. Islam experienced a tremendous boost subsequently during the rule of the Umayyads and Abbasi period.

Halaku Khan ransacked Bagdad, the capital of the Abbasid rulers. In that very year Osman, the founder of Osmanli was born.

Shugat was a small Manor/Freehold/estate of Anatolia. Ertugrul Bey was its chief. A son was born to Ertugrul Bey in 1258 A. D., and he was named Osman. Following the death of Ertugrul Bey in 1288 A.D. Osman ascended the throne of his father. As per his name, Turkish sultanate and Turkish caliphs are titled as Osmanli and occupying the town of Yeni Byzantine Empire, he established there the first capital of Osmanli Empire in 1299. This Sultan rapidly expanded the frontiers of his realm. Reigning for a period of 38 years, he further consolidated the foundation of the Osmanli consequent upon his death in 1326 A. D. at the age of 70, his very son Orhan was coroneted as Sultan. Orhan, too, like his father, had a version to worldliness. During his rule, the legion of Osmanli State for the first time stepped in on the soil of Europe. He expired in 1359 at the age of 75 years after long 33 years of rule.

Subsequently to the death of Orhan, his own son Murad was established on the throne. He was also gifted with uncommon talent.

He was as much determined and efficient in conquering newer territories for the state as he was prone to give full religious freedom to his Christian subjects. Inflicting crushing defeat on the Christian army, he conquered Macedonia.

Simultaneously, he occupied Romania. He conquered Adreanopoles too. He seized Bulgaria in 1372 A. D., Skirmishes both great and small began to flare up with the European countries during his state. As a matter of fact Murad, the first courted martyrdom at the hands of his enemy in 1389 after a glorious and eventful rule of 30 years. Sequel to the martyrdom

of Murad, the first, his son Beyazid, the first, cended the throne. He likewise his able predecessors, ruled the sultanate adroitly. But his integrity and rectitude were questionable. He laid siege to Constantinople (late its name would be Istanbul) for the first time sequential to the demand of his focus on the other theatres of war he withdrew his siege on the beleaguered Constantinople. In 1402, he was taken prisoner in an encounter with the army of Timor. On the plain of Ankara he succumbed during his duress.

Following feud over the possession of throne after the death of Bayazid, his son Mehmed, the first, ascended the throne. He was a stout devout and peace-loving person. He died in 1421 A.D. after 8 years of rule consequent upon his death, his son Murad, the second, was set on the throne only at the age of 18. He was an adept and stolid efficient administrator. He had a very humane attitude towards his subjects during his rule Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina came under the sway of Osmanli State. In 1451 he died at the age of 68 years. Sequential to his death his raid servant's son Mehmed, the second, was placed on the throne. Mehmed, the second, was a very competent ruler. He conquered Constantinople in 1453 which is one of the famed cities of antiquity. There is a hadis - sahih, "verily, you shall conquer Constantinople, what a wonderful leader will his leader be and what a wonderful army will that army be" and Fatih Sultan Mehmed and his army achieved our Prophet's (pbuh) praise in 1453. He established there many mosques, educational facilities and hospitals.

In 330AD, the Roman Emperor established a new capital of his Empire on the shore of the strait of Bosphorus in the Greek Byzantium and renamed it Nouveau Roma or New Rome. Mehmed, the second, shifted his capital to it. It became the hub of the sprawling Ottoman Empire. In course of time this city was christened Constantinople-which is now known as Istanbul. In Turkish language *bol* means plenty, abundant. The word Istanbul comes from the words *Islam bol*, i.e in English the city where Islam is practiced abundantly.

He was able to conquer many adjoining areas. In view of Mehmed, the second's moral rectitude and exalted ideals, many small territories of Eastern Europe came under the authority of the nascent Ottoman Empire. In the year preceding his death, he was able to bring under the Ottoman Empire large chunks of Italian territory. Ruling the Empire with competence and poise for long 30 years he breathed his last in 1481. It has to be pointed out that he was poisoned, because He had sent his fleet to Italy and conquered a small part. His main target was the city Rome, capital of Christianity, and before becoming successful, he was poisoned.

After his demise, his eldest son Bayazid, the second took up the reins of administration in newly established capital Istanbul of Ottoman Empire. He has hardly any achievement worth mentioning although he had a long stint of rule of 31 years. In view of his ineptitude perforce he had to handover power to his son, Selim, the first in 1512 A.D. Scoring a victory on the Shah of Persia, Selim the first occupied Tabriz, one of the ancient cities of the by gone days.

Over and above, he occupied a greater part of Arabian Peninsula including Syria. Subsequent to this he was able to establish his foothold on the soil of Egypt and brought it under the sovereignty of the Osmanli Sultanate.

The surviving members of the Abbasids dynasty took refuge in Egypt after the conflagration and carnage of Baghdad by Halaku Khan. They retained the epithet Khalifah inspite of non existence of Abbaside Khilafat, subsequent to their taking sanctuary in Egypt. Ever since, 37 caliphs ruled the domain up to 1924 A.D., spanning a period of four centuries.

After conquest of Egypt by Selim the first the descendants of the Abbasid dynasty surrendered their title of Khalifah to Selim the first under compulsive circumstances. As an must be written together of predicament, Selim, the first, simultaneously became the holder

of title Sultan and Khalifah of the Muslim world. He was invested with both the titles. The Turkish Sultanate witnessed a great territorial expansion during his reign. As a sequel to his death in 1520, his only son Suleyman was installed on the throne of Turkish Sultanate. He is one of the most ablest Sultans of Turkish Sultanate. He restored order, peace, tranquility and discipline in the vast Empire/Sultanate. He redeemed Drag from forcible occupation of Persia. It is pertinent to mention here that notwithstanding the inclusion of Persia in Ummaya and Abbasid rule from historical perspective it appears that Shiaseet of Iraq was able to run Persia under their control during the period subsequent to the ouster fall of Abbaside Khalifaht from power. Regions wedged between Iraq and Persia turned out to be the permanent cause of conflict between Turkish Sultanate and Shahs of Persia contemporaneous celebrities of the world of the time of Suleyman include, among others Charles, the fifth of Germany Francis, the first of France, queen Elizabeth, the first Czar Ivanovich of Russia, Cizimand of Poland, Shah Ismail of Iran and emperor Akbar of India. Suleyman established an efficient Navy in the Mediterranean Sea, the Red Sea and in the Arabian Sea. He ruled the Turkey Empire for 46 years and passed away in 1566AD. Thereafter, his son Selim the 2nd had his investiture as a Sultan.

He was indolent and luxurious. Before he died in 1574 A.D he was on the saddle of rule for 8 years. As succession, his son Murad, the 3rd sat on the throne of Istanbul. He indulged in effete luxury likewise his father.

Nonetheless the territories of Georgia, Tabridge, Azerbaijan Sreewan etc. were reined in under the sovereignty of Turkish Sultanate. Enjoying royal power for 21 years he expired in 1595 A. D.

After wards Mehmed, the 3rd, son of Murad, the 3rd, came to the spotlight of power. He was born in the womb of queen Sufia. He died in 1603 A.D. after 8 years in power.

Thereafter Ahmed, the first 8 years aged son of Mehmed the third was set in power. Admittedly and without doubt, he was not in competent and mept like his father and grand father. He was careful of maintaining coexistence and amicable ties with Persia by entering into peace treaty with Shah Abbas. He died in 1617 A. D. after 14 years in power. Later on, Mustafa the first, the brother of Ahmed the first sat on the throne. But he was compelled to abdicate the throne in view of his mental insanity within three months of is assumption of power.

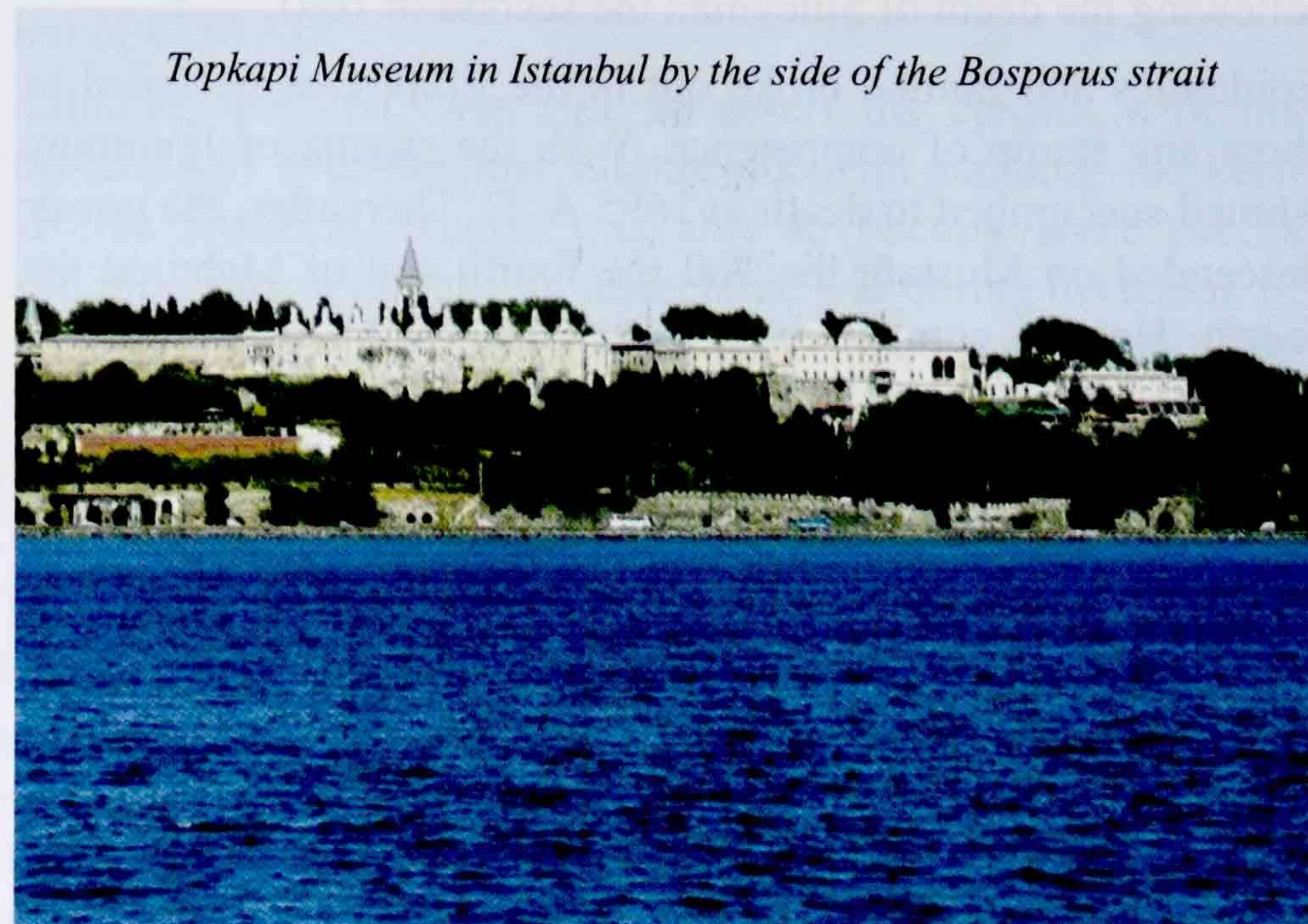
As a result, his nephew, aged 14, Osman the 2nd was installed on the throne of Istanbul in 1618 A. D. He was unsuccessful in ruling the Sultanate because of incompetence. In consequence thereof Osman the second was toppled him from power and assassinated by rebel soldiers.

Mustafa the first was again installed in power. He failed to wield power this time too. As a consequence, Murad the fourth aged only 11 years and son to Osman the second was installed on the throne of Istanbul in 1623. With the advancement of his age he was leaving the stamp of his competence. He retrieved Bagdad from Persia in a definitive battle. He died in 1640, merely at the age of 28. Since he had no male issue, his brother Ibrahim, the first, became the ruler in Istanbul. Ibrahim, the first was also an inept and incapable Sultan and Khalifah. He lost his life at the hand of rebels in 1648. Thereafter, his son Mehmed, the young aged merely 7 years was installed on throne of Istanbul. Muhammad the fourth as a small boy could not manage the affairs of the vast Empire in consequire there of chaos and confusion ramified including palace intrigue.

The vast Osmanli Empire was shrinking during his tenure taking advantage of internal dissension, Poland Launched an aggression. The Turkish Sultanate vacated some areas infavour of Russia in order to inter into a treaty with it. The Sultanate was compelled to relinquish Vienna, the capital of Austria.

The Osmanli Sultanate soldiers were encountering debacle after debacle in the face of European ferocity and intensity of war. Routing the Osmanli and Sultanate soldiers from Croatia, the Austrian Army occupied Budapest. Hungry recuperated the regions which it lost previously Venice wrested away the control of the regions Muria, Athens, Navareno etc.

*Topkapi Museum in Istanbul by the side of the Bosphorus strait*



In 1687 Poland vanquished the army of Osmanli Sultanate at Makkah.

Once thought invincible the Osmanli Khilafat. Now that Khilafat began to suffer defeat almost in every battle.

Mehmed the fourth was in power for a period of 38 years. In view of his incompetence catastrophe befell the Khilafat. He was ousted from power in 1687 because of widespread insurrection.

Afterwards, Suleyman, the 2nd, who was incarcerated for a long time assumed power. It was not easy for him to grapple with awful disorder and critical condition. During his regime, the Austrian Army seized control of Belgrade from the hands of Osmanli Sultanate. Austrian Army Austrian scored a great victory in Bosnia, Herzegovina and Transylvania. Suleyman the

second himself took to the field with his army only to suffer a crushing defeat.

However, on the following year his astute and shrewd Prime Minister retrieved some of the previously lost regions through desperate attempts. Ahmed, the second ascended the throne following the death of Suleyman the second in 1691.

Epidemics and famine broke out in the Empire as he failed to show any stamp of competence. With the stigma of Ignominy Ahmed succumbed to death in 1695 A. D. Thereafter, the power descended on Mustafa the 2nd the fourth son of Mehmed the fourth. He was comparatively somewhat brave and competent launching military campaign against Austria he reoccupied some of the areas previously lost to it but on the following year, the Osmanli Sultanate Army courted a very crushing defeat at the hands of Austrian army. The European armies began to intensify their multi pronged attack prong on the army of Osmanli Sultanate. Failing to withstand the fierce onslaughts the Osmanli Sultanate army began to make desperate but strategic retreat.

However, on the other hand, the shrewd Prime Minister was able to place the Osmanli Sultanate army on a strong position with his sagacity and wisdom. As an out come of this wise policy, peace, though temporary, was secured in the eastern front of Europe. But this able prime minister lost his office because of palace intrigue consequent upon this, disaffection, discontent spread all around in virulent form. Insurrection began to erupt all around. In view of deterioration of situation Mustafa the second, perforce, had to relinquish power.

Afterwards Ahmed the third, brother of Mustafa the second sat on the throne of Istanbul. He was partly successful in quelling internal insurrection since he was a peace loving Sultan and Khalifah. But he could not ensure a respite of the vast Empire from the threat of extinction.

In consequent upon this chaos and disorder the Austrian army occupied Belgrade in 1718 AD. Taking advantage of the weak leadership of the Sultan the commander of the soldiers of Jansinar, Petrola Khatil laid siege to the palace of the Sultan and martyred the prime minister. In the face of extreme adversity Ahmad gave up power in favour of his nephew, Mahmud the first in 1730 AD.

Mahmud, the first, was able to assert his control with his resolute will over the vast Empire notwithstanding the keen adverse situation. Russia was able to occupy some places adjoining Russia through an undeclared war during his tenure of Sultanate. In 1739 a peace treaty was signed with Russia and Austria through the mediation of France signed by the Osmanli Sultanate.

This treaty is termed historic Belgrade Treaty.

This treaty is the last honourable treaty for the Osmanli Khalifahte

Following the death of Mahmud the first, in 1754 Osman, the third, ascended the throne. He died in 1757 after a reign of mere 3 years.

Afterwards his own brother Mustafa the third was seated in the throne of Istanbul. Although initially he showed evidence of his capability, he became mentally very weak in view of the death of his able Prime Minister Ragib Pasha. Fighting flared up with Russia and Austria during his rule. Following his death in 1773 his son Abdul Hamid the first was installed on the throne. He had to sign treaty with Russia for cessation of hostility. The stipulated terms of the treaty not only provided for concessions to Russia but also impinged on the sovereignty of Osmanli Sultanate/Osmanli Khilafat. Abdul Hamid the first died in 1789 and it was followed by the ascension to throne by his nephew Selim, the third. He undertook the task of modernizing the vast army of the Osmanli Sultanate. He became involved in warfare in the European frontiers with Austria taking advantage of this military pre occupation, Russia along with Bulgaria undertook

incursions at various of points of its European Border. Meanwhile Napoleon Bonaparte became the ruler of France. He moved to occupy the Osmanli Sultanate in provinces of Egypt, Palestine and Syria but England could not approve of this French move. Taking stock of the situation France, a confederate of Osmanli Sultanate with held itself from undertaking such a rash action. Towards the end of the rule of Selim the third internal disorder and dissension were on the rise. Insurrection occurred observing the gradual deteriorating condition he abdicated the throne in 1807 and went into hiding. On the following year, he was assassinated Mustafa the fourth, the nephew of Selim the third as ended the throne of Istanbul in 1807. But within one year he had to vacate power. As an outcome Mahmud the second was installed on the throne. During his regime disorder reached its height in the European part of the Osmanli Sultanate. In 1827, the combined fleet of Russia, France and England launched a strike against the naval fleet of Osmanli a Sultanate and inflicted a defeat on it. As a result there of many areas of Osmanli a Sultanate went under the control of Russia as per provision of a treaty imposed on it. Russia gained right to have free access of trade throughout the Sultanate. The relation between the Sultan and the governor of Egypt became strained in 1829. Consequent upon this the governor of Egypt Muhammad Ali sent his son Ibrahim to Syria and Palestine with a view to occupying them after equipping under this predicament. Mahmud, the second, sought help from Russia. Seizing the opportunity, vast Russian Army entered deep into the territory of the Sultanate ingrant and France became alarmed at seeing the influence of Russia. Exerting pressure on Egypt they put a brake on the advancement of Egypt even then the Osmanli a Sultanate fell into a deep crisis. On the other hand, England and France exploiting the weakness of the Sultanate extracted many concessions from it. Mahmud the second died amidst the situation of deep crisis following his death Abdul Mecid, the first son of Mahmud, the second was installed on the throne. The Osmanli Sultan Abdul Mecid, the

first was a person of liberal attitude. In the matter of religion, he was liberal too England stood by the side of Abdul Mecid the second in view of the rise of Russian influence. Consequent upon this interference took the Sultanate in multiple forms. Nonetheless in 1848, Russia snatched away some areas including Moldavia from the Osmanli a Sultanate as an outcome, Sultan Abdul Mecid declared war against Russia in 1854. Britain and France accorded support to Osmanli a Sultanate. Belligerency ended through treaty signed in Paris in 1856. As per provision of the treaty the Black Sea was kept open for trade for all Nations.

It also stipulated that no naval fleet of any nation could move into the Black Sea. As an impart of the treaty Russia supremacy was temporarily curbed and the influence of England and France registered augmentation.

It is pertinent to mention here during the rule of Sultan Abdul Mecid the great, much structural constructions and renovation took place in the holy cities of Makkah Mukarrama and Medina Munawara. The door on the right side of the Masjid-E-Naba has been named Bab-E- Mecid. This door and the inscription on it evoke veneration for Sultan Abdul Mecid in the hearts of Millions of devotees who pray in the Masjed-E-Nababi and offer Fateha at the mausoleum of Prophet (pbuh) Sultan Abdul Mecid died in 1861. Thereafter, Khalifah Abdul Aziz ascended the throne he had an aversion to the movement of the young Turks. He began to mete out oppression and repression to the exponent of young Turks.

Following the death of Khalifah Abdul Aziz in 1871, Murad, the fifth, succeeded him as Sultan of Osmanli a Sultanate. He also followed the policy of his predecessor towards the young Turks.

In view of the overwhelming odds in this vast Ottoman Empire, some young Turks organized themselves under the banners of young Turks with a view to establishing country in the main land of Turkish people, modeling on the prototype of a European country. However, most of the exponents of this movement were educated in various countries of Europe.

They took refuge in the foreign countries when Khalifah Abdul Aziz and Khalifah Murad, the fifth could not tolerate them and adopted a policy repression and oppression. They were led by Mithat Pasha. Abdul Hamid, the second succeeded to the throne, sequent to the death of Murad, the fifth in 1876. He was imbued with ideals of the young Turks. He granted a perforce a new constitution to Osmanli a Sultanate Mithat Pasha became the Prime Minister of Turkish Sultanate in the light of the newly given constitution. But scarcely some days had passed when the Sultan Khalifah sacked Mithat Pasha as prime minister as serious disagreements surfaced between Sultan Khalifah Abdul Hamid and Mithat Pasha on some important points. The operation of the constitution was kept in abeyance.

The members of the 'Young Turks' either left the country or went into hiding under compulsive situation. Even then Khalifah Abdul Hamid could not consolidate his vast Empire due to the interference of the enemies of abroad. In the face of stiff opposition of the Sultan Committee of Union and progress was formed under the leadership of Enver Pasha in 1906. The adherents of young Turks also rallied together under the leadership of Enver Pasha. There a vowed aim and objective were to reorient the country according to Europe a pattern, reform of the constitution, press freedom, peaceful coexistence with the progressive states etc. This committee was able to under take the task of the administration of the country in the midst of forbidding circumstances. Sultan Abdul Hamid the second was deposed on the 27th April 1909 consequent upon the seizure of state machinery. Mehmed, the fifth, brother of Sultan Abdul Hamid, the second was installed on the throne following his dethronement. The prominent personalities who imbibed in Islamic ideology could not reconcile with proponent of young Turks movement. They could not approve of committee of union and progress government on the other hand, the deplorable condition of the Khilafat remained unabated as a result debacle after debacle in the war field gripped the army of the Sultanate dissident people began to show audacity of defiance

the Sultans in a blatant way. Many faithful adherents of the Sultans were assassinated. Desperate situation also prevailed in the rest of the places of the Sultanate on the whole; the situation was precarious throughout the Sultanate. Under such precarious condition the committee of union and progress ousted Sultan Khalifah Abdul Hamid the second on the 27th April 1909 . It enthroned his brother Mehmed the fifth as a surrogate Sultan-Khalifah in his stead.

Although Mehmed the fifth was installed as the Khalifah of the Osmanli Sultanate he was a titular Khalifah. He had no real power in such a context the First World War broke out in 1914. Towards the beginning of the war Osman Sultanate maintained a neutral posture, ultimately it became involved in war in favour of Germany largely due to role played by Enver Pasha, the apex leader of committee of Union and progress. Osmanli Sultanate suffered defeat along with Germany and Austria in that First World War under this precarious predicament Mehmed the fifth expired in 1918. Afterwards, Mehmed the 6th was installed on the throne as Sultan-cum-Khalifah. The external enemies meanwhile had divided the truncated vast Osmanli Khilafat among them through its final dismemberment.

**On the other hand powerful Mustafa Kemal Pasha of Turkish.** Army rose to the prominence in a rapid manner in the Osmanli Sultanate. He proclaimed a decree from the present Turkish capital Ankara in 1922, declaring the abolition of the Osmanli Sultanate hierarchy. Consequently, Mehmed the 6th stepped down and left for England.

Nevertheless, the Ankara government of Mustafa Kemal Pasha declared Abdul Mecid, the Khalifah only in name for reasons best known to him. Mustafa Kemal Pasha became the president of Turkey in the month of October 1923 through a government proclamation which the newly formed state was nomenclature as the Republic of Turkey. In 1924 the 37th Sultan of Osmanli Sultanate the 2nd Abdul Majid who was namely in Sultan, ousted from the power of Sultan and the custom of Osmanli Sultanate had been abolished for ever.

## Mustafa Kemal Pasha's Turkey

Mustafa Kemal Pasha is the father of the nation of modern Turkey. He was born in 1881. He left brilliant record of service formidable in the army. His role during the First World War is worth remembering. He was a formidable Personality in the eyes of external enemies. In sequence of service, he earned credit and accolade. In 1916 he was exalted to the rank of a general and earned the prerogative of Pasha after his name as mark of distinction. At a critical juncture of the country he formed an alternative government within the country. The members of young Turks movement espoused the cause together with the general populace. Receiving a favourable response from the Masses he proceeded very rapidly. Taking into account the greater interest of Turkey he chose nondescript Ankara as the capital of Turkey. Showing great gallantry and prowess, the army led by Kemal Pasha repelled and expelled the Greek Army from Izmir.

Restoration of peace and order in Turkey and the consolidation of the control over the country were effected simultaneously.

During the hey day of Osmanli Khilafat, it had a vast Empire straddling across Europe Asia and Africa. Territories right up to Danube River of Europe, nearly all Arab states and vast area of Africa formed vast Empire which was under effective control of Osmanli Sultanate. But from 1800 century onward the Osmanli Sultanate became gaunt and imbecile. It lost its vigor strength and energy taking advantage of the moribund state of Osmanli Sultanate and frail and sluggish leadership of the Sultans, Greece, Bulgaria, Albania, Yugoslavia (The then Serbia, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Montenegro) Hungary, Romania, the occupied regions went out of control one after another.

In similar fashion, a vast part of Africa i.e. Egypt Sudan, Libya, Tunisia, Morocco seceded. It can be said that the whole of the Arabia states were under the rule of the Osmanli Sultanate, especially present day Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine including usurped Arab land of Palestine which is present day Israel one after another, the Osmanli Sultanate lost its authority over them. The first 3 centuries of Osmanli Sultanate can be called the golden period of Osmanli Sultanate and this period witnessed heroic exploits in military campaign, sprawling frontiers, saga of heroism magnanimity towards subjects as much as resilience resoluteness and resourcefulness in administration.

Being impressed by the conduct, moral rectitude high ideals, and liberal and tolerant policies of the Sultans, people of other religious including the Christians rallied under the secure banner of Islam.



*Famous Museum of Ankara*

Although the kings and the emperors of Eastern Europe were engaged in hostility with the Sultans and maintained a belligerent attitude towards them, the mass of people nourished a respectful attitude towards the Osmanli Sultanate. Consequent upon this the powerful states of Europe could not dislodge the Osmanli Sultanate from the control of vast part of Europe.



The later 3 centuries can be called the age of decay, decline and fall of the Osmanli and Sultanate. Except for some competent Sultans, Most of the Sultans gave them up to effete luxury and indolence consequent they could not safeguard the vast Empire built by their forbears with fortitude and forbearance. As a consequence, the Osmanli Sultanate suffered an ignominious defeat during the First World War. As a matter of fact adverse and hostile environs were eating into the vitals of the Osmanli Sultanate. Under this circumstances loss of Sultanate became inevitable and so did the Osmanli Sultanate. The powerful states of Europe gobbled up the remnants of the Osmanli and Sultanate. It lost all possessions except a small chunk of territory in the European part of Turkey. Had Mustafa Kemal Pasha not emerged and stemmed the tide of disintegration Turkey would have suffered extinction. He made his advent in Turkey as a messiah. He re-deemed the Turkish nation from the threat of liquidation Mustafa Kemal Pasha through the qualities of his able leadership. Kemal Pasha assumed the post of commander in Chief on the 12th August 1921. On the 27th September 1923, he declared Ankara as the new capital of Turkey. Kemal Pasha was elected president of Turkey on the 13th September 1923. As a result his right hand man İsmet İnönü Pasha was vested with the president ship of his people's party which he formed himself.

In 1927 he retired, along with his long time associate İsmet Pasha from the Army. In that year Mustafa Kemal Pasha was elected president for the second time. In 1931 he was elected president for the third term. On the 24th Nov. 1934 the Grand National assembly passed a law conferring on him the title Atatürk i.e, Father of the Turks. This title is his exclusive prerogative. He was elected in 1935 for the 4th term. Mustafa Kemal, the father of the Turk died on the 10th November 1938.

Because of able leadership of Mustafa Kemal Pasha, Modern Turkey is a country of 10 lack one thousand 5 hundred square km.

About six times than our country. The present population is nearly 73 millions. Eighty people out of hundred is Turks. The other 20 percent is Kurdish. But there are some Arabians near the border of Syria.

Mustafa Kemal Pasha brought huge reformation of Turkish which is contradictory to Osmanli and Sultans. Firstly, he thought the Ottoman language, Arabic in letters, as a foreign language and abolished it from the country. Madrasah education was banned. Namely Azan, Namaz, the reciting Holy Quran, and general education everywhere the Arabic Language was absent. So, the people were compelled to perform all the business in the Turkish language and later they became accustomed to.

After the declaration of Turkish as a republic country, the peoples Party of Kemal Pasha started to control the country without competition.

The veil and the hejab were forbidden for women. The law was enacted to lead the life of women following the lifestyle of Europe. For government employee tie and cap were compulsory. All kinds of Khanka, mazar and madrasah were banned. The language reformation was also done.

In 1934, the words Hazrat, Hafez, Molla, Hazi, Pasha were banned before names. Besides, the titles of Osmanli Khilafat were also canceled.

In the state affair, the Christian year was introduced instead of the Hicri year. The weekly vacation was declared Sunday instead of Friday.

In 1938, his close associate İsmet Pasha became the president after the death of Kemal Pasha. Later, the Second World War began.

He showed great acumen in running the country. He was able to maintain neutrality in the 2nd world through great tact and astute policy. Thus he saved the Turkish nation from the fury death and destruction of war and the sovereignty of Turkey

remained unscathed and the people got respite from the horror of war. He followed the foot prints of his predecessors in managing the affairs of the country. He proved his worth as a worthy and trusted follower of Mustafa Kemal Pasha.

### **Ties with this country**

As a matter of fact, Bangladesh has a long historic tie with Turkey. Its ties with Turkey were ever crucial. The port city of Chittagong is the rendezvous between Turkey and Bangladesh. The Sultans of Turkey used to buy ships and building materials from Chittagong for their fleet as the timber of Chittagong was cheap, durable and ship building in Chittagong followed high tech. The people of Chittagong used to make voyage to Turkey with their merchandise and mercantile ship. Such interaction and trade lies obviously resulted in the settlement of Chittagong people in Turkey and people of Turkish descent in Chittagong is a proven fact. Makkah Mukarrama and Madinah were under Osmanli Sultanate for hundreds of years our common religion is a cementing bond. The plight of Turkey Hejaz was a meeting place and trust. We still feel a sense of solitarity and affimly with Turkey. The glory and prestige of Turkish Ottoman Empire are regarded as our proud possession too.

Consequently, people of Turkish origin in Chittagong and people of Chittagonian origin in Turkey may exist as a matter of fact. The Arabian Peninsula and Mecca Mukarrama and Medina Munawara of the protectorate of Hezaz had been under the control of Ottoman Empire. As such, it is also presumed that Bangladesh formed closeties with Osmanli Sultanate through the people who went to Hezaz to perform Hajj from long since.

The plight of Turkey in the aftermath of the defeat in the first world war evoked the sympathy of the people of our country. As the Muslims of Indian sub-contient are sunni Hanafe, we have good relation with Turkey for religious issue.

### **Journey to Turkey**

Through study of historical books and perusal of multiple writings on Turkey, I have been gaining comprehensive knowledge and idea about Turkey ever since the beginning of my student life. I also obtained idea about the fact that the Sultans of the Osmanli Sultanate had been ruling over the then Hejaz including holy city of Mecca and Medina for hundreds of years. The capital of the Osmanli Khilafat of Ottoman Empire was Istanbul. The rare antiques artifacts and venerated mementoes, collected by the Khalifahs have been preserved here

*A partial view of the world famous Bridge over the strait Bosphorus.*



about the veracity of which there is no doubt. Nonetheless, among these articles and souvenirs, the various venerated effects of Nabi Karim (pbuh) the holy companions, the prominent companions and the Khalifahs a very high prominence and respect.

They have been kept in splendid array with a view to enabling the viewers to know about spirit of Islam and towering heights of civilization achieved by the Osmanli and Sultanate. Here, in Istanbul, the ancient capital, lies in eternal sleep, the famous and revered companion of the Prophet (pbuh), Hazrat Abu Ayub Ansari (R). I had the privilege to go to Jerusalem in 1997 after performing Hajj and Zearah. Thereafter onwards, the desire to go to Turkey was haunting my mind. Since the urge became irresistible, I was waiting for an opportunity and appropriate moment. Resident in Dhaka and inhabitant of Narshingdi Shakhawat Hussain, a friend of mine has link with Turkey; connected with Trade and Commerce.

In connection with business purpose he has visited Turkey alone several times. During my tour of Iran along with Mr. Shakhawat in September 2005, I applied for visa with a view to going to Turkey. It is a norm to paste recent photograph on the application form for visa. The passport is a Must one has to attach many relevant papers to it, depending on the type of visa, passport and country. Located at Gulshan-2, we both applied for visa in Turkish Embassy. Shortly after Mr. Shakhawat was called for, we were only 4 or 5 applicants for visa. The visa of Turkey is rather more difficult to get than the visa to Europe and America in every respect. It is easier to go to Europe illegally if one can reach Turkey. Prevention of illegal entry into Europe is not easier either Mr. Shakhawat is as much modern in outlook as in style and photograph conversely. I am a bearded person with cap on the head. My lineament and photograph are, too antiquated. Since the counselor was on leave, the Ambassador himself was interviewing the visa seekers. Directing his adverse comment on me to Mr. Shakhawat he returned my passport. Through his gesture and posture, he gave air to his disliking of his taking a queer person with him. Within 10 to 15 minutes, he came back with an assurance of getting visa together with my passports.

In my 3 to 4 passports, there are stamps of many countries of the world including Europe, America and African countries. Although a Muslim country, Turkey is disposed to the west. Conversely, our country is a much discussed and despised country in the world in view of the Taliban and Al-Qaida menace, besides the J.M.B. malaise. Those who travel abroad now-a-days can easily understand what great adverse situation and impediment they have to face. It appeared to me that on seeing the bearded and cap headed photograph, His Excellency the Ambassador became off-balanced. So much so that he did not feel any urge to have a glimpse of my passports, I presumed. In view of my visit to Iran on last May '08 in connection with the death anniversary of Imam Khomeini as a guest, I planned to go to Turkey from Iran along with Mr. Shakhawat Hussain with this purpose in mind. Mr. Shakhawat managed to get letter from Turkey through e-mail for three persons including Mr. Imdad. A copy of the invitation letter was sent to the Turkish Chancery in Dhaka in accordance with normal procedure. Papers were submitted in support of our living in Bangladesh together with the passport. A resident of Bakalia and formerly Commissioner, Chittagong City Corporation Counselor Mr. Emdad Ullah has gone to Iran in view of this, he, too, became interested to go to Turkey with me on the 26th May 2008 to the Embassy of Turkey in Dhaka with a view to obtaining visa. On the previous day I talked to Mr. Salahuddin Kasem Khan over telephone. Salahuddin Kasem Khan is an able son of late A. K. Khan, an aristocrat and famous industrialist of the subcontinent. Mr. Salahuddin Kasem Khan is the Honorary Consul General of Turkey. Within several hours of my telephone, he sent a fax message to the Turkish Embassy in Dhaka with recommendation for offering visa. On the 26th May 2008, we, the three, had an audience with the Turkish Ambassador and applied for visa for 14 days. But the Ambassador granted 20 days visa of his own accord. Contingent upon this, I managed additional air ticket to go to

Turkey from Tehran of Iran. We started for Tehran via Bahrain by Gulf Air in the early hours of the day following Thursday, the 29th May 2008.

I stayed in Iran for 12 days, the first 6 days as a state guest and the remaining 6 days at our own expenses.

The flight scheduled for journey from Tehran to Istanbul was at 4 a.m. of the night following 1st June. I was staying at the Mar Mar Hotel, located at the hub of Tehran city. Having dinner after dusk at the residence of our host Mr. Delwar I returned to the hotel at near about 12 p.m. In my book written on Iran, it has been mentioned that Bangladeshi national Mr. Delwar has been residing permanently in Tehran with his Iranian wife.

Becoming ready within nearly one hour, we set out for Imam Khomeini International Airport at around 1 p.m. Although the old Mehrabad Airport is within the city, it is being used till today. On the other hand, the newly built Imam Khomeini International Airport is nearly 50 to 55 km away from Tehran city. However, no arrangement has been made in this airport for any domestic flight. Folding up the baggage, we, the three, set out towards the airport by a large sized taxi.

Tehran was not steeped in sleep even at dead of night. Vehicles on the road and movement of men and women on the pavement kept the city resonant we felt the pulse and pulsation of life of Tehran. After sometime we left the city behind and proceeded on through the airport road. This highway runs towards Ispahan and Siraj after passing through the airport in the east and the city of Qoom while proceeding forward leaving the megacity behind us eyed darkness on 2 sides. However, once on the highway, the road was lit with the sodium light like Zia of Dhaka, the departures through the upper storey and the arrival is through the ground floor in this. In this airport, like Zia of Dhaka, the departure is through the upper floor and the arrival is through the ground floor. Reaching the airport around 2 am we saw the airport filled.

With passengers on reaching the airport at 2 am of night. Even the western world barred, this airport is not as busy as the great international airports of Asia. In view of the various types of pressure on Iran by western world, relationship between Iran and the overseas countries is relatively low.

We would go to Istanbul from Tehran by Turkish airline in three to four counters checking. We queued before a counter with our luggage when the Turkish official came, we gave him our respective passports and tickets with walkie-talkie. The Turkish supervisor was pacing about and looking after the affairs. At one stage on seeing my 4 passports stapled together, he commented; "your passport is a history". The official of the Turkish Airlines entrusted with task of verifying the visa of passports received our luggage, gave boarding card and tagged our belongings. Then we went away to the other side of the airport after completion of the immigration process, we saw that the passengers bound for Ankara were boarding the plane of Turkish Airlines. But, till then, the plane set for us did not arrive. Our plane landed after some delay. Meanwhile, the Azan for prayer at dawn was sounding from the terminal mosque at 4.15 am. Azan in Shia sect takes longer time than ours since some additional sentences have been added to it.

After offering fajr salah at the terminal mosque, we boarded the plane immediately after announcement. This Turkish Airlines bus plane was filled with near about 200 passengers. Turks and Iranians mostly were on board.

The Iranians, who are luxurious, travel to Dubai and Istanbul for passing some days for recreation in a luxurious manner, so, by way of comparison. The Iranians undertake journey to Dubai and Istanbul at a greater rate since these 2 cities are comparatively nearer to Iran. Formalities over, the Turkish Airlines plane set out for Istanbul from the soil of Tehran.

## Arrival at Istanbul

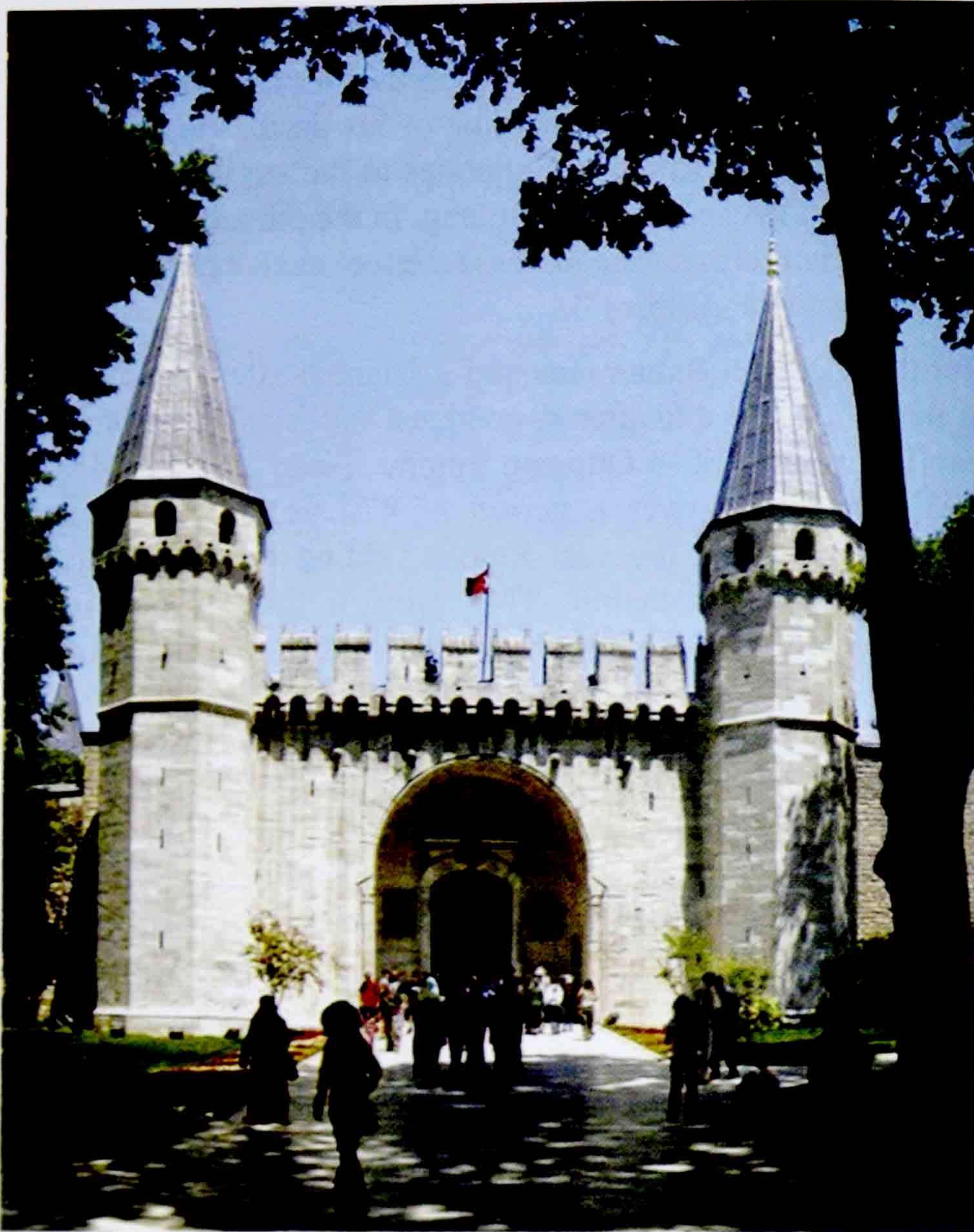
Istanbul is known as a mega city on the map of the world, having a population of nearly 2 crore. This city straddles both Asian and European continents. The strait of Bosphorus divides the city as well as the 2 continents. It is a narrow passage of water emanating from the Black Sea; it has lost its way to the Marmara Bosphorus strait leads to the Mediterranean Sea. This mega city has a glorious history since 1000 years B.C. From its inception Istanbul was regarded as an important trade centre on the map of the world. Then the name of this city was Byzantium. Until the Plateau War in 479 B.C. this city was under the control of Persia.

Thereafter, the Spartan general Poisonus governed the city according to his sweet will. The Roman emperor Septimias conquered this city in 196 A. D. and reduced it to rubble. Later on at the request of his successor, this ruined city was rebuilt. In this rebuilding process, he expanded the city from the former perimeter of the city and the built rampart around it. He constructed splendid palace later on this city which was occupied by Constantine. This city impressed him so much so that he declared this city as the capital of the Roman Empire in 330 A.D. Constantine named this city Constantinople after his name. He ordered for building a new Rome and issued directive to rebuild the city completely. He built there magnificent palace and impressive church.

His successor ordered for demolition of non-Christian temples. In 1453 the Osmanli Sultan conquered Constantinople and named it Istanbul. The Roman Emperors used to control Roman Empire from Constantinople.

The reign of emperor Justinus was the golden era in the history of Constantinople. He ruled the Roman Empire from. 527 A.D. to 565 A.D. At the time of his death, the Byzantine Empire stretched from the Euphrates to the strait of Gibraltar. But that golden age did not last long. In the 6th and 7th century of Christian era it encountered fierce onslaught from the Persians and the Arabs.

Turkish Osmanli Sultan renamed it Istanbul after its conquest. A new era dawned in after its conquest and Istanbul became the capital of the Turkish Ottoman Empire. From the year 1453 to 1923, stretching over a period of 470 years, the Osmanli Sultans had ruled the vast Empire, sitting on the saddle of power based in Istanbul. The Osmanli Sultans paid their attention to building imposing and majestic mosques after it came under its sway. They built splendid and marvelous palaces. The Sultans did not spare pain to embellish this city according to their aesthetic sense. The power of this vast Empire was unparalleled during the 16th Century. The epicenter of this power was Istanbul. This Empire stretched up to Persia in the East, the Western Europe in the west, North Africa in the South and Russia in the North. Suleyman the first was one of the most formidable persons of that time. He made his mark as a magnificent Sultan ruling over the realm for 46 years at a stretch. He left a lot of landmarks. Although defeated in the 1st World War and the capital has been shifted to Ankara, Istanbul stands out prominently with its own gaiety and splendor on the map of the world, notwithstanding the loss of its former status as capital for thousand years. Obviously it appears that Istanbul in its incipient stage was in the European part i.e. on the Western shore of the strait of Bosphorus. As a result of the entry of a water course through the uropean part of the city, Istanbul expanded to a large extent in the European part of Turkey. Nevertheless, the Asian part of the city is large as well as suspension bridge, obviously without pillar has bridged the European part of Istanbul with the Asian part of the City 6 laned



*The main gate of Topkapi Museum*

and nearly twice the breadth of the Karnaphuli. This bridge has been built at such a height that it does not put any impediment to the navigation of vessel between the Marmara (before Mediterranean) and the Black Sea. At a later stage not far from the city, another 8 laned bridge was built over the strait of Bosphorus to facilitate communication. It is at a high height as well.

While having breakfast in the Turkish Airlines plane. I began to think about Istanbul on its multiple aspects, Barring white mass of cloud, nothing was visible outside from the window.

The behaviour of the steward and stewardess was elegant and polished in the mode of European attire, they looked smart and pleasing. A delectable sight indeed!

The high standard of hospitality deserves appreciation. It appeared from the apparel and appearance of the passengers that they are an educated and well mannered nation. The Iranians as well as the Turks deserve such commendation. We were about to land on one of the renowned international airports of the world, Ataturk Int'l Airport, standing by the sea and named after Kemal Ataturk. A journey to Istanbul took nearly 2 hours and 40 minutes. The Airport of Istanbul is in the European part of the city. The Istanbul city became visible as the plane came down to a lower level. Our plane circled and landed on the airport, coming from the direction of the sea. Planes were waiting at different terminals for passengers often off loading passengers who came from different countries of the world including Turkey, entering the huge terminal through the boarding bridge. We went to immigration booth, walking on foot and through the conveyer belt. A lot of passengers who had arrived from different countries were huddling and bustling together before 7 or 8 counters. Males and females alike were in a dress. The number of women dressed modestly, was negligible. Most of the women, who were short dress, were moving freely. We were only three Bangladeshi national since I had first submitted the passport at the counter, the immigration officer was turning the page of the passports over and over.

Then he tested the authenticity of the visa in the computer. In spite of this, for reasons unknown to me the officer was looking at me with inquisitive eye. Then he returned the passport after sealing it. In view of the heavy rush of passengers, completion of the immigration process almost covered one hour.

Thereafter, we went near our flight belt, after hunting through many belt. As soon as we came out from the belt with our luggage, we saw the man of the office of business partner of Mr. Shakhawat loading the luggage, he started for the hotel.

He took us to a hotel compound located in the middle of the European part of the city.

We were put in a hotel named Orient Mintur Otel. The Turks call hotel as otel. It is a three star hotel in a 10 to 12 storeyed structure. I was placed in a room either in the 7th or 8th floor. Mr. Shakhawat and Mr. Emdad stayed in a room together. I stayed in a single room as I did in Iran.

As Mr. Shakhawat and Mr. Emdad became acquainted with each other through me, they stayed together. We had to stay in Istanbul for 2 days.

The car with its driver will give us lift for 24 hours. The driver was asked to come at around 3 p.m. to take us to go to the world famous Topkapi Museum. It was my long cherished dream to see Topkapi Museum. That was the primary reason for my tour of Turkey. It is a much venerated museum for 130 crore Muslims of the world. It is an act of piety and merit to Muslims to visit it as well as to people of other creeds. We released the car relaxed for several hours as we were tired of sleepless journey.

## **World Famous Topkapi Museum**

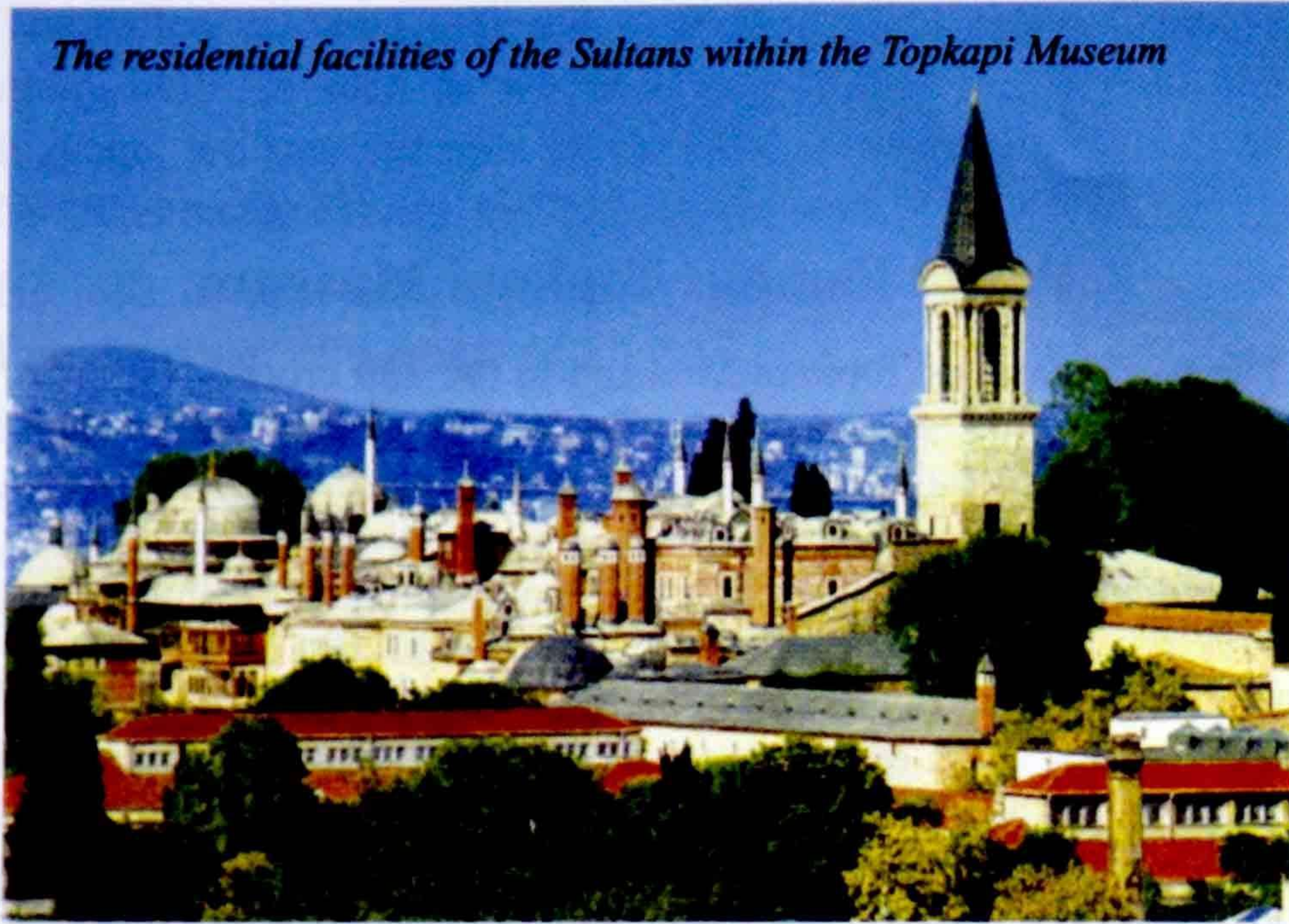
The world famous Topkapi Museum to the 130 crore Muslims of the world is a sacred place. Topkapi Museum is the most venerated and hallowed Museum since it preserves the much valued and respected bequests and mementoes of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). Together with them it contains the miraculous stick of Musa (A), over and above; this Museum contains many awe inspiring articles and effects of the earlier Prophets and messengers. The Museum is repertoire of rare antiques and household things of the inmates of the house of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), his holy companions and virtuous personages saints of later period. They evoke a lot of religious fervor and awe. In the midst of these portents of religious significance, the museum has accommodated rare historic, glitzy, ritzy and antiques and curios of the Turkish Sultans.

A museum, primarily envisions the vision of a big or small structure, it may also occasion the picture of an imposing edifice or even a complex of buildings wherein rare antiques of antiquity are preserved. But the Topkapi Museum, the topic of discussion is an exception, it is unlike other buildings.

Indeed, Topkapi Museum is a fortified, majestic and grand castle palace on the shore of the strait of Bosphorus and encircled on 3 sides by the strait in the European side of Istanbul. It was elaborately designed and embellished according to the best aesthetic notion of the Turkish people of the medieval period. This colossal palace covers nearly an area of 7 lack square kilometers, giving an impression of its sprawling look.

Enriched with many features, this architectural wonder is thought a marvel and a paragon of architecture through the centuries. This Museum houses small and great assembly halls arcade, pavilion Hall, Mosque, Park etc., thought to be essential adjuncts to the palace as if it were a satellite town within the perimeter of vast Istanbul city. The walls of this palace were built in such a manner

*The residential facilities of the Sultans within the Topkapi Museum*



that no cannon ball of that age could either pierce or make any dent on these walls. Topkapi is a compound word. It means cannon gate. This palace is surrounded by 2 km long ramparts on sea front side and 1400 meter long ramparts on the land mass side.

This palace is as better fortified as it is charming and soothing since it is surrounded by tranquilizing natural beauty. Presumably Sultan Mahmud, the second, took into consideration the strategic and aesthetic aspects before choosing this winsome place as the castle palace of the Ottoman Empire. Conquest of Istanbul in 1453 was followed by the creation of a new administrative zone in the Bayazid Area by the Turks of Ottoman Empire. Now-a-days there is no trace of that capital in the least. Later on Topkapi Palace was built in 1467 after its construction. Sultan Mahmud the second transferred his royal residence there. Sultan Mahmud the second used to look after the administrative functions from there. But the members of his family stayed back in the previous palace. Towards the later part of the 16th century, Harem (Quarters of Sultan's family) was established in the Topkapi palace. Then the Sultan shifted the inmates of his household there until 1839, this palace was the official and residential complex, later on Sultan Abdul Mecid built another palace on the shore of Bosphorus in view of the exigent circumstances. During the age of gaiety and grandeur of the

Ottoman Empire, the Sultans along with 4 thousands men and women who were working as administrators used to live here including the royalty and the members of their family. The location of the main gate of this palace is nearer to Hagea-Sophia Museum. According to the plaque placed on top of the gate; Sultan Mahmud, the second, built this spectacular and impressive gate during his rule. The inscription carved on the plaque stone bears testimony to this fact. During the reign of Sultan Abdul Aziz, it was renovated. At the time of the Isha prayer this gate was closed and opened on the morning at the time of Fajr prayer, barring the vizirs and the foreign ministers, no one could ride through this gate on horseback. It was the usual norm in the interior of this palace, there are 4 assembly halls of varying size and standard. The first Durbar hall is between the first and the second gate. It is regarded as the reception hall for the persons seeking interview with the state dignitaries who is now termed as the outer halls at the present age. Crossing the majestic second gate of the palace, which is medially placed, one has to reach the second Durbar Hall. This Durbar Hall is topped by a circular octagonal dome which has been patterned with eye catching and charming design.

This Durbar Hall too, built in keeping symmetry with the symmetry edifices of Eastern Europe. So it looks like a tower in appearance. The prime minister, important government officials and the ministers used to meet the Sultan in this massive structured, Durbar Hall. Located further within the important ceremonious of the state were held in the third Durbar Hall, such as coronation of the new Sultans and observance of various religious functions.

The 4th Durbar Hall was used for weekly cabinet meeting of ministers and purposes miscellaneous. Among the various parts of the palace the treasury/Exchequer and the Harem can be said to be the most pompous and protected place of the palace.

Harem was the place where the sultans lived with their family. The Harem is still remained with the former style. The former style of entering sun-ray and the control of heat are really excellent. Toilet, Dressing-Drassing, coat and the well decoration of the rooms surely came thinking to the modern spectators. There are a lot of flats in the Harem. Perhaps these were built for the multitude ideas of the sultans in the separate block.



Near the Harem area, there are houses built for the chief physician and his associate. The medicine and the rare articles for keeping medicine are saved in the museum.

The library of Osmanli Sultans was very rich in the world. The Osmanli Sultanat started soon after the Bagdad being destroyed by Halaku Khan. So, the most valuable and rare things of Abbasi Empire came to the hands of the Osmanli State and its rulers. Among these, the world famous books and the rare manuscripts are notable.

In Topkapi museum, Bagdad pavilion is very rich, as some most valuable and uncommon things of Abbasi Empire went to the hands of Osmanli Sultanat and these were preserved in this Topkapi Museum.

The royal treasury is another conspicuous thing of this Topkapi. This safe treasury was in the former palace for several years after the Istanbul was conquered by the Turkey Sultan. After taking requisite steps this treasury, it was brought in the Topkapi in the year 1478.

During the reign of the sultan, the treasury were closed and opened by 40 people with festival. In the 16th century, the reign of 1st Selim, it was considered as the strongest and powerful treasury of the world.

The things used by the members of the family of the Sultan were kept by the glass in several parts of the palace. In another block of the palace the things which were found as a gift from foreign kings are preserved very carefully.

In another block of the palace, the tabarrukat of the Prophets (pbuh) and the former Prophets and then the company of the Prophet (pbuh) are preserved very finely. In another block, the instruments of cooking for thousands people are kept systematically.

There are arrangements for observing the beautiful scene of the sea from this palace. This place was built in the way that it was high 50-100 feet from water level.

Now, between this Topkapi Palace and the water of the sea, vehicles and the tram are available for movement which is very lower than this palace.

## A round-up of Topkapi Museum



*The chest of gold and diamond within which the holy tooth of Prophet Muhammad (s) has been preserved.*

A round-up of Topkapi Museum travelling across the ascent and descent of hills, we were passing through the city at around 3 p.m. in a fine weather, neither cold nor hot. Parallel to the private car, taxi, bus etc. tram car were also plying. The road is bumpy as it is a hilly city like Chittagong. Since snow falls during the winter the road is not smooth. On seeing the women on the road with short and mini clothes, it seemed they were out to outvie their western counterparts of on seeing dress. It seemed to me that they were out to outvie their American and European counterparts. As it is a touristic place and attracts millions of sightseers from different countries, most of the women

were tourists. We reached the vast esplanade before the main gate of Topkapi Museum, traversing the road at speed allowed by traffic law. A number of tourists had car and taxi were parked there.

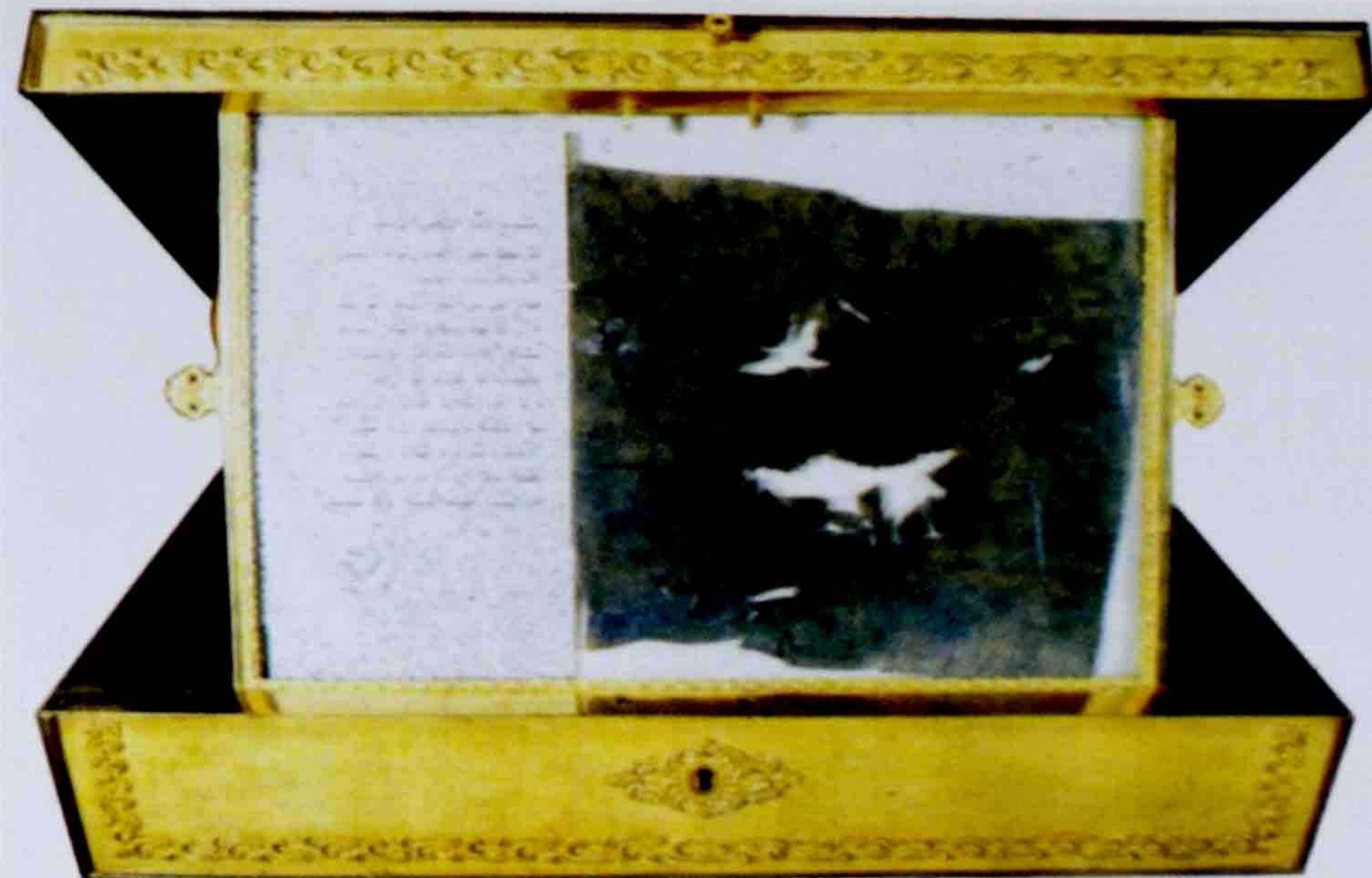
I had a fixed idea that the Topkapi Museum would be like a characteristic multi-storeyed massive edifice like the Egyptian museum in Cairo, Delhi Museum, Calcutta Museum, Dhaka Museum or the Museums of the developed countries of Europe and America.

Although the ritzy and pompous palace complex of the Osmanli Sultanate was converted into a museum later on, I did not find this fact written in writings of any writer, especially in writings of newspapers of Dhaka- Chittagong or in the travelogue of travelers to Turkey. Granted that some travelers wrote about it but it escaped my notice. We the three entered the museum complex standing in a line. After security check, we purchased tickets at 10 Lira per person. (A Lira is equivalent to Tk. 57).

On entering the compound, we found that it is a rambling complex covering a vast area which I had least idea about it.

I asked one of the persons on duty about the location of the museum of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). The Turks are not proficient in English. I know not what he had understood and pointed me towards the yonder Harem. I became sure that the Harem is the much venerated and hallowed treasure of the bequest of Nabi Karim (pbuh). Since Harem means Holy - personal meanwhile, my worry was on the rise because of the paucity of time. It was nearly shortage about 3.30 pm, lest the museum would be closed at about 5 pm and ..... on the following day museum would remain close on account of weekly holiday.

Besides, Mr. Shakhawat Hussain was thinking of leaving Istanbul on the following day. But must I stay on the following day, if possible the after tomorrow, too.



*The venerated letter of Prophet (s)*

We were looking round the other palaces as we were proceeding towards the Harem palace.

On reaching the Harem palace, we saw that people were buying tickets at 10 lira per head. Then we realized since it was a treasure house of the bequest and legacy of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), this system has been introduced. I fully realized that this palace is so richly equipped, valuable, soothing and venerable that this palace, within the Topkapi Museum is a palace of treasure of in valuable holy antiquities.

Here, in different magnificent rooms, the Osmanli Sultans lived with the inmates of their families and they have been furnished in such a way that, it seems, as if the Sultans have gone for outings with the members of their families and will return presently and take rest.

Even during this modern period such smart and neat arrangements charm the people. There we wanted to know from the watch and ward the direction and location of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)'s museum through physical gestures and hints. It appeared they also did not understand my purported objective.

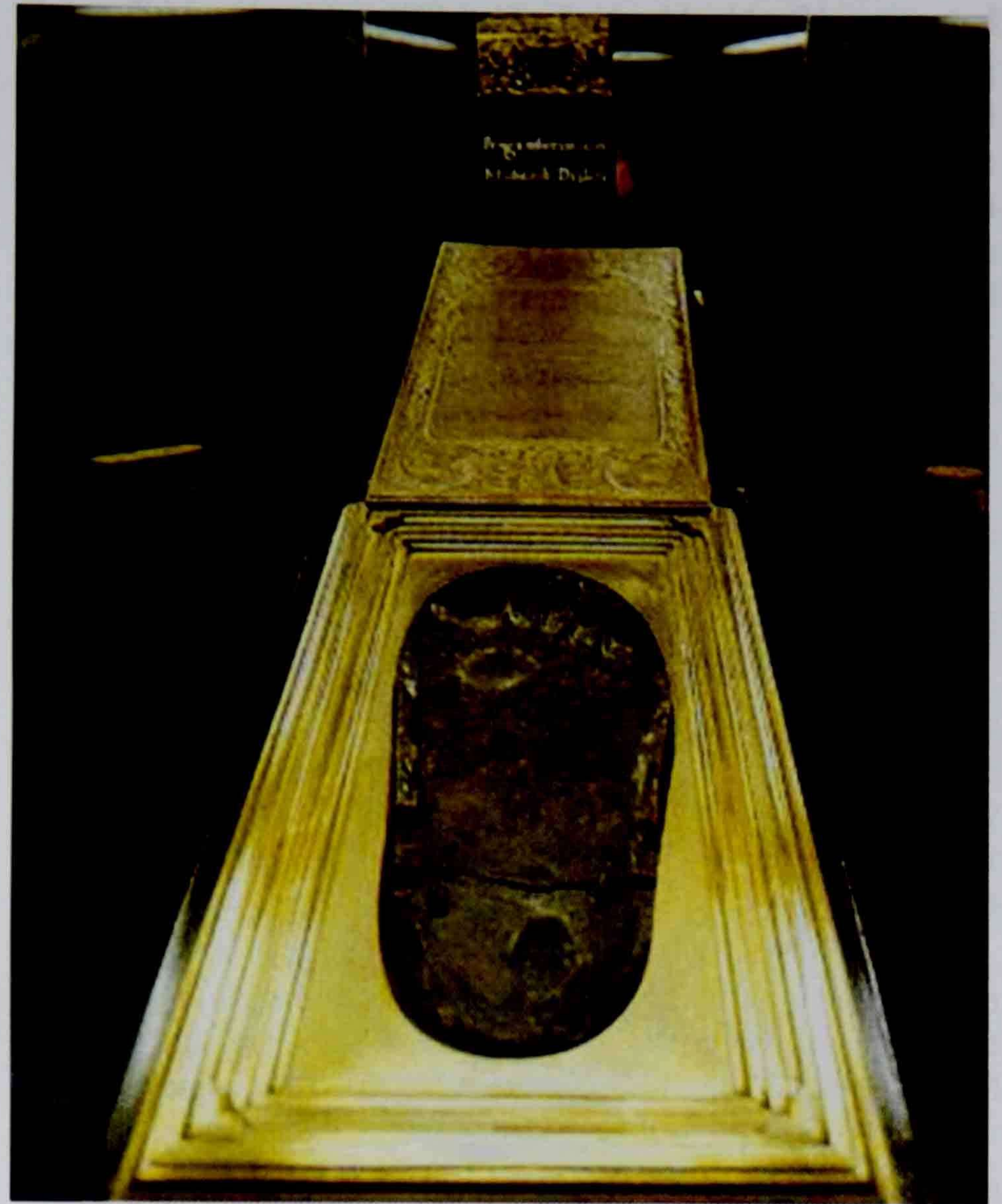


*Seal of the Prophet (S)*

We ascertained that the location of the Museum associated with the much venerated legacies is in another palace outside adjacent to that palace from a person who knew English.

This palace within the Topkapi Museum is the most plush palace although it is not such to me since my main object is towards the treasures of holy bequests of Holy Prophet (pbuh). This Harem demands at least 1 to 2 hours to see know, understand and realize its importance. Since I was fervent to go towards the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)'s gifts of treasures, I failed to do that only within 15 to 20 minutes. I have had a glimpse of the rich rooms of that vast palace and came back. I became overwhelmed with joy when I entered the gate leading to the palace where the much revered treasures of mementoes are preserved. I became extremely suffused with emotion I felt my visit to Turkey is a success. Many were wonder struck on seeing my unusual behaviour and reaction.

On entering this palace, I saw Qari reciting the Holy Quran with his sweet magnetic tone. This is in vogue for all time permanently I had no hurry after entering this palace. But within a short time Mr. Shakhawat went elsewhere. As a result



*The hallowed Sandal of prophet Muhammad (s).*

I also went to other palace. In the later sequel, I shall discuss in detail about the holy presents of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) to this earth.

Then we began to visit different Durbar Hall (Assembly Hall). Among them, in one palace the various gifts offered by kings, emperors have been presented in attractive way. Among them were diamonds, gems and ornaments have been arrayed which

have been plundered by Nadir Shah from abroad and offered as gift to Turkish Sultans. In another nearby palace, stored clothes, dress, ornaments diamond, vests vestures of the Sultans and their families in a neat and deft manner. Among the articles of the daily use of the Sultans is the 7th largest diamond of the world,



*The holy slipper of prophet (S)*

known as spoon maker's diamond the weight of which is 86 carot. Around this pieces of diamonds smaller in size are arrayed.

There are also preserved the gilded cradles of the new-born princes and princesses, there have been kept many lampposts

the weight of each is 48 k.g. Each receptacle of lamppost is decorated with 6666 smaller pieces of diamond.

These diamond pieces symbolize each verse of the Holy Quran. Besides, the throne, weighing 250 k.g. gold, there are, Holy Quran and Quran stand rose water and incense bearing vase receptacles of gold designed for keeping fruits. These receptacles and vases have been adorned with pieces of diamond.

The huge Array of rare wares and effects of the Sultans provide a glimpse of the lavish life style which cannot but evoke a sense of wonder and amazement.

The compound and household effects are so vast that it demands several hours at least to see it. I went hurriedly away since the co-travelers were waiting outside in a state of exhaustion.

The cooking kits, appliances and wares used for cleaning were kept in an impressive way. A substance called Jade powder was used with the metals with which they were made. If any poisonous substance were mixed with the food, their colour would become disfigured and they would break into pieces automatically.

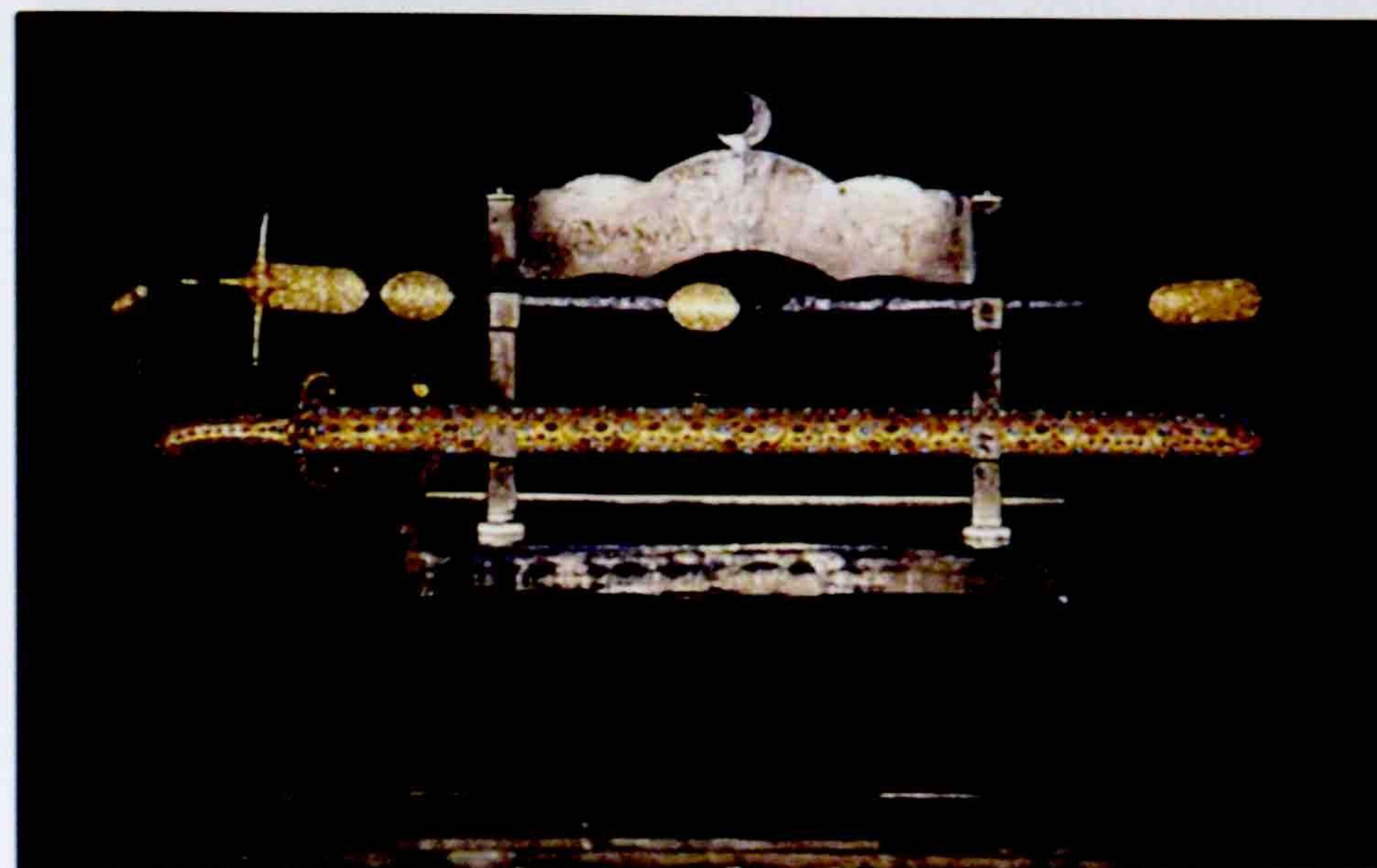
The entire decoration design of the palace is adorned with Quranic calligraphy. These attractive aspects bear resemblance to the designs of Makkah Mukarrama, Medina Munawara and Jerusalem, it seemed.

It appears the Sultans in order to adorn Istanbul, used Makkah Mukarrama, Madinah Munawara and Jerusalem as models since Saudi Arab, Palestine and Palestine were under control of the Sultans of Istanbul since long. Undeniably the Sultans were used to extravagant and luxurious living after 17th century. Even then they gave priority to their religious sentiment consequently; their singular and indelible marks of religious marks exist till today in Makkah Mukarrama, Madinah Munwara and Jerusalem inspite of the passage of hundreds of years.

A doubt lurked in the mind while entering the gate of the Topkapi as to its closure around 4 or 5 p.m. Later on I learnt it would close down at 7 p.m. In the late afternoon the sun would set in Istanbul at 8.45 p.m. We arrived in Istanbul last night; sleepless naturally, we the travelers were gripped with fatigues. I was eager to pass more time in Topkapi Museum, defying tiredness. But in view of the tiredness of the co-travelers I came out and met them in the premises of the garden. Then we bought illustrated booklet from book stand on Istanbul and Topkapi Museum. But the books are very high priced. We observed vast expanse water for sometime, sitting on the chair placed before the Topkapi Museum. The level of the water at of the Topkapi Bosphorus strait is 50 to 100 feet level at the minimum from the level of Topkapi Museum. Below, trams, cars and buses were plying on road running parallel to the water of the strait. On the other side in water, yachts of varying standard and size were plying on the strait, providing pleasures to the tourists since the late afternoon is the proper time for yachting. Side by side with the yachts huge cargo ships were plying.

After relaxation for some time when we felt refreshed ourselves we came out of the premises of Topkapi Museum. In the explainable outside, there are lot of restaurants of high profile besides parking lot we set out for Sultan Fatih Mehmed Masjid, after 3 to 4 hours of stay were turned with the waiting guide.

### The Tabarrukat of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) at the Topkapi Museum



*The holy sword of Prophet Muhammad (s)*

It is claimed that many holy and venerated articles of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) have been preserved in many countries of Europe and Africa of this world side by side with Asia in the world specially the holy imprint of the foot on stone, venerated hair, holy beard vests and vestments holy staff etc. In Bangladesh Kadam Mubark at Momin Road, Kadam Rasul of Bagichahat of Chandanaish and Narayanganj contain stones, bearing the impression of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)'s holy foot.

In Sreenagar of Kashmir the beard of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) has been preserved with great religious favour. The holy portents of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) have been preserved at Goura, Calcutta, Delhi Jame Masjid. Deoband and Ahmedabad in India. A country can hardly be found where there is no trace of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)'s legacy either in concrete or in

its imprinted forms. The abundance of Tabarrukat or Mementoes of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) in different countries of the world cannot but intrigue the historians about the veracity of these claims. Anything which is recognized by the Govt. possesses credibility. There are so many portents of the Prophet (pbuh) that many of them have not been confirmed by the relevant governments. So their veracity is questionable. Questions remain if



*Another holy sword of Prophet Muhammad (s.)*

they are the signs of Nabi Karim (pbuh). It is a formidable task to ascertain the truth. Opportunists and vested interests were not few even in those days exploiting the feelings and sentiments of the Ummat-E-Muhammad (pbuh) they fattened and thrived.

The mementoes and signs that have been collected and preserved by the Turkish Sultans in the Topkapi Museum have been done under the auspices of the Sultans through a process of proper test and scrutiny. It can be undoubtedly said that the holy mementoes and portents preserved in the Topkapi Museum have authentic and credible basis although there are a little doubts amount some of the holy treasure of bequests preserved in other museums elsewhere in the world. There is no room for hesitation and doubt about the authenticity of the legacies of the Prophet (pbuh), preserved with sanctity and most carefully in the Topkapi Museum.

As soon as I entered the palace of bequests, I saw a Qari reciting the verses of the holy Quran with his modulated voice here. It seemed, an aura of holy and religious sanctity was prevailing. From the inner recess of the mind, he chanted invocatory utterances bestowing and seeking divine grace and benediction.

From the first day these holy amanats are in the hands of Turkish people, the Holy Qur'an is recited near them by hafiz-i Qur'ans

for 24 hours for respect to our Prophet (pbuh). There are several hafizes appointed by the state to recite the holy book. First I went to a long table on which a well protected glass box was placed. I saw within the box holy hair, beard of Prophet (pbuh). Within the space of 1 to 2 feet, I observed the holy tooth which came out during the Battle of Uhud. All these have been arranged in such a manner that visitors could easily catch glimpse of them.

Near at hand, the seal of the imprint of Prophet Muhammad is placed. The copy of the important letters sent to different courts of kings the size of 16 to 19 c.m. and 12 lined written in Arabic, have been placed.

In this museum, 60 pieces of Prophet (pbuh)'s holy beard have been treasured. Among them only 1 piece of beard has been placed for observation of the visitors by encasing in a glass chest. In another side, the foot print on stone of the holy Prophet (pbuh) has been placed. In another side, the special cap (helmet) used in the battle field and the breast plate have been to view for the visitors.



*The holy Quran Khalifah Hazrat Omar (R.)*

### **Uncanny-weird / mysterious staff-wand-A magical stick**

In a greater space of the palace, 2 swords used by holy Prophet (pbuh) in the battle field have been kept. It is learnt that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) used 9 swords in all. In another block, the holy Sandal, staff, turban and other personal effects have been preserved with due sanctity fervor. Each preserve contains a detailed description as to where, when and how they were collected. All on a sudden, Mr. Shakhawat and Mr. Emdad drew my attention to the holy staff used by Prophet Musa (A). The holy staff of Hazrat Musa (A) has been kept in a glass box adjacent to a wall. I had no idea about the preservation of the staff of Hazrat Musa (A) in this museum.

Nearly 4 to 5 feet long in size and in colour like the colour of the wood of our country nearly 25 m.m. in circumference, there are 6 to 7 knots in this staff. The uncanny and miraculous power of the holy staff of Hazrat Musa (A) has been detailed in the holy Quran in more than one place.



*A sword of Khalid-bin Walid (R)*

In another block near the sword used by Dawood(A) and one of his letters have been preserved. Further more, it contains the swords of Hazrat Abu Bakar Siddique and Hazrat Omar (R), Hazrat Osman and Hazrat Ali (R). The reason these swords are kept together is to symbolize the unity among Halifahs. In another part the swords of Hazrat Khalid bin Walid (R), Hazrat Jafar Tayar (R) and Hazrat Amar Bin Tayar (R), have been arrayed. In a large room of the palace, there are cover of Hazre Aswad, two former frames of the ducts which conveyed the water

of the holy Kaaba Sharif; one of these is of the year 1612 and the other of the year 1640. They were covered with gold plate and each weighed 14 kg. The water of the roof of the holy Kaaba flowed through the gold tube and fell into the interior of Hatim the name of which is Mizab-E-Rahmat. The holy door of the Kaaba Mubarak of 1160 and some more are displayed as well.

Then a few door locks used in that holy door during the period of Abbaside period have been preserved. The old cloth-cover used in the door of the holy Kaaba in 1852 have arranged in succession. The model of Rowza Pak and Masjid-E-Nabbi of 1852 built by the Osmanli Sultan have been put on display next. In this context, it is worth mentioning that in 1951 King Abdul Aziz, dismantled completely the northern portion of Masjid-E-Nabbi and rebuilt it on land of the time of our Prophet.

He kept the western part of the mosque intact which is attached to Rouza Pak the Turkish Sultan previously built this mosque including the demolished northern part of the mosque.

Later on, King Fahad Bin Abdul Aziz, undertook a plan in 1985 to expand the Masjid-E-Nabbi towards East-West and North with thousand crores of Rial extending over a period of 11 years which has received recognition as one of the most splendid, magnificent exquisite and impressive facilities on the surface of the world side by side, he also recast the town of Medina Munawara in various ways.

I was reluctant to come out of palace in which holy legacies are preserved. In view of co-traveler Mr. Shakhawat's exit beforehand and Mr. Emdad's persistent insistence, I could not see it thoroughly spending adequate time for it before coming out of the palace. I listened to the recitation of the holy Quran in sweet voice with rapt attention for 1 to 2 minutes coming very close to the Qari as a sign of respect to the holy mementoes of the Prophet (pbuh) since the beginning of the rule of the Turkish Sultans, the recitation has become a custom for hundreds of years. I was cherishing a desire to revisit it as I could not feel full satisfaction on seeing the priceless treasures in such a short spell of time. But in view of exigent situation I could not do that.

For Virtual view, you can go to <http://www.3dmekanlar.com/sites.html>

## The Central Mosque of Istanbul

Istanbul, a city of mosques, the central mosque of this is Suleymaniye Mosque. In commemoration of his historic conquest of Hungary in Europe on returning to his country, he built it. This mosque has been built between 1550 and 1557. This mosque is an important edifice of the Osmanli Sultanat. Suleyman 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. These columns have buttressed up the dome from the out yard. On Friday during Juma prayer, vast congregation of devotees used to assemble here.

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 guttery of this Suleymaniye Mosque, there was separate arrangement for women for performing namaz even at that age and slice it continues 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 every where from the Mehrab of the mosque. (Mihrab-circular vanttred 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



*The interior design and sight of the central mosque of Istanbul situated on top of the hill.*



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 Suleyman the first lies in domed tombs, attached to the mosque. The construction of this mosque came to a halt in the middle because of colossal amount of expenses. Due to this, the Sultan much credit sad in the outside world including Persia. Although it is not admissible that the Sultan will fall into financial crisis in view of the vast Empire of the Sultan. Khalifah Suleyman the first was one of the most powerful Sultans among the Osmanli Sultans. In his vast Empire, he has made a lot of charitable works as well as religious works. Nonetheless haled an unostentatious life. Sultan Suleyman the first was contemporaneous to Mogul 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 Osmanli Sultanate 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 inspite of distance, it is natural for them to have contact with the Sultans of India. The 1st 7 to 8 of the Osmanli Sultans were contemporaneous to the Sultans and kings preceding the Mogul 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 Osmanli Sultanat. Seated in Delhi from Babar to Aurangazeb 6 emperor ruled over India.

They were very powerful. During their rule, they have built many establishments, mosques and forts in India including Bengal. The Jame Mosque of Delhi, the Badshahai 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 Osmanli Sultanate. On seeing the Topkapi palace as a museum, I began to think where are the establishments of the Sultans and Moghuls of Delhi? In the Indian sub-continent, the Agra Fort is regarded as the richest, then comes the Redfort of Delhi, but all these cannot reach no where near the palaces of Osmanli Sultanate, to say 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 Riyal. This is the most spectacular and magnificent mosque. The Turkish engineers, technicians, workmen and helpers have built Masjid E-Nababi. One top of this, the religious Aura and mystique this mosque infuse 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 Osmanli Sultans have become 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.

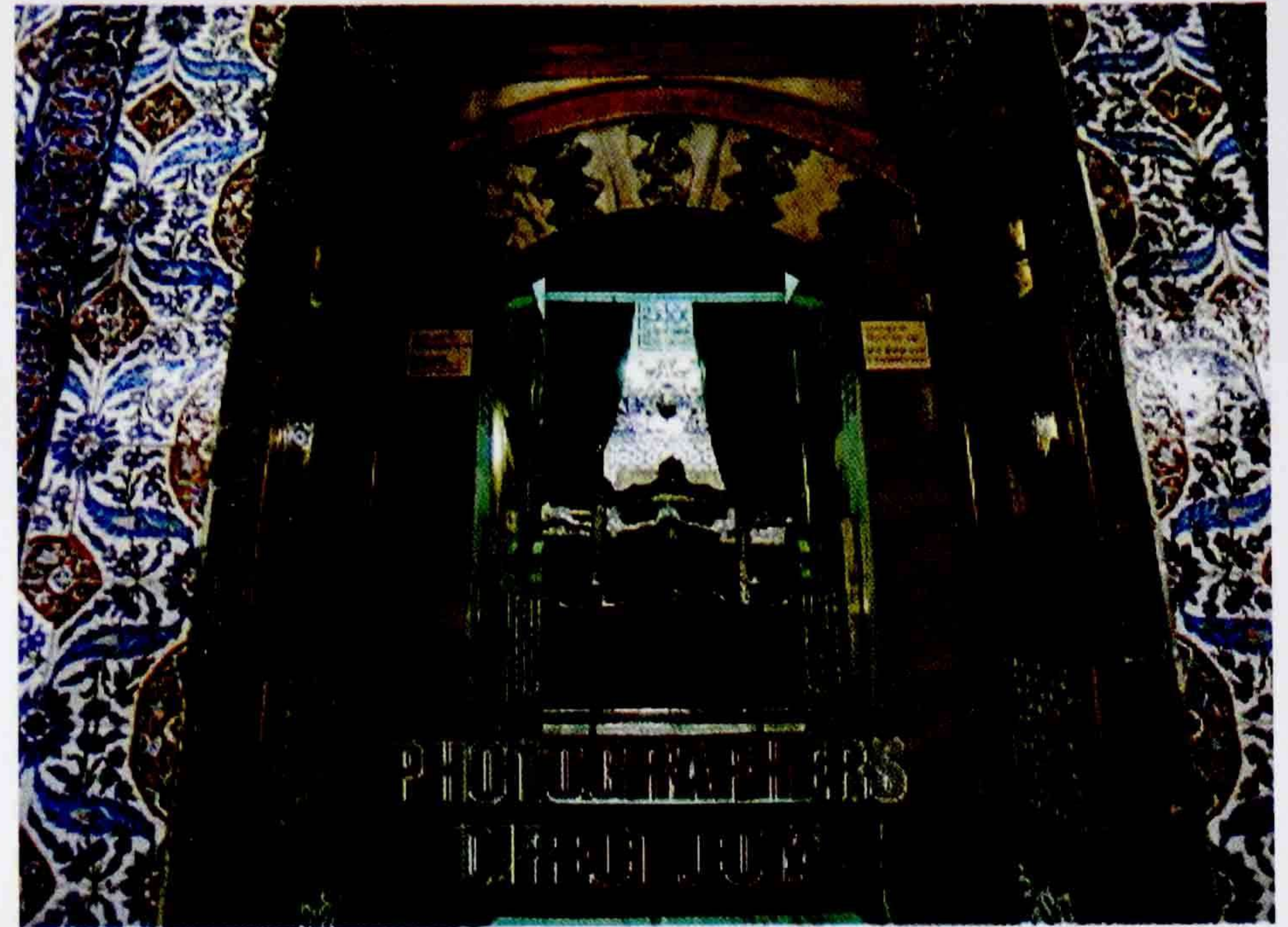
It is unthinkable of a mosque in Turkey without one or more than one dome. Without dome one or two mosques may exist in the rural areas. I found many under construction mosques in Turkey during my 10 days' stay in Turkey. These mosques are also being constructed in the style of the mosques built hundreds of years ago. It is easily understood.

On the 12th June in the afternoon, we went to see the famous mosques of Istanbul. Our vehicle moving through a snaky road proceeded towards the hill of Suleymaniye Mosque. On the descent of the hill, there are countless number of shops. There are approaches through the shops. The mosque can be reached through by car through this road. When our car reached the mosque, we got down and saw this impressive mosques, the compound outside the mosque, the charitable complexes and the lines of shops or so was spent. Around it these establishments are situated. 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, especially the Mehrab the pulpit Azan and Ekamatkhana resemble the Masjid-E-Nabbi. On the other hand, this Suleymaniye though not exactly resemble the Jerusalem mosque, it closely resemble the mosque of Jerusalem. As like as the mosque of Baitul Mukaddas, this mosque also stands on one of the 7 hills. In 1997 I had the privilege to visit Jerusalem. The Suleymaniye 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 constitutional features of body of the Turks to a large extent like the physical feature of the Palestinians.

The Jame Masjied of Delhi, Baitul Mukarram of Dhaka have the aura and solemnly of religious sanctity. This mosque in Istanbul has retained such religious sanctity and aura I believe. Although it is called Suleymaniye mosque in writing, it also called locally Suleyman Fatih Ali Muhammad mosque since the name of the Sultan is Suleyman Fatih Ali Muhammad. Massive repair work was going on within this mosque. So, it is easily assumed that since a large congregation of people, it might hamper the smooth conduct of the prayer. In view of this we decided to say the Juma prayer on the following Friday in the mosque of Sultan Ahmed Mosque alias Blue Mosque Zearah at the Mazar of Ayub Ansari.

## Zearah Shrine Hazrat Abu Ansari



*The interior view of the holy shrine of Hazrat Abu Ayub Ansari (Rh.)*

Among the knowledgeable Muslims scarcely one comes across a person who has not heard of noted companion Hazrat Ayub Ansari (R). He was an intimate companion of Nabi Karim (pbuh). Reaching Madinah Munawara after immigration from Makkah Mukarrama, he stayed at Kuba village and built there Kuba Mosque. He went to Madinah Munawara on Friday. Not responding to the call of the immoveable companions, the camel which has borne Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) sat down near the present green tomb of its own accord at the behest of Allah. There situated the 2 storied house of Hazrat Abu Ayub Ansari (R). Nabi Karim (pbuh) stayed in the house until his own house was built.

The Arabs wanted to occupy Istanbul from 672 A.D. to 679 A.D. Abu Ayub Ansari (R) participated in the battle at his 80s and went to Constantinople on horse. His friends had to tie him on the horse, for the reason that he was unable to ride a horse due to his age. Abu Ayub Ansari (R) became there martyrdom. There nearly 8 hundred years later, Turkish Sultan Mehmed the 2nd conquered the Constantinople city in 1453 A.D. He was able to identify Hazrat Abu Ansari (R)'s grave near the walls of Constantinople after a dream by one of his soldiers and built there mosque and mausoleum. In the 18th century Selim, the third, renovated this mosque and mausoleum. The sword which the Osmanli Sultans used to hold in the scabbard, fixed to a belt has been preserved in the mazar complex of Hazrat Abu Ayub Ansari (R) attached to the mazar. There are also graves of other martyrs who embraced martyrdom with him the mazar complex is huge and its structure is octagonal in shape.

A solemn atmosphere prevails in this area of Istanbul. Lest they showed brazenness, the women enter the premises of the mazar covering their head with scarf. Osmanli Sultans used to respect Mazars with deep reverence.

Consequently, they built many small tombs over the mazars of the inmates of the house of Prophet (pbuh) and other companions of Prophet (pbuh) as marks of respect at Jannatul Mowla of Mecca and Jannatul Baki of Medina. In Turkey, the mazar of Hazrat Abu Ayub Ansari (R) in Istanbul and Hazrat Jalal Uddin Rumi (A) in Konya are prominent places for Ziarrah. Turkey at large, abounds in places of Ziarrah. On Friday morning of 13th June '08 we went straight to the mazar compound of Hazrat Abu Ayub Ansari(R) with preparation for Juma prayer. We were at a great advantage since the business partner of Mr. Shakhawat has placed a guide together with his car for 2 days to facilitate our tour. We proceeded towards the mazar area parking the car, at a distance, together with the car and its driver. Although the Turks know English a little, they are an educated nation. Their behaviors style of living and mode of speech are really worth emulating. We went direct to the mazar without going to the mosque first. There was a

great gathering of people offering Zearrah in the inner side. The mazar by and large, is on a higher level from the plains. At one side of the mosque attached to the wall, a gadget used by Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) has been preserved. Offering respected Salam with humility to this renowned discipline of Hazrat Muhammad (pbuh), we applied our mind to offering Fateha for the deceased.

I thought myself lucky as I could visit the Topkapi Museum the previous day and felt a sense of satisfaction at the opportunity of offering Fateha, standing before the renowned companion of Prophet (pbuh), for paucity of time, we came out of the mazar after passing sometime within. Then we entered the massive mosque which is called Ayup Mosque. At time the concourse for Juma congregation has begun to assemble no where in Turkey. I could see 2 tiered mosques. Likewise, this Ayup Mosque is a one storied mosque. It appears, following the Masjid-E-Nababi, The Turks do not build multistoried mosques. The Turkish Sultans have passed away long, long ago. But till today the Turks are falling the tradition of building tiered mosque. Coming out of the premises of the Mazar, we saw the large compound and the tents pitched beside the road for Juma congregation. The pitching of tent on wood or steel is as much easy as interesting. A great multitude of Muslim men and women assemble here in connection with Juma congregation. Shops around in this area are for buying religious materials. They include scarves of women, rosary, cap, fragrance, sent prayer mats etc. Those are worth mentioning.

The Turkish made wares have special demand for the pilgrims who undertake tour to Holy Makkah and Medina for performing Hajj and Umrah. We purchased tidbits from here. The shopkeepers showed special respect to us on knowing that we are Bangladeshi. Besides discount, really a solemn religious aura and sanctity prevail here in the premises of Tomb of Hazrat Abu Ayub Ansari (R) a prominent companion of Prophet (pbuh) in this part of Istanbul.

The women move modestly with headgear on the head. We taxied away to Blue Mosque with a view to offering Juma prayer, on finishing Zearrah in the sanctified and hallowed premises of this renowned martyred companion of holy Prophet (pbuh).

## Juma Prayer in Istanbul

Istanbul is a city of mosque. In this city, there are not hundreds but thousands of Mosques with towering minarets. The mosques of Istanbul are famous all over the world; specially some mosques which I think are wonders of architectural craftsmanship. Among them Sultan Ahmad Mosque popularly known as Blue Mosque is the most striking. The last 2 Juma prayers were hundred due to exigent situation sealed in fringed. We had no chance of praying the last Juma in Keraman in view of the absence of Sunni Mosque. The Juma before last the whole day was spent in plane and airport during our flight to Tehran from Dhaka.

Reaching Istanbul on last Thursday, we set programme for offering prayer that day most of the Turks belong to Sunni sect. Among many famous mosques of Istanbul, the Blue mosque and Suleymaniye mosque are most outstanding. Since massive renovation work was going in the Suleymaniye Mosque, we resolved to say prayer at the Blue Mosque. In front of the Topkapi Museum of the Osmanli Sultans, the situation of the Blue Mosque is very close to world famous Hajia Sophia Museum. Byzantine people in 1500s were proud of their structure Hajia Sophia Museum and its dome size which was the largest than. The architect Mimar Sinan built Suleymaniye Mosque and its dome was bigger in size and Muslims became proud of their mosques and architectures.

The Turkish people regard this mosque as one of the most imposing and impressive mosques of Istanbul. This mosque was first built by Sultan Ahmad the first. Then he was only 20 years in age inspite of conversion of Hagia-Sophia church into a mosque the Sultan did not feel a sense of satisfaction. As a consequence, he built this mosque Sedefkar Muhammad Agha, an eminent architect of Shishan supervised and guided the



construction of this mosque. In view of the large scale use of blue tiles, it is called Blue Mosque side by side with Sultan Ahmad Mosque. Sultan Ahmed the first used to use this mosque as the centre of his religious proclamation.

The Sultans used to attend the religious festivities here. The Hajj and Omra pilgrims would start their journey from here. Hurre Alayi, a caravan, used to go to Hejaz to help needy people there. As sheyhulislams, religious leader of the Ottoman State, did not allow the sultans to go for hajj since the distance was long (it was taking at least 8 months) and the state should not be without leader, the sultans sent Hurre Alayi to help the people there.

The 6 lowering minarets of this mosque dominate over the sky and are visible from a long distance. The Sultan ordered the architect to build the minarets with gold. On understanding the reflection of the fervour and emotion of the Sultans in his utterances, the architect thought it is impossible and instead built it with precious stones. The Sultan hung a metal led shackle from the gate of the mosque as a mark of deep respect to the Almighty Allah. Each time, the Sultan passed the gate on horse back, the Sultan bowed down his head in obeisance. The roofed portico of the mosque is covered with 30 small and big domes. In the yard there is a large fount an octagonal in size. The 260 windows were glazed with very valuable coloured glass. This glass used to keep the mosque with coloured light 24 hours a day. Blue and green and tiles together with red carpet on the floor always kept the mosque shiny. The interior of the mosque looked uncanny and charming. The central dome of the mosque stands at a height of 43 meters, i.e. that is higher than 130 feet in height. Not only that the diameter of this world famous as 24 meter, i.e., more than 70 feet covered with the plate of marble stone, the 4 round columns held the dome up.

The wall of the mosque has been adorned with coloured decoration. The main colour of which is blue. Marvelous Arabic calligraphy embellishes the wall. The vault (Mehrab) and the pulpit (Mimbar) have been made of white marble stone which closely resemble the Masjid-e-Nababi built by the Osmanli Sultans.

The yard and the garden around the mosque have enhanced the beauty of the mosque many times yesterday, in the afternoon. I saw many tourists from home and abroad seeing the mosque walking about in a leisurely way.

Although the visitors entered the mosque taking off their shoes, some space near the direction of Kibla has been reserved for the devotees to enable them to perform Salat. We said optional prayer, entering the zone reserved for Namaz. Today, the 13th June and Friday, we hastened to this famous mosque to offer Juma prayer. Soon after 12 noon, we finished the rite at the Mazar of much revered Hazrat Abu Ansari (R), an outstanding companion of Hazrat Muhammad (pbuh). Inside the mosque, on the whole, there was already a gathering of devotees. In Turkey, there is no custom of delivering religious discourse, standing either upon the pulpit or under the protruded vault by the celeries. In a corner of the mosque, there is a reserved place on which dais like platform has been placed for delivering edifying lecture and admonition. As per custom, a learned personage about 35 to 40 was giving exhortation on religion in Turkish language over a microphone. I understood his deliberation was punctuated by the quotation from the holy Quran and sayings and practices of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). The Imams of the mosques have a special vestments, among them, is Rumi cap which is invariably red or green. The cap is wrapped with white cloth which looks like the turban of our country. An overcoat is on the body which is like a rain coat. In the room of the Imam is preserved more than one such cap and vestments. Taking off Turkish dress of shirt and pant in that room, the Imams clad in proper vestments above the ankle and cap, go to the mosques to lead the congregation. Once the Salah is finished the holy turns back to his special room and takes off his cloak and cap and dress himself with shirt and trousers. Then none can recognize him as an Imam.

Clad in the dress of an Imam, a beardless person stopped the religious discourse on the instant at the time of Azan and the Muezzin immediately began to shunt Azan through the mike. Nevertheless, Turkish Imams are sensible and pragmatic persons.

Here the shape of the platform of the Muezzin is like that of the Masjid-E-Nababi only 7 to 8 minutes is earmarked for saying the Sunnah prayer within it, except for the direction of Kiblah. On other 3 sides at a level up to 10 to 12 height feet is a gallery spanning both breadths of 8 to 10 feet, the female devotees filled the gallery for prayer.

Scarcely 5 to 7 minutes had passed for Sunnah prayer when the Imam began to ascend the pulpit, chanting invocatory verse. No sooner had he ascended the pulpit on height up to 10 or 12 feet he sat down before a mike.

Then the Muezzin proclaimed the Azan for Khutba. Then, although the honourable Imam initiated the delivery of Khutba by reading out verses from the holy Quran and the Hadith, he switched over to Turkish language within few minutes and finished delivering of the Khutba. The Imam came down the pulpit through the stairs while the Muezzin over the mike began to chant prayer and hymned Surah Fateha. The devotees instantly joined the Muezzin and echoed the Muezzin in a voice praying by reciting the Surah Fateha and humming verse. After pronouncement of Ekamat, the Imam led the prayer and concluded it.

The Imam did not use Turkish language during prayer, it was in Arabic. Soon after, the Imam turned his face on both sides with the expression the muezzin hummed over the mike.

In a voice, the sunnah prayer was prayed.

Keeping the Ka'ba back and the Musallies before him raising the joined hand he performed Munajat. At the entrance of the mosque, poly bags are kept in the mosques of Turkey. Shoving the shoes into them, the shoes are kept in designated box. We kept our shoes in that manner coming out after prayer. We deposited the poly bags into the box since snow falls during winter; it seems the shoes are kept in that way lest the shoes became drenched. I felt a sense of complacency in being able to say the Juma prayer at famous Sultan Ahmad mosque i.e. the Blue Mosque of Istanbul.

## **Famous Haghia - Sophia Museum**

Haghia-Sophia is one of the historic edifices in the interior of ancient Istanbul city. The main attraction of Istanbul the Topkapi Museum set apart, the Haghia - Sophia Museum is the other singular attraction for the tourists who visit the ancient Istanbul city.

In fact, Haghia - Sophia is a historic church of the Christian community. The meaning of Haghia - Sophia is divine wisdom. History records that Constantine, the first built this facility in 325 A.D. It was destroyed in 404 by Fire. In 415 A.D. Theodosius built the church anew. But it collapsed in 532 A.D. due to faulty construction. Within the space of short time Justinian, the first, proceeded to undertake the re-construction of the church. Engaging eminent architect and working over a



span of 5 years, the construction of this vast one domed church was finished. In 557 A.D. the dome of the church fell down owing to the dilapidated condition of the wall. Later on, the church was rebuilt again in 563 A.D. In 1317 emperor Andronicos Pollou effected massive renovation of this church. The entire Christian community of the world prided in the Haghia - Sophia church. After the conquest of Constantinople by the Turkish Osmanli Sultan, Fatih Sultan Mehmed, it was converted into a mosque and as a symbol mosque, four very high minarets were added to it. In 1573 a lot of Islamic calligraphic writings were inscribed on the walls of it. In 1847 this was renovated and adorned on a greater dimension. Nonetheless, it seems, for the reason of complacency the sultan built a mammoth and impressive mosque adjacent to it. Situated in front of the Topkapi Museum i.e, palace, this majestic mosque is one of the most famous mosques of Istanbul, the name of which is Sultan Ahmad mosque, popularly known as the Blue Mosque. As a result of this, the importance of Haghia - Sophia became greatly reduced as a mosque for palpable reason due to the construction of another mosque nearby.

The dome and the roof of the church are covered with mosaic, gilded with gold. The wall is plastered with white marble stone. This edifice commands a view of its magnificent sight from a long distance of Istanbul city. It is one of the eye-catching sights of Istanbul. In view of its multiple reform, both inside and outside including the wall it is quite natural to think that it is one of the most plush and glitzy mosques of Istanbul, built by the Sultans of the Osmanli Sultanate. Contrary to this, as a matter of fact it was a world famous church. Ignorance about its history naturally creates wrong notion about it. In 1934, it was declared a so-called renovation and since then, due to pressure from giant Christian countries, this so-called renovation seems to be going on and the mosque looks like a museum. The mosque became a world heritage and it is well preserved as such.

Saying Juma prayer in the nearby Blue Mosque, we collected high priced tickets standing in queue with 10 Lira per head with a view to visiting the Haghia - Sophia Museum on the 13th June: The price of each ticket amounted to Tk. 570. A stream of people was waiting to see the Haghia - Sophia. Among the people, the Europeans obviously were predominant. As a witness to time, it stands on a site surrounded by garden. We began to proceed through the main gate. After passing through the security picket, we stepped towards the entrance of the museum. There was strict police vigil. We entered the main museum and became wonder-struck, on seeing up wards and the surroundings.

It is a vast domed museum as high as a 4 to 5 storey building in the middle of which there is no pillar or column. At a height as high as 20 to 25 feet, a balcony 10 to 12 feet in breadth, surrounds the museum all around. Hundreds of visitors, men and women, have come to visit it. The inscriptions of Arabic calligraphy on the wall of the museum, the Mehrab and Mimbar have reminded in fact. Within, we eyed, repair work was going on at a high height. Standing on the lower floor for some time and, walking about within for a while, we came out and reached the portico. At one side of the interior yard, the stair case for ascending the balcony stood. The stair case had no steps or tiers. It rose gradually upwards from the plain. The path was laid with stone chips and plastered with special pieces of stone. It is very difficult to negotiate with the ascending ways for the heart-patient. We got a chance to have a close view of the dome above after getting up. It appeared, through repeated repair works, the Haghia - Sophia Museum has been kept intact. There is no trace of Constantine or the Osmanli Sultanate, But the visitors are satisfying the cravings of their mind at the expense of money by visiting this ancient Landmark Museum and taking lessons from history. Walking about for sometime on the balcony we came down and came

out of the museum. Thereafter we went to see the under ground palace. Else where in this book it is mentioned this old part of the city in the European side is the main attraction for the tourists. Through 2 sides the Bosphorous strait flows. By the side of the strait, the palace of the Sultans of the Osmanli Sultanate stands which presently is Topkapi Museum, stands.

In front of the Topkapi Museum, the Blue Mosque stands and beside one corner of the Haghia - Sophia Mosque figures prominently. Not far from the museum the underground palace beckons the tourists. In between these facilities there are either restaurants or gardens in the spacious space. By the side of the strait there are many small sized hotels the height of which covers the height of 5 to 6 storey structure.

From the exterior side they seem to be up to the standard, at least of the standard of 3 star-hotels.

Covering an area of 3 to 4 square Kilometers this area presents irresistible attraction to the tourists.

The guide could guide us to one of these hotels on previous day morning after our arrival in Istanbul. But on account of his lack of foresight, we had to stay in a hotel about 2 to 3 kilometers away from this area.

For Virtual view, you can go to  
<http://www.3dmekanlar.com/sites.html>

## The underground reservoir

The underground reservoir whose local i.e. Turkish name is Yere Batan Sarnici is one of the famous historic places of the world in Istanbul city. No one can understand that such a marvelous place exists underground if one has no prior knowledge of such a reservoir. It is one of the most attractive places of Turkey. History reveals that it has been built in 542 AD by Justinianus, the first (527-565) to reserve water for the palace. 140 meter in length and 70 meter in breath in size, this basin has 336 pillars which have held the domes of the reservoir up, world famous Byzantine stones have been encrusted on the domes in 9800 square meter area. The height of this reservoir is 9 meter. This place remained un-used for hundreds of years. At the present time this place has been turned into a museum for the visitors.

Filling water up to several feet within the place arrangements have been made for the movement of several kinds of species of fish. It can be said that it is a vast aquarium underground. The location of this reservoir is adjacent to the famous Blue Mosque



*A partial view of the underground palace*



and Hagia - Sophia. The palaces of the then Osmanli Sultans, Topkapi Museum, the Blue Mosque Hagia - Sophia Museum, the underground palace, Egyptian Bazar, City wall Eaali Khuli Nagar fort etc. are in the European part of the city of Istanbul. These have become the focus of the tourists. On Friday, June 13, 2008, the second day of our visit to Turkey side by side with offering of Juma prayer at the Blue Mosque and visit to Hagia - Sophia we stood in the queue and purchased tickets each costing 10 Lira in order to see the underground reservoir since the location of Istanbul is in Europe and along the Europe area, Istanbul remains filled with European tourists throughout the year. As a result, Istanbul occupies the top most position in the list of boisterous life. We began to descend along the stairs after proper security check we fell a little bit cool atmosphere because of its location under the ground level; special arrangement has been made to walk over the water, together with proper ventilation, on one side a restaurant caters to the need of the visitors. The fishes in the water are not very big, at most 1 to 1.5 kg in weight. In the transparent and flashing water, the floor as well as the fishes was visible.

The columns and the design on the domes are really very charming. No visitor was seen feeding the fish. It seems the visitors would not give food and the proper person would give food at the proper time as usual. The temperature of Istanbul is temperate. But the atmosphere within the reservoir is all the lower.

The kings have made exit long ago. Now constitutional governments set up according to legal frame work formulated by Kemal Ataturk is working. The government has made proper arrangement to enable the visitors of different countries to see the palaces and museums built by the Osmanli Sultans during the time of their reign.

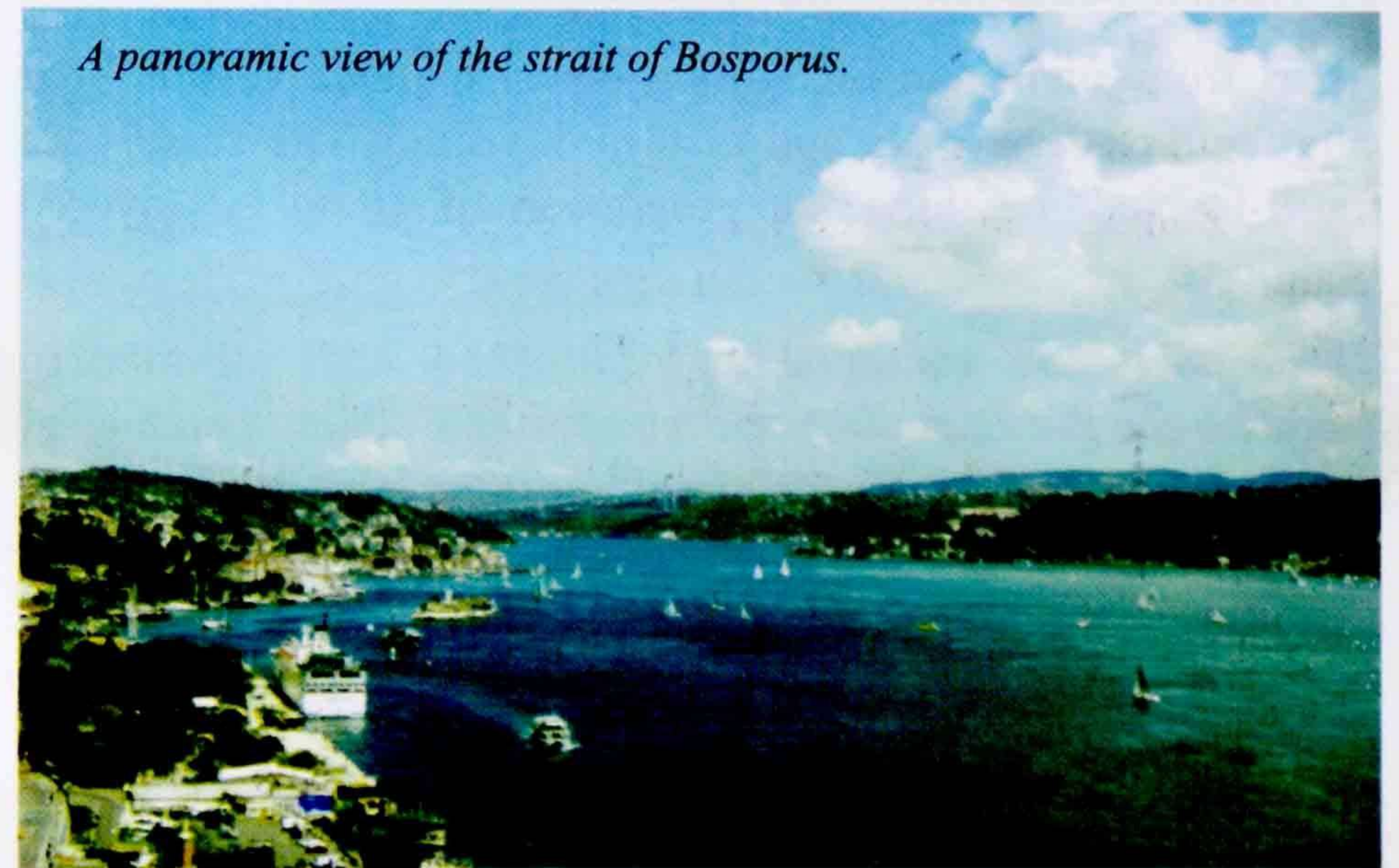
In view of the urgency for going to other part of Europe and to make cruise in the strait of Bosphorus, we could not stay in that place for long. On account of this as we not down at the level of the plain through another stair case, then for obvious reason the cool and amiable temperature of the palace within automatically vanished.

## **The strait of Bosphorus and river Cruise**

The strait of Bosphorus has divided 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 favorite to Zeus, but Hera, the wife of Zeus was envious of Loa. Zeus converted Loo into a cow in order to protect her. But Hera sent a bee near the cow. This bee annoyed the cow so much so that the cow was compelled to step in the water and went to other side, crossing the water channel.

*A panoramic view of the strait of Bosphorus.*



Bosphorus strait is the only water channel to pass to the Mediterranean Sea via Marmara Sea from the Black Sea. The length of the Bosphorus strait is nearly 32 km. Its breadth varies from 3 to 5 km. 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. 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 and 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-leveled, 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 beggar description since the facilities are or an unimaginable dimension. It is varied as well as various.

The 2 bridges, built in 1973 and 1988 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 Dolmabahce in Turkish, situated in the Asian region of the Bosphorus strait. Sultan Abdulmecid, the

first, ordered Hac? Said A?a to construct the palace. Hac? Said A?a built this palace in 1856. Dolmabahce Palace is one of the most glamorous palaces in the world. It was the administrative center of the late Ottoman Empire with the last of Ottoman Sultans was residing there. After the foundation of the Turkish Republic in Ankara, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk transferred all government functions to the youthful capital, Ankara, but on his visits to Istanbul, Ataturk stayed at Dolmabahce Palace. He stayed, welcomed his foreign guests and made a practical center for national, historical and language congress and for international conferences. It is located in the Besiktas district and stands on an area of 110,000 m<sup>2</sup>.

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 Cleave Land Bridge built this world famous hanging Bridge, spanning over a period of 31/2 years. It stands on 4 pillars; the distance between the 2 pillars is one thousand 74 meters, i.e. nearly about 3 thousands and five hundreds feet the height of the 2 pillars is 165 meter, i.e. nearly about 500 feet 64 meter above the water surface, this 6 lined 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 San Francisco Mackinae Bridge of Michigan more than 2 lack 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, without and to the Mediterranean Sea via the Marmara Sea through this bridge ingenuity and perspective of the Turkish engineers command esteem and appreciation.

Seeing this bridge, the former mayor of Chittagong city Mahiuddin Chowdhury took a decision to build a hanging bridge on the Karnafully River and usually I support it.

Being over pressure of the vehicles of both sides on this only bridge, the Turkish government built another hanging bridge on the Bosphorus strait near the north side of Istanbul City. This bridge was inaugurated on 3rd July by Turgut Ozal, The Turkish President then, in 1988, after working 26 months at a stretch. And this bridge was named after as "Fatih Sultan Mehmed". Turkey, Japanese and Italian firm built this bridge. It is 66 meters high from water level and the breadth is 39 meters. The distance between 4 pillars is 1050 meters. The total length of the bridge is 1550 meters.

We have spent about two hours taking the second class pleasure crafts seeing the Bosphorus strait with own eyes. Besides, we observed beautiful scenes and infrastructure on the bank of Bosphorus.

Before and behind us, there were innumerable vehicles and thousands of tourists were engaging the most beautiful bridge of the world and we felt at the time of going and coming that the bridge was so over from water level.

Seeing the pure water of the Bosphorus strait, we remembered the polluted water of the Karnafully and the Buriganga. The bridge over the Karnafully in the area of Rangunia is so low that the engine boat will be interrupted at the time of high tide let alone the ship.

Our concerned engineer knows a little about it. On the other hand, their engineers' knowledge wisdom and clear sightedness is outstanding.

The Turks are far advance than us in tech and tact in all respects. As a citizen of a littoral country, I was shocked at our monstrous ignorance. By contrast, the Turks leave marks of savvy and sapience in everything they do.

## Istanbul to Konya Via Ankara

After staying in Istanbul for 2 days and 2 nights, we had set programmes to go to Konya on Saturday, the 14th June. There are 2 roads for going to Konya from Istanbul. One is via Ankara and another is via Eskisehir. My co-traveler Mr. Shakhawat was highly pleading for bus in order to undertake long journey in Turkey. I told him that we should not make journey at night in view of the fact that during his 3 previous tour of Turkey traveled at night in order to save time. I prefer train journey for traveling at night because arrangements are available in train for sleeping at night. We had hearty breakfast at the hotel. Then we went to the Esenler Terminali, the bus terminal, in the European part of Istanbul by a car and driven by the business partner of Mr. Shakhawat Hussain.



It is a 3 tiered vast bus terminal then, the bus booked for our journey by telephone was about to set out at 9-30 a.m. We got up on the 3 floor of the terminal a few kilometers away, after coming out of the hotel, our allotted bus was waiting in the 3rd floor. In each level of this terminal there are restaurant, shopping arcades of drivers' nature, toilet, and sufficient space for bus parking, offices of the bus companies, private car/taxi stand and other modern facilities are galore. The officials' personnel, drivers and helpers were dressed in their fixed uniforms. The bus of our company will go to Konya via Ankara. Most of the buses of Turkey are ritzy shiny and new. Almost all the buses are of world famous Mercedes brand being inquisitive I asked many where the old buses were.

In reply they informed, they have been shifted to the rural areas. I could not approve of this since the roads and highways of Turkey are as much developed in as in Europe, both in the urban and rural areas. Therefore, the rural areas cannot afford to keep such a huge number of buses. The bus fare in Turkey is as higher as the high standard of living. The fare from Istanbul to Konya is nearly Tk. 3000.00 in Bangladeshi currency. The distance via Ankara is nearly 690 km, but the distance between Ankara and Istanbul is 450 km and the distance between Ankara and Konya is 240 km. The distance between Istanbul and Ankara is rather long but the Istanbul- Ankara road is one of the best in Turkey. Besides, in view of its being the capital, it has greater facility for boarding and getting down. I was also happy, although we would not stay in Ankara. Ankara is, in fact, a capital established by Mustafa Kemal Pasha. Besides, it cannot boast of historic landmarks and establishment. So the attraction for this city to the tourists is relatively low. At the nick of time, our bus set out for Konya via Ankara. The number of passenger was few. I became curious. Mr. Shakhawat and Mr. Emdad sat by side. I sat beside a Turkish youth. Our bus came down to the plain, from the 3rd level through in a circuitous



*Vests and Caps used by Allama Rumi (Rh.)*

way. Then we entered the new city from the European part, crossing river. There are 3 to 4 beautiful bridges for going to the new city from the old city. Although these bridges are not very high, hundreds of vessels from the strait can easily pass through them in order to make cruise in the strait. The northern part of Istanbul of European area is also full of ascent and descent. Crossing this vast city gradually our bus began to pass the restaurants, hotels behind began to proceed towards the newly built 2nd suspension bridge. This bridge has been built in the vicinity of the city, the length of which is shorter than the previous one. Even then this bridge will nearly equal in the breadth of Karnaphuli its length. This bridge, like the previous,

one has been built on two pillars on two shores. 8 laned, the buses of Turkey do not stop at toll box of the bridge since there are arrangement of 3 types. The first type is offering of cash money, the 2nd type is through credit card and the 3rd type consists in the payment of toll by sensors through a computerized device. The bar automatically moves away as soon as the bus comes. We entered the Asian part of Istanbul by bus over this world famous bridge and reached the asian side bus terminal, Haydarpasa Terminali. Haydarpasa Terminal is at Bosphorus with the straits exquisiteness. This terminal is on the first and is on the plan. As soon as the bus stopped before the counter of our bus level company, the passenger bound for Ankara and Konya boarded the bus within 2 to 3 minutes, the bus began to move leaving the Istanbul city behind with high speed after negotiating with the hilly bumpy road, within 15 to 20 minutes covering a distance of nearly about 20 to 30 km. It reached the outskirts of the city. Meanwhile the guide served snack on a tray. Among them were cakes, biscuits etc. on being asked soft drink is served at any time like buffet. Within the bus, supply of water is abundant. Tea and Coffee were served after snack and soft drink like in the plane hot water, sugar, tea, coffee and milk are packed in packets. Juice as served to those who did take tea or coffee like in the plane. If the journey is of several hours the snack is served twice if the journey is of ½ hours repast is served once. Our bus was on the highway, leaving the Istanbul city behind. The neatest beauty of the landscape on two sides of the highway of 450 km between Ankara-Istanbul is reefered in the world. The highway is 8 laned. While it is lined in some other place, at the juncture of the roads over bridge do not pose any problem for the vehicular traffic. In some parts of the highway on the left side lies the Black Sea, again on the right side of the highway lays a portion of the Marmara Sea 60 to 70 km away from Istanbul. There are panoramic views of garden after garden on hills and plains on both sides of the highway. This green landscape of garden

presents a soothing sight in some places; there are homesteads at the foot of the hills, with Mosques having top domes we passed through small and big cities. Although these cities were not very ostentatious, they were up to the standard. There was no least trace of dilapidation. Defying sleep slumber, we began to enjoy these tranquilizing sights.

The Turkish words are nearly akin to English, easily readable too. But the speech, words are not easily understandable since the highway was 2 faceted. Our bus was proceeding towards Ankara at a high speed, 90-100 km/h. We had a moved at brief stop over by the side of restaurant on the highway at around 1 p.m.

The restaurant is neat and clean, as well as the toilets. After toilet service, ablution for prayer was finished, holding the feet high above the basin after washing hands and mouth since through a lot of writings I could know that Turkey is a land of obscenity and debauchery and there is no facility for saying salah. I stood before the restaurant and voiced in a loud voice salah, salah instantly 2 to 3 persons pointed me towards upwards on getting up stairs. We were simply wonderstruck and mum. Our wrong notion changed. We discovered separate rooms for men and women for salah as well as separate arrangement for ablution for men and women. On boarding the bus, we saw two aged women were smoking by the side of the bus, face to face since the bus will depart very shortly. Might be this habit owing to the cold temperature when the bus setout again at the proper time, we saw, on both sides of the road, deep hills and high mountains our bus entered a tunnel.

At least it ran within it for 4 to 5 minutes. Before the tunnel and after the tunnel we saw on both sides high mountains. There was no least trace of human habitation. But, even in this deep forest, there was no dearth of gardens. This is an exceptional soothing sight. It was almost afternoon when we neared the destination the Ankara city. An expanse of hilly terrain

dominated the landscape, covering we a distance reached of 60 to 70 km before Ankara City. Wheat field on both sides of the highway, figured prominently punctuated sometimes by fruit garden.

Within a short time we entered the Ankara City. The bus prompted about the Ankara City and then proceeded towards the terminal. Like Istanbul, Ankara is not a density populated area. Neither it is crowded with jungle of buildings. Rather it is, by contrast, some what open and vacant empty. In view of its being a new and planned city, it has sprawled like a rambling city.

### **Lavatory Service and ablution**

Proceeding gradually and rounding about the city casually our bus entered the terminal and ascended the 3rd Level moving in a circuitous way and stopped before our fixed counter. Three tiered this terminal is identical to that of Istanbul. The helper-cum-guide announced that the bus would set out for Konya at 5 p.m. One of the 2 drivers disposed of the empty one time glass, plate, spoon etc. in a fixed dustbin after packing them in packets when the bus stopped at the terminal. On seeing this I wondered about their cleanly habit and consciousness about health. Coming down from the bus, we finished our necessary toilet of course, at our expenses. No sooner had we come than we heard Asr Azan over the microphone in the room for prayer for certain. In view of shortage of time we proceeded towards the bus. The passengers of Ankara were boarding and getting down. At 5 pm sharp the bus set out for Konya.

I wanted to engage the Turkish youth seated by me, and bound for Konya, in chat soon after the bus had started to move from Istanbul. It was not possible, since the youth I presumed was not versed in English. Very few people of Turkey know English.

Scarcely had or gone to some distance when Tea/Coffee, Juice and Snack were served.



*The Holy grave of Allama Rumi within the Mazar Complex*

We did not observe high hills or mountains when our bus bound for Konya was moving towards the South from Ankara. The terrain is not either on way high or low and knolls. The landscape is not plain as ours. On 2 sides, there was luxuriant field of wheat. There are fruit gardens amidst it. From Ankara, the distance of Konya is nearly 240 km i. e, nearly at an equal distance from Chittagong to Dhaka. Ankara-Konya Highway, it seemed to me is of medium standard of course, it is a 4-laned highway, 2 each in either way, marked and defined. If the vehicles come across any link road on their way, they have to control speed following the traffic signal in view of absence of over bridge.

Meanwhile, our bus reached a point midway between Ankara and Konya; I began to think how we can say Salah. We caught sight of a town, in the mean time, at some distance. So, nearing the driver, I sounded 'Salah, Salah'. On seeing me as a foreigner, turning his neck back, it appeared, he held me in deference. Reaching the town within minutes, he went to the terminal of the town. Coming down swiftly from the bus, we said 2 Rakah deferred prayer and boarded us again. Only within 5 to 7 minutes the bus started again for Konya. The dusk prayer in Istanbul is at 8.30 p.m. In the South East it is at a time after 8 p.m. As we reached the suburb of Konya, the area looked hilly. But the hills were not as high as the hills on both sides of Istanbul-Ankara highway.

As soon as we covered the hilly areas, we entered Konya, and the bus went straight to the terminal-the last destination of the bus.

The terminals are meticulously arranged; the parking spaces of bus and taxi are clearly marked and defined. None can trespass into other. We said our Maghrib prayer at the terminal Mosque. The weather of Konya is temperate as well as in Istanbul. The sky is blue and the weather is cherry. We proceeded towards the Mazar of Hazrat Allama Rumi (R) situated in the interior of the town with a big sized taxi throughout Turkey. Hazrat Allama Rumi (R) is addressed as Mevlana Celaleddin-i Rumi. The taxi

driver easily understood when we told him to go to the tomb of Mevlana Celaleddin-i Rumi. The entire people of Turkey remember Mevlana Celaleddin-i Rumi with reverential heart irrespective of men, women whether they are fundamentalist or progressive. Our taxi was moving through the radiant Konya City flashing with the sodium light. The city looked smart and neat. After Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir are the 2 other big cities. Konya is one of the 3rd rated cities. Konya has an airport for internal flight. Side by side with bus and taxi, trams also ply in the city. When the taxi moved within the city for 15 to 20 minutes, we saw on both sides, of the road, repeatedly a good number of hotels one after another. From this it became palpably clear that we were nearing the Mazar of Hazrat Allama Rumi (R).

Within a short span of time from a distance, we saw the Mazar and the facilities of the Mosque. Our taxi stopped in front of a hotel. From its exterior view, it appeared to be a standard hotel. The name of the hotel was Dergah. Beside the name, 2 star asterisk mark. Mr. Shakhawat and Mr. Emdad chose it after checking in the expenses of breakfast were included with the fare. We took 2 rooms, one for me and another for Mr. Shakhawat and Mr. Emdad as usual asterisk mark on the hotels of Turkey is inscribed everywhere. On the following day, we could understand clearly that there are good members of hotels, varied in standard for Zearrah seekers within a distance of several meters. Among them one is Rumi Hotel and another is the Sema Hotel. We reached Konya after the day's Journey in order to offer Zearrah at the Mazar of this great saint. None of us of three felt any kind of exhaustion. The Shrine of Hazrat Mevlana Celaleddin-i Rumi (R) is managed and looked after by relevant government authority. We knew that the gate of the Shrine is opened in the morning and closed in the afternoon for Zearrah. Therefore, with a plan to offer Zearrah in the morning we had our dinner in the Hotel, after Esha prayer and then we went to bed.

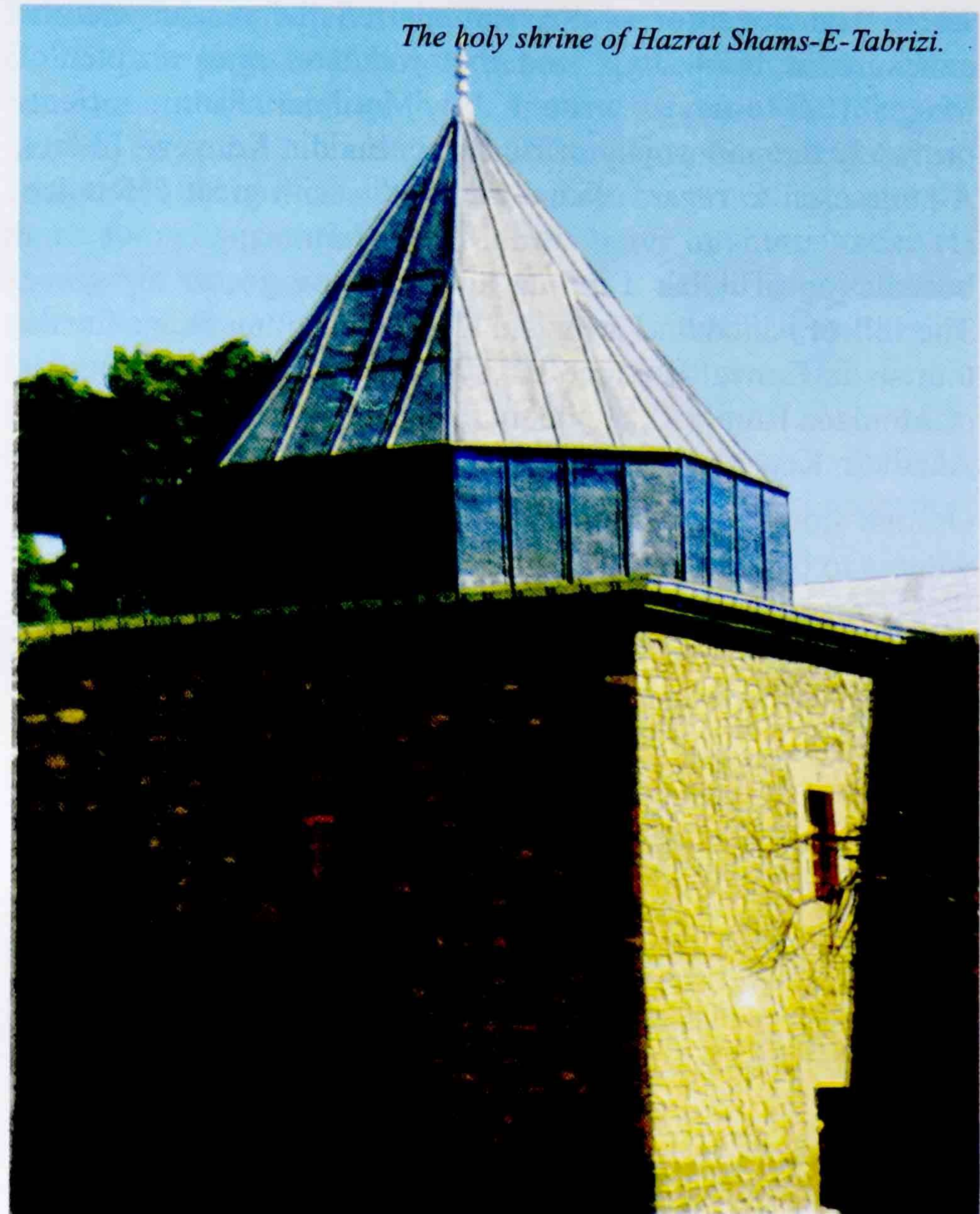
## Konya and Mevlana Celaleddin-i Rumi (R) Shrine Complex



*A view of the Mazar complex of Allama Rumi (Rh.)*

Holy and famous as a religious site of Turkey, in connection with the observance of its of 9 thousands 400 years of history, an international conference was held with great fervor and Ostentation in Konya. Really Konya is one of the most ancient cities of the world. Snow swirls over the city during winter. Of course during the summer it is too hot and 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 Anadolu-Anatolia. Alaaddin hill, mosque, and madrasaha 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 caloric mountain of the Bosdak range is at a height of 1919 metre. Idoch, the highest mountain is 3240 metres high at its apex. The Mazar of Hazrat Shamsuddin Tabriyee (?ems-i Tembiz), the mentor of Mevlana Celaleddin-i Rumi (R) is only half a kilometer 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 Moulana of Rumi has a special feature. This mosque has been built by the 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 12/1 to 2 km away, stands the Shrine of Hazrat Syed Sadruddin Konyevi. He expired in 1274. The governor of Konya repaired the mazar and the annexure in 1874. It is said that wahdatul ojud chapter of Masnabi (Mesnevi) written by Moulana Rumi reflects profusely the philosophy of Hazrat Sadruddin Konyevi. In fact, Allama used to regard Hazrat Sadruddin with great deference. He also used to visit his Mazar imploring grace and benediction of Allah a throng always converges to his grave. The hill of Alauddin Keykubad is an enchanting haunt for the tourists in Konya. It is one km away from the Shrine complex of Moulana Rumi (R). In the middle stands the huge mosque of Alauddin Keykubad 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 trams 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 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. We reached Konya late on the 14th June. On the following morning we tried to collect information from Hotel Reception counter. They informed yesterday, in the late afternoon. Sema assemblage has been held and there is no possibility of its holding to day. It may be held on either Monday or Tuesday. They went towards the hall fixed for Sema assemblage

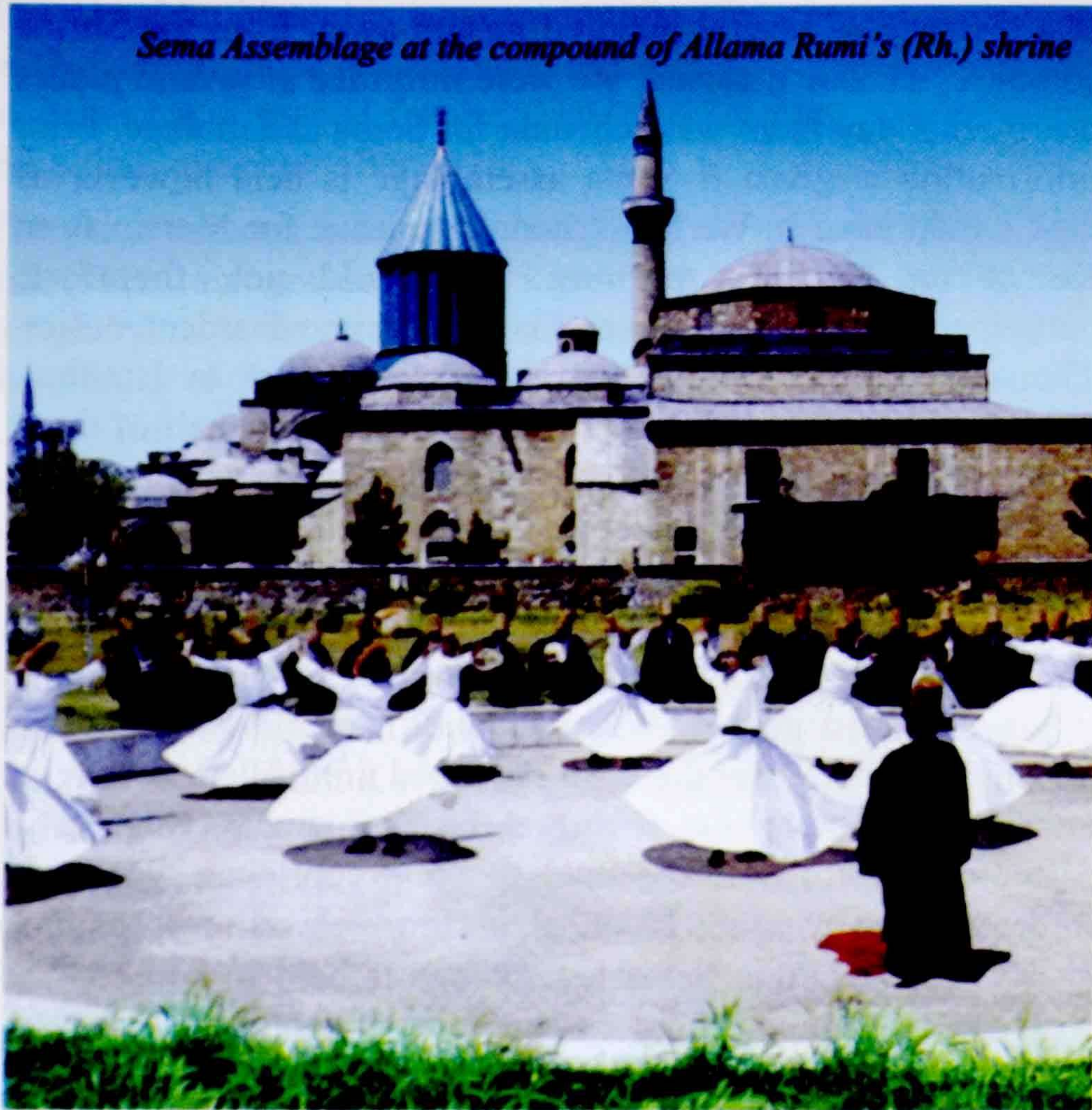
at a distance of several hundred meters away from the Shrine complex. We saw it closed. We were informed at several places nearby that day there was schedule for Sema assemblage. Prior information is given if Sema assemblage is held however as luck would have it. We had schedule to leave for Mersin from Konya on Monday morning. We could not, therefore, participate in the Sema assemblage in spite of ardent desire. Thousands, not hundreds of night clubs exist in Istanbul. Leaflets are distributed to the foreign tourist on behalf of these clubs. Nude pictures of various poses together with name of the comfort are attached to these. I am a bearded and capped person. So it did not reach me. But on first or second day, a leaflet fell into my hands. There I found that it is a leaflet of Sema assemblage in Istanbul. I did not give any importance to it since I was going to Konya and I would enjoy Sema assemblage there. But the wish remained unfulfilled, neither in Istanbul or Konya. On seeing different pictures, this Sema assemblage in Turkey seemed to be exceptional. We were informed that wearing identical uniform covering a spell of nearly one hour this Sema assemblage is held in consonance with the rhythmic movement of the form of dance.

**The Allama Rumi Mazar Complex :** while performing Zeearraah in the morning and evening I became confirmed of a mosque



*The holy grave of Hazrat Saforuddin Konavi (Rh.)*

*Sema Assemblage at the compound of Allama Rumi's (Rh.) shrine*



within the Mazar complex. During the life time of Moulama 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 cap on the side of the cap. 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 Kiblah, 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 of Murad Pasha (R) and another is of Hazrat K.G. Gatema Khatun Tobrize - 994 Hijree, 1585. Hazrat Sinan Pasha (R), Tabriz (R) 981 Hijree, 1573 and Hazrat Khurram Pasha Tabriz (R) 961 Hijree 1553. Although the details of these 3 were not a variable, at first sight it appears. Obviously, they would have been being very close to Allama Rumi (R).

The situation of the kitchen is side by side with. 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 Mevlana Celaleddin-i Rumi (R) some are, till to day making bread some are baking the bread and some are serving as usual as it they were alive.

On their heads are set Rumi cap wrapped with turban the room beside the kitchens quest house. There Allama Rumi (R) together with his 10 to 12 admirers is seen as they were eating food. At first sight one well not is able to realize that all these scenes are made of stones and artificially set. On the other side of the compound of is the location of the museum of Allama Rumi (R). There a venerated memento of Hazrat Muhammad (pbuh) 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 stalls 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. There one has to enter with ticket of 2 Lira per head where 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 inciting 5 star hotels within several hundred meters. 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 minarets of the mosque command view from a long distance. In entire Turkey, Allama Rumi is succinctly called Mevlana but there is difference in pronunciation. In English, it is MEVLANA.

For Virtual view, you can go to  
<http://www.3dmekeanlar.com/sites.html>

## Hazrat Rumi (RH) and offering his Zearah



*The interior view of the shrine of Allama Rumi (Rh.)*

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 Hijri. 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.

Both Moulana Bahauddin, the father of Moulana Rumi (R) and his grand father Moulana Hussain Balkhi were famous theologians 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, Allam 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 (RH) presented a piece of Asrarnam and predicted that 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 (pbuh), 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.

Subsequently 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 further later stages 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 in Islam), polemics of philosophy and literature earned widespread commendation and esteem from all. Although during his early life, Moulana Rumi (RH) 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 Sema prove religious dance and song in spite of his early punctuations attitude to religion together with a recognition of a great poet. Not only was that Moulana named Sema Community 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, 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 Rubiyat 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 stand point of literature and art 'Diwan' are 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 totally 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 Sirajis 'Diwan', Allama Sheikh Sadi's Gulistan and Moulana Jaluddin Rumi's

Masnabi are most popular Magnum of Persian literature. Their reputation and popularity are above all. A Turkish given name Garhar is Moulana Rumi's first wife. He married again when Garhar died often giving birth to two sons in his family.

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

We started for Zearah of Allama Rumi's Mazar 2 to 3 metres away only. On Sunday morning of 15th June from the hotel reception counter we knew that the holy Mazar would open at 9 a.m. for the visitors and persons who came for offering Zearrah. Reaching the interior yard of the holy Mazar we stood in a queue one after for purchasing ticket at 2 Lira per head. The Turkish women have scarf for Zearrah. The number of European women are not few as well as the Turkish men and women. On entering the gate, we saw a huge compound. At the margin of the compound and the entrance we saw packets of poly bags in big bins, in which there were smaller packets of poly bags. Covers of shoes were packed in these bags to enable the Zearrah offering people to enter the Mazar premises without taking off the shoes. It is their novel arrangement. We, too, enter the major with hundreds of visitors and Zearrah offering people with shoes wrapped with poly bags solemn atmosphere did not prevail within because of this we could not find full satisfaction although we conveyed our compliment and chanted text imploring grace and blessing in a mood of humanity. The gate of the Mazar would remain open from 9 a.m. to 7-30 p.m. We decided to go to the Mazar again in the evening. Sunday being a holiday, we thought, there would be heavy rush of people in the morning therefore, we came out after nearly one hour and proceeded to other sites of major, situated in the compound. Outside, attached to the compound, there are 3 Mazars. The Mazars are of Murad pasha, Fatema Khatun Tabrize (994 Hijri), Sinan Pasha Tabrizi 994 Hijri.

In another is Hurrām Pasha Tabrizi. After finishing Zearrah and seeing the guest house and kitchen including other room, we came out of the premises.

Performing Zearrah in other places after taking rest for a while, we came to the Mazar again in the revenue with a view to offering Zearrah again. The decision was right. The gathering was not large. Paying Salam to this great saint, we hummed invocatory verse seeking benediction on his soul with humility in accordance with our method and mode of Zearrah during the Zearrah of Allama Rumi (RH) and his saintly father. Then we sat down there for the purpose of meditation. Although the shoes were wrapped with poly bag, it is very difficult to sit with propriety and decorum nevertheless we were absorbed in meditation as long as possible. We made supplication again and strolling casually about by this time, time has passed beyond 7 p.m. we had no reason for hurry. The sun sets after 8.20 p.m. in Konya. We resolved to say Maghreb prayer in the mosque outside which is attached to the mazar. Even then people were coming out of the Mazar. The police and the warden also wanted to see us leaving the Mazar. We thought existed last then it was 7.15 p.m. or 7.20 p.m. outside there are gardens and mosques centering the Mazar besides residential facilities. The weather is temperate. Sitting on the garden of this eminent saint for some time, we were passing the time enjoying the sights of the city. Although the Mazar complex is under the supervision of the competent authority, the mosque is open to the devotees. Like us, we saw many men and women are sealed there.

As soon as the proclamation of Azan for Maghreb prayer was blared, we, along with the people who stayed in the park, went into the mosque with a view to offering prayer.

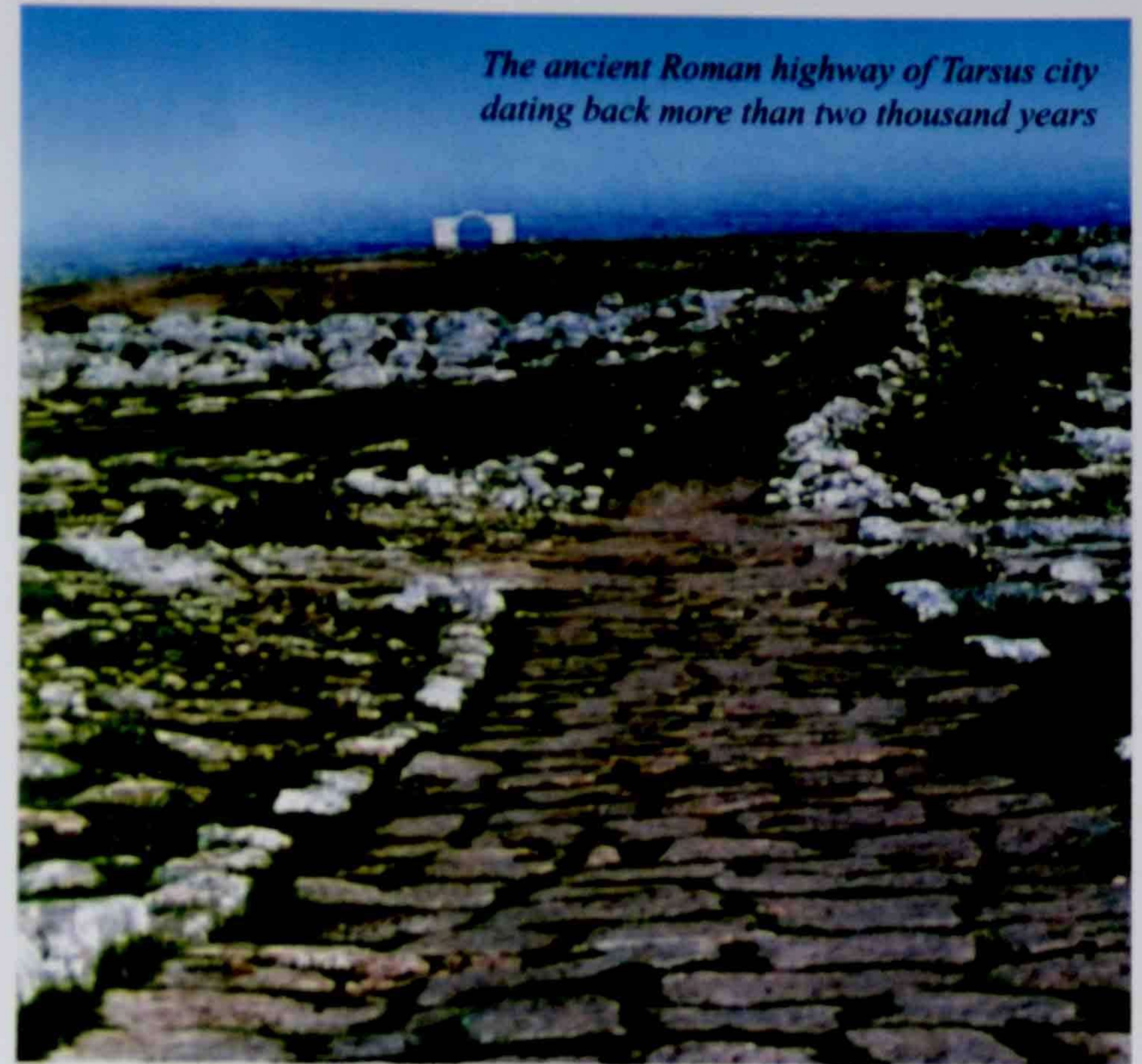
## From Konya to a port city of Mersin

In Turkey, the Konya city is the city of Allama Jalal Uddin Rumi (RH). On Monday the 16th June 08 in the morning set out for Mersin, the port city located at a distance 345 km in the South-East in order to offer Zearrah in other places including the Ashab-E-Kahaf at Tarsus.

On the previous day in the afternoon, we purchased tickets in order to go to Mersin at 9 a.m. in the morning from one of the counters of the bus companies near the hotel Dargah at which we stayed.

Near the Mazar of Hazrat Allama Rumi (RH), there are offices of different Airlines and bus companies so that the Zearrah offerers not face any trouble. Taking breakfast at our own initiative in the hotel supplied by the hotel management we went to the Bus Terminal at a distance 8 to 10 kilometre away with a taxi. Our bus set out for Mersin at the fixed time. As a rule, the mobile phones are required to remain closed during the bus journey in Turkey. Crossing Konya, our bus began to proceed towards the east after passing the city behind. We discovered scant places of human habitation. But on the high and low ground, we saw abundant wheat fields. Sometimes, in the middle we saw fruit orchard and vegetable garden. It is apparent the highway is a medium standard highway. Within 15 to 20 minutes of the start of the bus, we had treat of repast and soft drink including coffee, tea and juice on demand mineral water is supplied with glass at any moment.

Traveling over a distance nearly 100 km, we entered Karaman city. The bus made a stopover before the counter of that bus company of the terminal of the town. Some passengers got up



there after we cover some distance coming out of the town, the bus moved towards the South from the bigger road. The bigger road moves towards Adana, another big city of Turkey. The road we proceeded along is a 2 way road. After going 10 to 15 km we entered hilly terrain. The more the bus moved further, the more hills, one after another we saw. The bus ascended up through the snaky road. There is no less number of gardens. But the hills visible far away are not as green as ours. After proceeding along the hilly road 20 to 30 km, the bus reached the top of the hill a very high point. This is as they say, is the Toros Mountains, the bus proceeded along the ascent and descent for a long while. Even in the midst of hills, there are a good number of café, filling station and mosque beside the road through the hills, the road is a two way road, understandably, the speed is limited.

*The ancient cleopatra gate of Tarsus City*



It is an awful experience to look down while the bus was negotiating with the zigzag road and sharp turn of the hilly road. The bus made a stop over beside the road towards 12 noon after passing through the hills for a long time.

**During our journey of Turkey it was a season of popular fruit prune:**

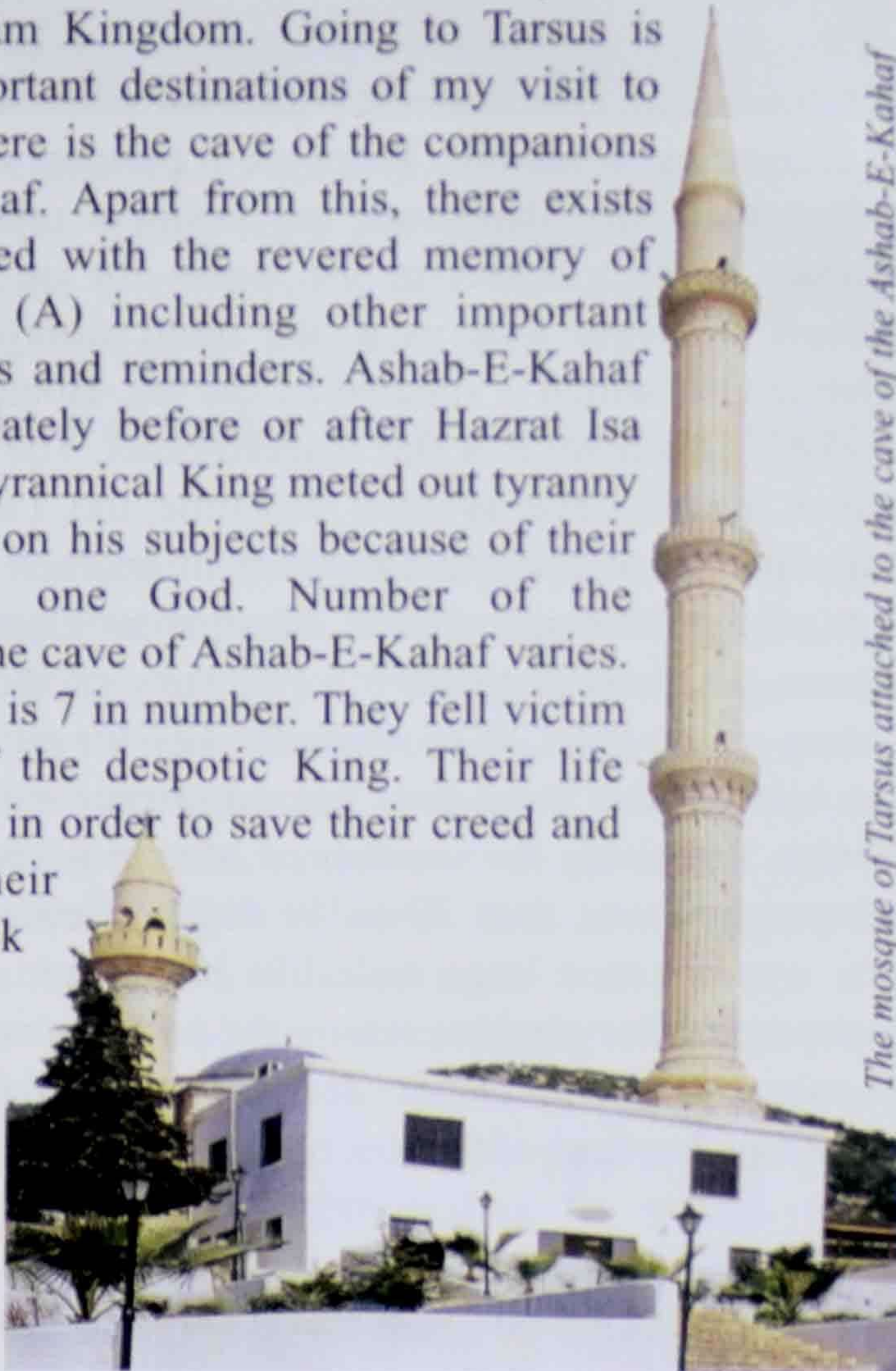
The prune while is available in the Arab gulf countries is also available in Turkey, but it tastes a little sour. The prune of Turkey is varied; green, white, yellow tinged. It is of another type and it tastes very sweet. I bought one K.G. of prune from the shop attached to the restaurant. I thought it was brought from the garden of the hill since price was very low. It is only 1 Lira per kg, equivalent to 57 Bangladeshi Taka. I ate them with great relish since I am very fond of fruit. Within 10 to 15 minutes our bus set out for Mersin again through the high hills and hillocks covering at a stretch the Tarsus Mountains over a span of nearly 2 to 3 hours, our bus was gradually coming down towards the plain land. Proceeding on and on and covering nearly 150 km we reached a small town by the shore of the Mediterranean Sea. We saw a road running East-West by

the shore of the sea. Then, the bus proceeded to the south in the direction of Mersin by the sea shore. By the seashore, on both sides of the road, we saw different establishments. Among them there are large number of hotels, motels and restaurants. They present impressive view. Thus, we covered 30 to 40 km. As we neared Mersin, we saw lots of big high apartment buildings by the side of the sea. We began to enter Mersin city slowly. The prevalent style of living and mode of behavior is as like as the Istanbul city. It is much licentious and libertine as Istanbul. There is no least trace of modesty and moderation like Konya. Plying through the city, the bus stopped at the terminal.

Ayshegul (gul means rose), daughter of the business partner of Mr. Shakhwat, came herself with a car to the Terminal in order to receive us in Mersin. There are 3 partners of the companies with which Mr. Shakhawat has business relation. They have already booked tickets in the hotels for us. Driving the car herself Ayshegul took us to the multi storeyed hotel Named Mersin Otel which is situated by the sea. Hotel is called Otel in Turkey. This hotel is 4 star marked-hotel. The 2 rooms of ours are on the 8th Level as usual, this time, too, I am in a room and Mr. Shakhawat and Mr. Emdad is in another. On the opposite side of the door of the hotel, transparent glass has been set. It allows the persons to have a full view of the transparent sea sitting in the hotel. It provides facility for going and sitting in the balcony this town does not experience snowfall during the winter. Relatively the weather of Mersin is somewhat hot. The temperature was then 30 to 40 degree Celsius. Although this city was not on a large scale like Konya and Adana, it looked prosperous. For obvious reason the port city is usually rich like Bombay, Karachi, Dubai, Jeddah although Chittagong is an exception because of the discriminatory policy of Dhaka.

## Zearrah at the cave of the companions in Tarsus

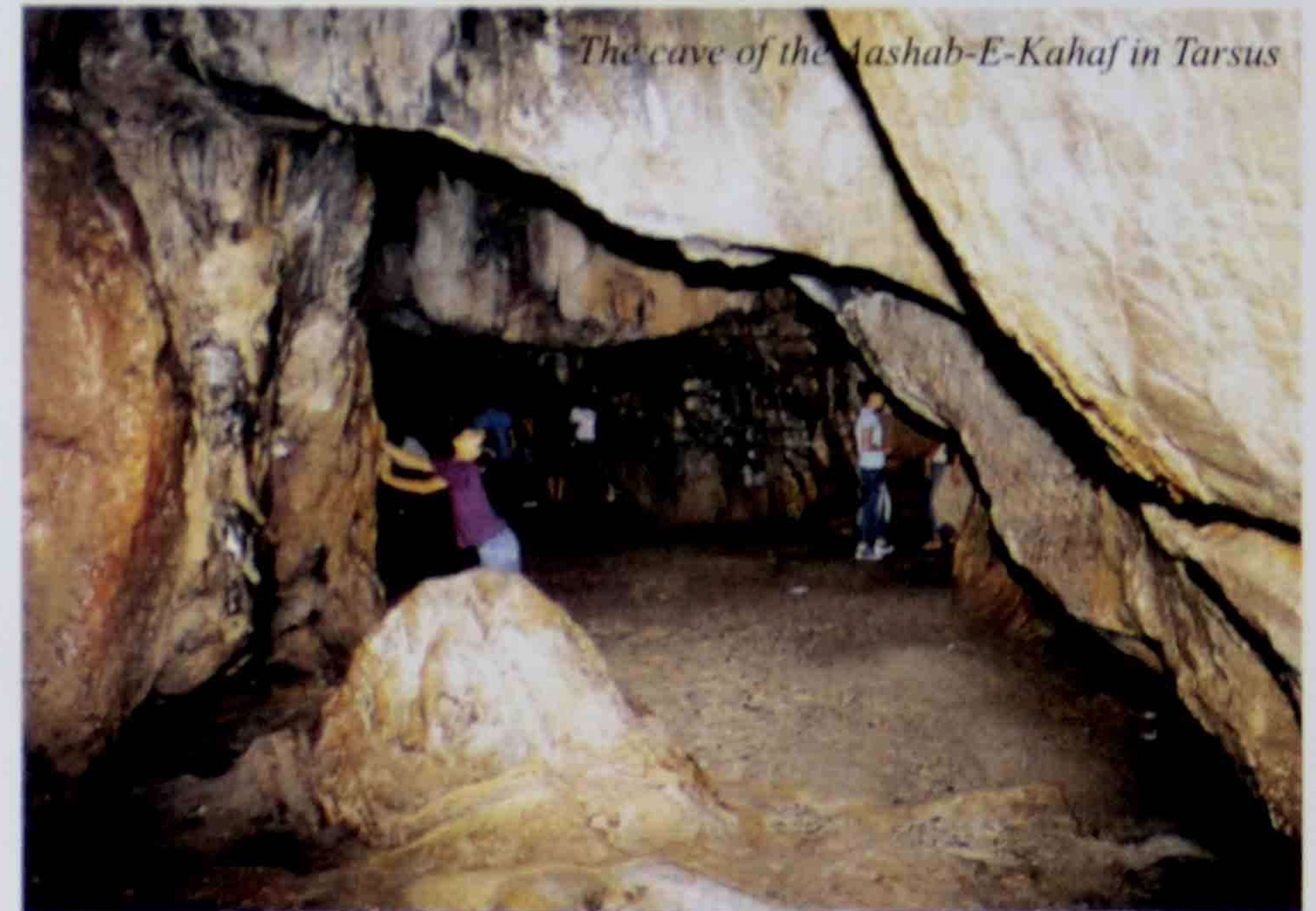
Tarsus is a small district of Turkey situated in the South-East. Although Tarsus is a historic city, the port city of Mersin in the South and Adana in developed the north are highly because of their situation. Although this region was once a part of Roman Empire this is near and a little distance away in the west from the Ancient Sham Kingdom. Going to Tarsus is one of the important destinations of my visit to Turkey, since there is the cave of the companions of Ashab-E-Kahaf. Apart from this, there exists portent associated with the revered memory of Prophet Daniel (A) including other important historic remnants and reminders. Ashab-E-Kahaf episode, immediately before or after Hazrat Isa (A) happened. Tyrannical King meted out tyranny and persecution on his subjects because of their belief in only one God. Number of the companions of the cave of Ashab-E-Kahaf varies. In one version it is 7 in number. They fell victim to the wrath of the despotic King. Their life being at a stake, in order to save their creed and to continue their piety, they took shelter in a cave with a dog as a watch. This cave is famed as the cave of Ashab-E-Kahaf.



*The mosque of Tarsus attached to the cave of the Ashab-E-Kahaf*

Taking of refuge in the cave along with a dog is mentioned in more than one place in the Holy Quran. Setting out on Monday, the 16th June '08, in the morning, we reached the port city of Mersin. The location of the residential office of Shahin Kamakgulu, a renowned industrialist of Mersin is very close to the hotel we put ourselves. His daughter Ayshegul gave us lift to the hotel from the terminal, driving the car herself. Shortly after, we went to the office of Shahin Kamakgulu on realizing the purpose of our visit. He became quite surprised. Mr. Kamakgulu, being an intelligent has a flair for history and heritage. Aged above 60 and inquisitive palpable, he seemed too inclined to literature. He developed close intimacy with me through his brief talk. He himself took the initiative to go to the cave of Ashab-E-Kahaf for Zearrah along with us. The programme was set accordingly. On the following day, he picked us up from the hotel and started for Tarsus.

Tarsus is only 35 km away from Mersin. The highway is of 2nd grade highway in view of expansion of Mersin city, empty land between Mersin and Tarsus is less visible.



*The cave of the Ashab-E-Kahaf in Tarsus*



The Mersin city is only 35 km from Tarsus-but, in the north, opposite to the sea did not seem so, on seeing its infrastructure but, on our way, on both sides of the road we observed lot of gardens and farms. In view of absorption in talk on different aspects, Mr. Kamakgulu, the industrialist and friend of Mr. Shawkhat was driving the car at a slow speed. Driving nearly about an hour, the car entered the city and took a turn towards left, then leaving the small town behind, we proceeded towards the village through the narrow zigzag way of hills. We were nearing the Ashab-E- Kahaf our ultimate destination, following the road indicator, at the turn of road and the inscription Ashab-E-Kahaf, written in Turkish language. It has been mentioned before hand.

Since the Turkish letters closely resemble English, it can be read if effort is made. But there is no scope for understanding their chat. On the way, closely skirting the side of the road, we observed large grape garden. On seeing the hanging clusters of grapes, I became curious to see it. So, Mr. Shakhawat halted the car there. Although I have seen grape garden in different countries of the world, such a large garden of grape did not catch my notice. As there was no owner of the garden or his people, I could not taste them. Then we began to penetrate into deep inside of that hilly area. On both sides, there is hill after hill only. But they did not seem very high. On most of the hills, there are gardens or farms on both sides. We saw scant human habitation on moving farther ahead. We saw Minarets of mosques one after another. It is almost imaginable to think of a mosque in Turkey without minarets. The mosque together with other smaller infrastructure attached to the mosque was visible because their location was near small and big hills. Our guide-cum-industrialist informed us that the location of the Ashab-E-Kahaf is there since the road is developed our car could easily reach there without delay.

In fact, the situation of the mosque is outside the cave. 50 to 60 devotees can pray there. But the minarets were sky hugging.

The mosque is attached to a road and by its side, a restaurant caters food. More than one shop form a line. Crossing the premises of the mosque, we proceeded towards the cave. The large hill seemed to be a hill of stone. Since we viewed stones at the entrance of the cave, a number of people who came to offer Zearah were ahead of us. Through the entrance of the cave, 2 persons can enter and come out side by side. Within the interior of the cave, our area of movement would be rather difficult.

None dared going inside in view of deep darkness inside. Around the cave, on the plain, some grave like mounds come to view. The solemn and deep silence within the cave quicken deep-eternal and hallowed feelings. Although gloom is within, due to impact of light outside, we felt a touch of heavenly feeling.

Shimmer and embalming effect are with regard to Ashab-E-Kahaf. Allah Pak says in the glorious and holy Quran "Do you think, the cave and the dwellers of Bakim are uncanny and astonishing among my pavilions of portents? When the youths took refuge in the cave, they said, O our lord, you show your grace and mercy on us and help us manage our affairs truthfully". Then I kept them asleep for some years in the cave. Later on I awakened them in order to know which of the 2 parties can correctly determine the span of their stay'.

(Sura Kahaf, verse 9-12)

As a matter of fact, there is difference as to which is the cave of the companions of the cave since the cave in Tarsus is nearly at a distance of 15 km from Tarsus. On the other hand, not far from the capital of Syria there is a cave presented as the cave of Ashab-E-Kahaf, i.e. the cave of the companions.

As a matter of fact, the caves of Syria and Jordan are within the former Kingdom Sham. On the other hand, the cave of Tarsus under reference is very near to Sham a part of former Roman Empire.

According to the version of Hazrat Abdullah Ibna Abbas (R), it is seen that once he participated in one campaign of Jihad with Habib Ibne Maslama. On the way they reached such a place of Rome where they are rows of caves in the hill. There he saw bones of many persons and their skeleton in one of these caves. Then one speaker commented that they might be of the companions of the caves. Hazrat Ibne Abdullah Abbas reacting to this said that those bones were not of an earlier age than 300 hundred years back.

The episode of Ashab-E-Kahaf happened in fact, immediately before or after Isa (A)'s Prophet hood and the credible opinion is that the number of the companions of Ashab-E-Kahaf is 7 and a dog in addition. They are as follow. Macsalma, Tamu Likha, Maatnus, Astunus Verunas, Wassimus, Nalunas and their dog the name of which Kitmir or Hamban.

Commenting on Ashab-E-Kahaf Hazrat Sheikh Saadi (RH) observed "The dog of the Ashab-E-Kahaf has become a part of humanity by spending some time in contact with the virtuous person while the son Noah (A), Kenan has lost the pedigree of the family of Prophet by mixing with sinners and culprits.

We saw as we come out from the cave, many Zearrah offering persons from different parts of Turkey have come on bus to offer Zearah at this grave. They were eating packet lunch sitting nearby as the time of Zohar prayer approached, we said our Zohar prayer there.

Then we set out for Mersin via Tarsus but soon as we covered 15 km of distance our guide-industrialist and driver Shahin Kamakgulu took us to a plush hotel. There he entertained us with lunch. Sensing love for meat-fish and vegetables, he ordered a special mixed veg dish for us. Very palatable in taste, this mixed veg item is locally called Shakshuka, prior to the lunch Mr. Shahin Kamakgulu engaged me in chat. He told me that a writer has no reason to make haste and made a plea to

live in Turkey by forsaking the love of homeland. On reaching Mersin after finishing the lunch, he again invited us to dinner. As he drove car, he enquired of my conjugal, family and professional profit. He is unusually a curious person. His curiosity further increased when he heard of the publication of some books written by me. Soon after Magrib prayer he took us to the sea-beach.

The sun would set after 8 pm in Mersin at that time. Therefore, Kamakgulu took us to a famous restaurant situated on the sea shore. This restaurant besides meat is also famous for vegetables. He ordered for vegetables besides meat.

This is one of the outstanding restaurants of Mersin situated on the sea shore. The empty compound is hemmed in by the sea and the wall of the restaurant. There are arrangements for sitting round a table, numbering about 4, 6 or 8 persons at a time on this compound under the open sky nearly 100 persons can sit, dine and chat, besides the modern facilities available inside the restaurant. It is quite natural to feel urge to cat outdoors at night. Each restaurant has its own individual characters. Some for meat, some for fish and some are famous both for meat and fish. The Turkish people have great love for different kinds of food side by side with dessert after dinner. He continued to talk with me in a mood of cordially and earnestness during the time preparation of food after placing order and during dinner. He engaged me in humorous and pleasant talk in an exhilarated mood again, he proposed that I should stay permanently in Mersin. He also suggested that he would arrange for me flat in the apartment situated by the sea shore and a Turkish spouse. He also proposed that he would patronize all of my writings. He knows better whether he placed all these proposals with earnestness or as a matter of mere humor. Although it was incomprehensible to me, I responded to his call with a sense of pleasure and flicker of smile.

## Zearah in Mersin and Tarsus

The situation of Tarsus is to the west of Mulk-E-Sham, i.e. Syria. 12 prominent companions of Hazrat Isa (A) were born in this city during his Prophet hood. The history of this most

ancient city is replete with clash and conflict. I had comprehensive idea about this city before I traveled in Turkey. After

offering Zearah at Ashab-E-Kahaf, we came back to hotel in Mersin. In the evening I got out for tourist information centre. In Turkey, in every city both great and small there are tourist information



centre. In spite of many tourist information centres in Istanbul I did not find time and chance to go there. Reaching Konya on Saturday late afternoon, I left that city on Monday morning. In view of Sunday, a weekly holiday, the nearest information centre from our hotel was closed. I found tourist information centre on my way to hotel after getting down from the bus at the Terminal on Monday, 16th June at late noon. It is noted before in another place of the book that the Turkish letters closely resemble in

English and it can be read if effort is made. But there is no scope for understanding their speaking. Walking nearly 1 km in the evening, I went to the Tourist information centre. There more than one man and women were working. But regrettable that none knew English. Later on, they called in a person who knew English from the neighboring room. In a vast room in different shelf-tiers in different languages there are booklets and maps in distinct manner.

I collected Tourist guide book, booklet and Map written in English and Turkish Languages. At this instant, tea was served to the relevant official. It seemed they also wanted to entertain me with tea. I also felt inclined to take tea together with them with great relish. Many men and women working there became interested to talk with me used broken English and became eager to know different matters about our country, especially about the life style of the womenfolk. Although I have had talk with them for a while, I could not sip tea, served by them, in view of its being unsuitable for drinking. The tea is a much bitter as it is deep black. I knew that, to the Turkish both general tea and deep black are favorite alike. I browsed through the booklets on returning to the hotel. Amongst them the booklet on Tarsus provided much unknown information.

Staying in Mersin on the following Wednesday, we had set a programme to go to Gaziantep on Thursday, the day after the following day as such I became inclined to visit Antakya, bordering on Syria, on the following day.

In Turkey, in the city of Mersin, Mr. Shakhawat Hussain, my co-traveler had the busiest business schedule. So, it was not possible for him to visit Antakya. The other co-traveler Mr. Emdad also was not interested to go there. Nearly 200 km away from Mersin, in view of the highly developed communication system in entire Turkey, a journey of 200 km is not a matter of much trouble. I became disinclined to go alone. So I became busy to visit Tarsus again on the following day in order to make proper use of time. Mr. Emdad was reluctant to go to Tarsus again. As a result, managing a taxi with the help of

Hotel reception, I set out for Tarsus around 10 am on the following day. At my own will, I sat in the front seat by the side of the taxi driver. The driver speaks English in Broken words. This old driver is a votary of Tasavvuf and the Turks are Sunni Hanefi and inclined to Tasavvuf, above and all. Like us, they are disposed to Zearah of messengers of Allah. All the details of Tarsus are at his finger's ends. As a result, he could easily identify the several places when I mentioned the name with the help of booklet.

At the entrance of Tarsus, stands the Cleopatra gate, once upon a time the empress of Egypt, came to Tarsus by sea. The first name of the gate was sea gate. Later in honor of her, it was named after her. Once it had been named Tarsus gate.

Later it was named St. Paul's gate. This gate bears evidence of the glorious history of Tarsus. In the old part of the city stands the homestead of Prophet Hazrat Daniel (A). He was contemporaneous to Nevochanduzar (605-562 B.C), the king of Babylon, side by side with enslaving his subjects, he used to compel his subjects to do many acts contrary to, Monotheism of Allah. Even many Jews had to undergo punishment in view of their religions belief. Prophet Hazrat Daniel (A) made efforts to redeem them from serfdom and persecution through his acumen and sapience. Till to day, his homesteads including his birth place exist deep under ground. The tourists can observe them going down. Together with the driver I was also able to see them for myself and came to know much valuable information through my conversation with the locals.

#### **Zearah of Prophet Daniel (A).**

Not far from his birth place, I went to offer Zearrah of Prophet Daniel (A). His large sized grave is underground within the ancient mosque. Ladder has been fixed to go down. Once, during the time of famine, he was called back to his birth place Tarsus from Babylon. He did not return to Babylon again. He expired in Tarsus and was buried there. During Khilafat of Hazrat Omar (R), Tarsus as well as Syria came under the control of Hazrat Omar (R).



Then the holy grave of Hazrat Daniel (A) was opened. In the vast grave, his intact death body wrapped with silk cloth was found. He was identified as the Prophet Daniel (A) from the

ring of his hand. The holy dead body was unscathed. In spite of passage of nearly 700 years, Hazrat Abu Musa Asari (R) kissed the holy dead body with great respect. At the instance of Hazrat Faruk-E-Azam, the dead body of Hazrat Daniel (A) was wrapped with coffin and buried after Janaja and he deposited the money to the state exchequer.

In his holy grave a vast amount of money was found. Then the commander in chief and the famous company of the Prophet (sm) Hazrat Abu Musa (R) wrote a letter to the second caliph Hazrat Omar (R) for knowing what to do about the burring and the janaza of the Prophet Daniel (A) and the money found with him. Finding the letter, Hazrat Omar (R) ordered to perform his Janaja and burry him with proper honor and homage. He also ordered to deposit the money in the state exchequer. According to the Caliph's order, the Prophet Daniel (A) was buried under deep soil. I visited this holy grave of the Prophet of Allah and passed some time there.

Then at the instance of Hazrat Omar (R), the dead body of Hazrat Daniel (A) was buried inside the ground. There offered Zearah while visiting Iraq in 1997. I offered Zearah at the Mazar of Hazrat Daniel (A) in Mosul, the 3rd largest city of Iraq. But from the details of information and account, the Mazar at Tarsus, it seemed, possessed greater credibility.

In the suburb Tarsus, there is a river, the name of which is Seyhan. The residents of Tarsus believe that Hazrat Lokman Hakim (A) once visited Tarsus. Surah Lokman of the holy Quran is named after him and as per hearsay, he is contemporaneous to Daud (A). The secrets of gaining immortality of humans were known to him. The residents of Tarsus used to believe that the well was very sacred and if any one drank it he would attain immortality. A letter similar in nature written by him by and by flew out of his hand and fell into the Seyhan River. From then on the people used to regard the water of Seyhan as Elixir or panacea, since the river is at a distance from the city, I could not go there for having an on the spot sight.

The mosque of Hazrat Belal (R) the holy companion of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

Hazrat Belal (R) was a very favorite companion of Hazrat Muhammad (pbuh) and the first Muezzin of Masjid-E-Nabbi and Masjid-I Harem. Not being able to bear the bereavement of the death of Hazrat Muhammad (pbuh) he went away to Damascus, the present capital of Syria where from he once went to Tarsus. A mosque was established in the place where he went in 1519, the mosque was renovated. I made effort to go there in order to say prayer.

The well of St. Paul : The well of St. Paul, in the old part of Tarsus is one of the worth seeing sights. St. Paul is one of the famous clergies of the world in Christian community. Tarsus is the holy place of many prominent personalities of the time of the Prophet hood of Isa (A). Saint Paul was born in Tarsus. The contribution of St. Paul in the propagation of Christianity is undeniable. He lived in Tarsus, beside his house a well stands, and it has been named after him. During the golden period of Christianity, people used to believe that the water of that well had a great healing effect. There the memorials of Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman civilization are still extent with the help of the taxi driver I have had a glimpse of it.

Thereafter, I went to see a part of the road, built 2 thousand years ago. It is really thought provoking and a wonder like the present age, at a lower level from the road, there was drainage system built during the period of Prophet Isa (A), beside the road there were different structure. The technique of road buildings and the use of mosaic tickle the imagination of the present day people St. Paul, Sizara Julius Kaiser, Allenodorse, Nelson, Cleopatra, Mark Anthony, Apostles and Harian and many others used this world famous road. In 1993, able digging ness to 60 metres horizontally, this road was discovered and opened to the tourists for inspection. The tourists regularly rush in order to see the road.

This Roman toilet was built in 1785. This has been preserved by the authority for the knowledge and understanding of the people how the people of Tarsus used to this toilet.

On seeing this Roman Toilet evokes wonder besides, I have had a sense of worship used in the first great world war. Although the Turks were defeated, this ship has been preserved for the visitors as a symbol of pride of Tarsus. Besides, ancient church, museum etc. including houses exist on top of the hill of Tarsus. In view of tiredness, I returned to Mersin without seeing them. A believer in Tasavvuf and Zearah, this very old driver asked whether we have offered Zearah in Mersin at the Mazar of Hazrat Mikdad (R), a companion of Hazrat Muhammad (pbuh) I became quite astonished at this, since I had no knowledge of it prior to this. As soon as we entered the Mersin city, with a cheerful frame of mind, he took us to the Mazar of Hazrat Mikdad (R). The Mazar complex is somewhat very near to the highway that runs along the sea shore and is opposite to the sea. It is attached to a huge mosque. Arrangements for toilet and ablution have been made as they exist elsewhere in Turkey. A radiant and solemn atmosphere was pervading there.

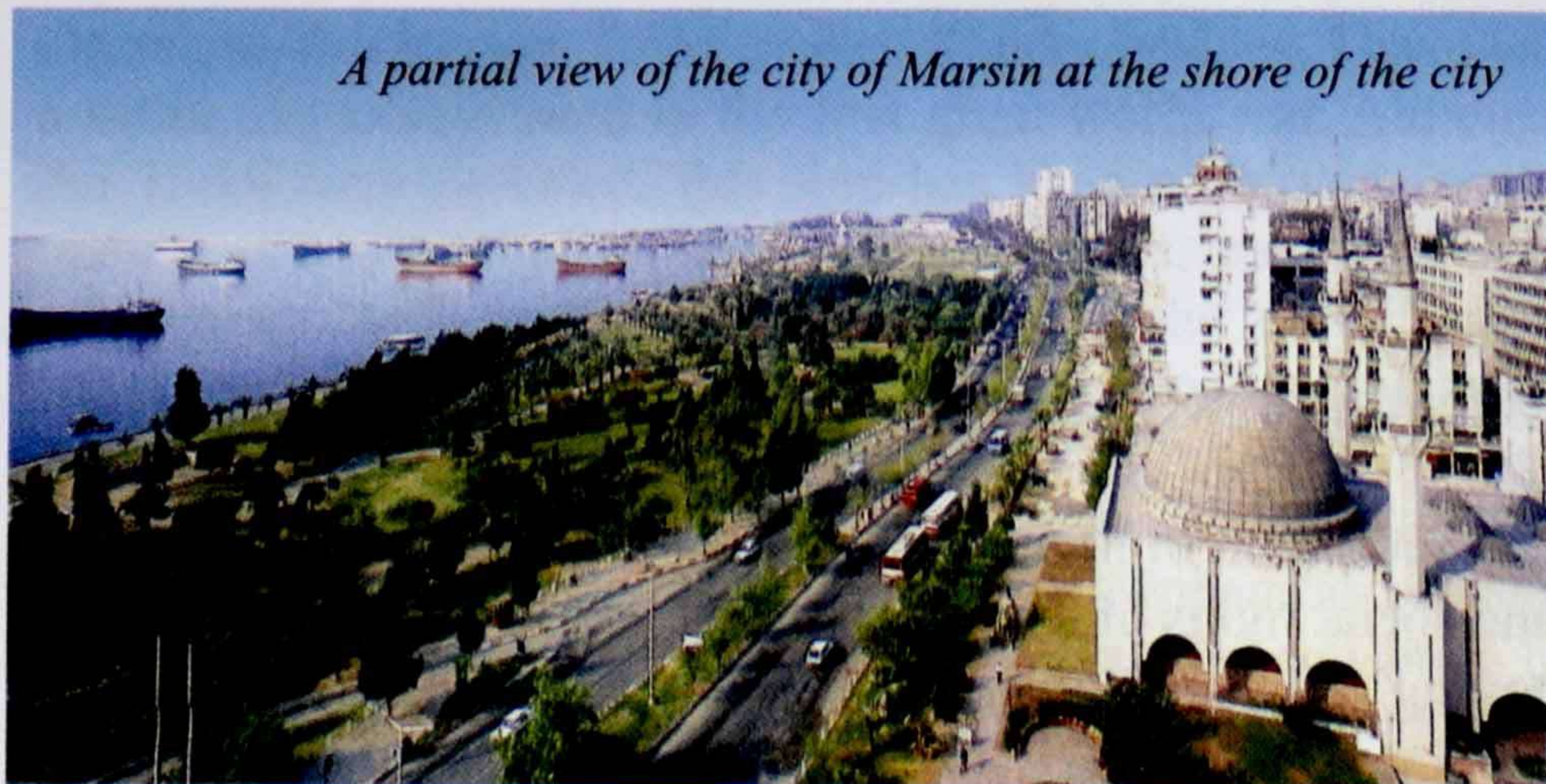
It was surrounded by diverse gardens of fruits and flowers and luxuriant green foliage when we reached the premise just before Zohur prayer, we saw it filled with Zearah offering people. Men and women were offering Zearah in parallel position since Turkey is a modern country. But the women, nevertheless, covering the body and wearing scarf, were careful of maintaining modesty and decency. I felt a sense of satisfaction since I could offer Zearah at the Mazar of Hazrat Mikdad (R) in Mersin and the Mazar of of Hazrat Ayub Ansari (R) in Istanbul while touring Turkey. Without showing any hurry, the driver rather was walking about with a calm mood. I felt he was happy to give me scope for Zearah. Spending a prolonged period for Zearah and inspection, I went to the taxi, parked nearby. I found the sellers selling plum.

At the side of the road, I proceeded towards the hotel, buying 1½ kg. On the way, I offered nearly half to the driver. The driver did not take fare more than the stipulated amount, in the least. Releasing the driver, I bought food for lunch from fast food stall, entering my room. I ate the food which purchased and tasted them with relish. At last I have had short sleep.

### **Encounter with 3 ladies on religious and social affairs**

In a restaurant of Mersin, I had about of arguments on religious and social rights of ladies in the light of Islam at the table while having dinner. Barring the Muslims, there are no other religionists in Turkey. In information from various sources, it has been said that the Muslims comprise the 98% of the total population. The vast Osmanli Sultanate gradually shrank and reached during the rule of Kemal Ataturk to its present size and status. Naturally, the Turks adopted life style of European type during the rule of Kemal Ataturk and his adherents, as they made bid to give up many religious and Arabic injunctions and laws of Islam. The greater part of Turkish men and women became ignorant of the implied meaning of religion as they passed almost a century in a secular fashion. In Turkey, it has become a norm to shake hands, instead of conveying Salam, at the time of meeting of one with another. In consequence, thereof, although my co-travelers Mr. Shakhawat and Mr. Emdad shook hands with women in Istanbul, Konya and Mersin, I kept away from shaking with the ladies from the stand point of religion. On reaching the bus terminal of Mersin, the daughter of the business partner of Mr. Shakhawat, Ayshegul gave us lift to the hotel, driving the car herself as usual. Ayshegul would shake hands with us according to fashion of Turkey. My 2 co-travelers are clad in trousers and shirt which are the customary dress irrespective of religion and color. But I am an exception-cap headed and clad in Safari. Although Ayshegul shook hands with my 2 co-travelers, I feigned unmindful and busy, Ayshegul did not stretch her hand out hesitatingly. On the following day I went to the office of

*A partial view of the city of Mersin at the shore of the city*



Mr. Shakhawat's business partner Zeynep Saheli. Aged below 40 to more, she is an owner of a big business firm with a large office. I could know that she was an unmarried lady. Although she wore trousers, she had a short vest almost shorter than the blouse of our women on her upper body like sleeveless vest of men, I slid behind my co-traveler and entered her room last. Consequently Mr. Shakhawat and Mr. Emdad sat down after shaking hands. Later on the following day after sunset, Zeynep Saheli came to our hotel room. She wore trousers & shirt of course designed for women with a little bit of decency. Even the women who work in Turkey wear trouser and loose shirts and scarf on head. In the hotel lobby attached to the reception counter, I observed, Zeynep Saheli took at me with great reverence since we had an invitation from Ayshegul's father on Monday evening, 17th June '08, Zeynep Saheli invited us to a dinner on the following night. Following this, she took us to a restaurant at the sea side on the following day evening, i.e. at 8.15 p.m. after the end of Maghrib prayer. In this area of Mersin, there are innumerable hotels situated by the Mediterranean. In front of almost every restaurant there are open squares. They are charming as well as properly furnished. In some of these restaurants only fish is supplied. As a result, side by side with standard, the charge is very high. If space is

not available for parking in the space attached to the restaurants, the guards on duty are given the key of the vehicles. Then they return the keys. Zeynep Saheli stopped at a famous restaurant of fish on the sea shore taking us with her. As soon as we entered the restaurant on the sea, one of her friends and her friend's companion came to her view and instantly sat round that table. I slid back tactfully this time too in order to avoid shaking hands with them. Unlike my 2 co-travelers seeing me unmindful, without stretching out the hand, they sat down on the chairs. The name of that friend of Zeynep is Sumeyye Kalya and Sumeyye's colleague is Sevda Bahsheshi. Aged nearly about 25 to 26 years, Sevda is married, i.e. they are leading happy conjugal life but Sumeyye Kalya is aged equal to Zeynep Saheli likewise Sumeyye has no husband like Zeynep Shaheli, i.e. neither of them has yet entered matrimonial life. Without giving chance to her 2 friends, she came earlier.

Zeynep ordered for food for dinner for 6 persons. It would take 10 to 15 minutes to supply food according to order. Meanwhile, some light foods such as dry chips were served. While we the three were having chips before eating the dinner together, Zeynep wanted to know from me if I would not mind if she would talk with me on some matters. Instantly I replied affirmatively. In response to it Zeynep told me that one of her visit to foreign countries was Pakistan. As she was about to shake hands with a person there, he withheld his hand. At this together with mental shock, Zeynep felt great humiliation.

One to two days after this she went to meet a person in Pakistan. That person was performing ablution at that time. Finishing ablution, he stretched out his hand and shook hands with Zeynep. Zeynep's observation was that if the mind is free from evil design, shaking hands by men and women is not a matter of indecency.

Meanwhile, the 2 other ladies, being inquisitive and lending support to Zeynep, began to talk on that matter with all seriousness and importance. On hearing their conversation, I listened to their talk with interest and a flicker of smile in the tip after they finished broaching the subject.

I asked if they knew Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia of Bangladesh. All three ladies replied in the affirmative. Then we told them that they do not shake hands with any man. The former prime minister of Pakistan Benazir would never shake hands with any person, at least, after she became the prime minister. In the Muslim world, culture is varied, I observed. The custom of shaking hands with men is a vogue in Turkey, but in few countries of the Muslim World it is a usage, I commented instantly after. The three ladies enquired if we had come from Iran to Turkey what is your impression of Turkey on seeing the life style of women? They enquired in a chorus of voice. After an instant thought I observed: The Iranian ladies are the happiest women in the world without giving a direct answer. Instantly, but showing respect befitting to a father, the 3 ladies differed with my opinion. They added. The clergy clerics have compelled them to lead a life in captivity. If the Iranian women come to Turkey, they lead free life like us. In reply I added that I did not refer to the instance either of Afghanistan or of Saudi Arabia, neither of Taliban attitude but of Iran. Like the women of Turkey, the women of Iran can move every where, but with proper decency and decorum. I put in reply the Iranian women are completely free within the bounds of decency. But they did not lend their approval to my idea. Then I requested them to go to Iran to see for themselves the condition of Iranian women. Then they said: Although we did not go to Iran, we have an impression of Iran through the Media and T.V. i.e. their opinion is that the present followers of Ayatollah Khomeini have curbed the freedom of women in Iran in the name of religion. Their opinion is, in fact, not true at all.

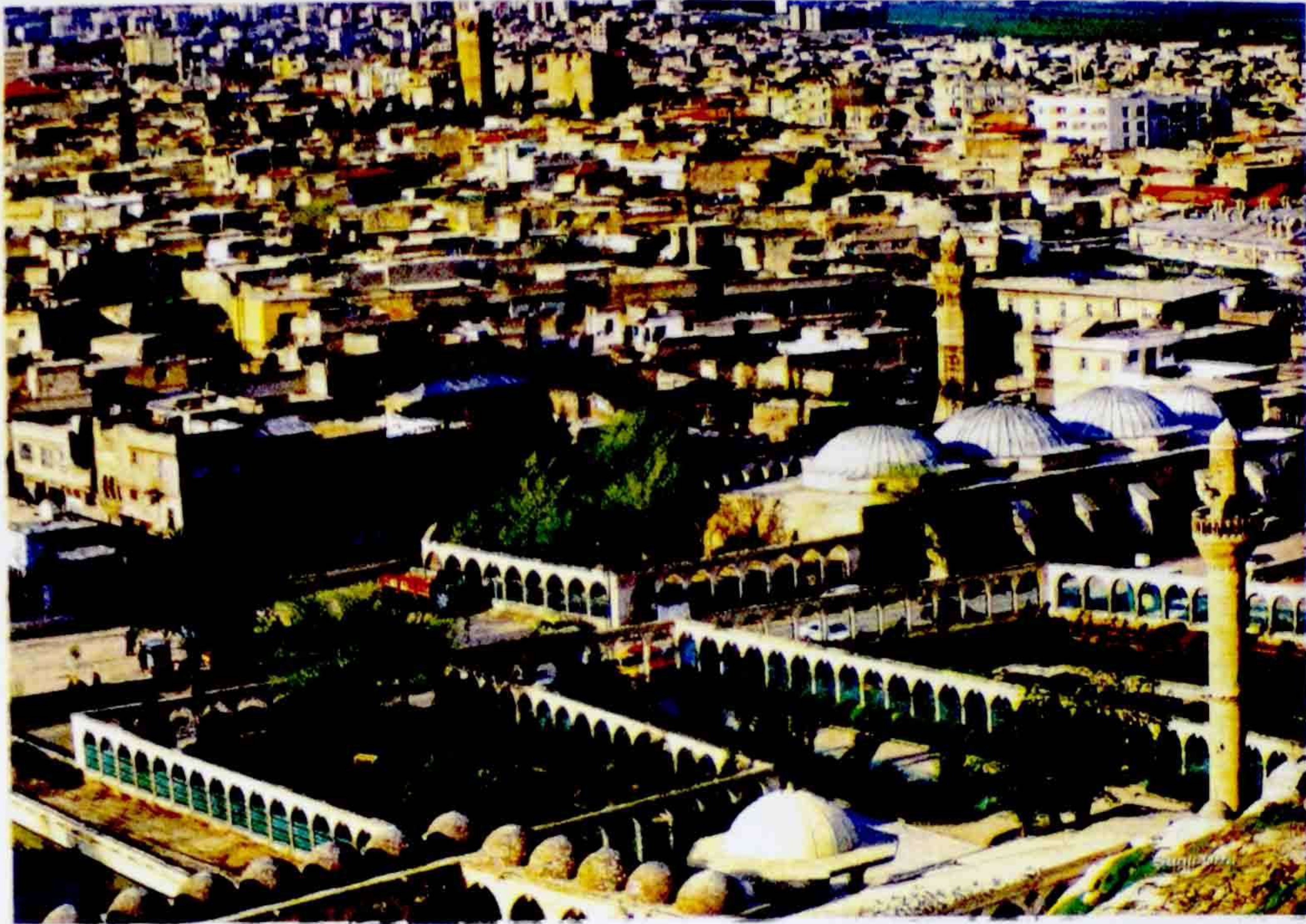
Although I am a Sunni, I defended the truth about Iran a country predominantly of Shia sect side by side with dinning I tried to impress upon them the religious feelings. I observed: The women are humans as like as the men. They reserve the right to move freely in this world, but it must be within the limits of modesty. Islam does not approve of compelling the women to lead life in captivity in the name of religion. This is sheer bigotry, I added.

Although her two companions it seemed, differed, Zeynep Saheli a pious lady, held the same opinion either from the view point of showing respect or from sheer point of courtesy. They argued that there is no difference between men and women. The women have the right to lead a free style of living as well as the men but the men folk have curtailed the freedom of womenfolk meanwhile, the bearer served fish dish on the table. After the bout of eating fish was over, tasty chocolate, and ice cream were served. At last, the Turkish dessert was placed on the table.

As we have come to Iran and Turkey for Zearah and visiting the historic sites, although these 3 ladies like the Iranians, became involved in polemic on religious and social issues, I understood that their respect for me tremendously rose higher.



## From Mersin to Gaziantep via Adana



*The ancient city of Urfa, the birth place of Prophet Ibrahim (A.)*

Gaziantep, in the East, is one of many famous cities of Turkey. Predominantly, it is an industrial city. Some friends of my co-traveler Mr. Shakhawat live there. Above all, in Urfa, in the further east from Gaziantep is the location of the birth place of Prophet Hazrat Ibrahim (A) and in the south, the situation of Hazrat Habib Nazzar (A) and Hazrat Shamin (A)'s Mazar Sharif are in Antakya.

The distance between Mersin and Gaziantep via Adana is nearly 300 km. On the previous day, I purchased tickets. The schedule is at 9.45 a.m. That day was Thursday, 19th June. I took an elaborately prepared breakfast. Then we went to the bus terminal by a car driven by Mr. Shakhawat's business Partner's

daughter Ayshegul. Zeynep Saheli awaited our arrival at the terminal. We talked about the colloquy we have had last night on diverse subjects at the dinner table.

It appeared Zeynep is well versed in religion and history, besides her higher education. Although she led free and open life, she was pious. She keeps short and scarf in her bag for offering Namaz.

At hand, we had 8 to 10 minutes time before the bus sets out. In the mean time, Zeynep discussed with me about many things with a reverential heart.

She requested Mr. Shakhawat to give greater importance to me than his business affairs in Gaziantep. Zeynep told me that, if possible, she would take me to Urfa from Gaziantep on Saturday morning. When time, meanwhile, was up for sitting out, we bade them farewell and got up into the bus. The bus began to proceed towards Adana in the north from Mersin. The distance from Mersin to Adana is nearly 80 km. In between, Mersin and Adana, is the location of Tarsus, a historic and ancient city of Turkey. I visited that place the previous day and the day before the previous day. The highway between Mersin and Adana is of second rate. Comparatively the area between Mersin and Adana is dense in population.

It is natural that wherever there are thick population, there are as many office, court, business center shops-stalls, restaurants, establishments etc. In this region side by side with fruit orchards, there is no lesser number of kitchen vegetable gardens. Our bus entered the Adana City. But, on seeing the city, it appeared to me that it is not as much affluent as Mersin. Only within 5 to 10 minutes, loading more passengers it began to proceed through the city from the terminal and reached a highway which runs towards the east.

The distance of Gaziantep from Adana is 225 km. This highway is of premium quality as like as the Istanbul-Ankara highway 8-laned, with four in either way. As there are over bridge at the junctures, the driver drove the car speedily.

As we proceeded towards the east further and further, we saw more and more hills and comparatively fewer and fewer dwelling place. So there was only scant number of shops, stalls and malls; the number of vehicular traffic on the highway was all the more few. The Iranians flout traffic law by crossing the speed limit. As a result, through policing and penalty, the speed is kept within the limit in the highway of Iran. Turkey is an exception to this by contrast. The drivers do not violate traffic laws. Nevertheless, there is policing system although I did not come across it. Through the vast highway we proceeded fast further on and on towards Gaziantep, the reason for making the highway 1st grade of this area by the Turkish government is understandable. I believe main reason behind it lies in the fact that, through this highway runs vehicular traffic to Syria, Iraq, Iran and Armenia. So it became indispensable for Turkey to make this highway to the level of highest hallmark.

The bus, passing through this highway speedily, reached the hilly city Gaziantep Bus Terminal at around 2 p.m. Gaziantep is called an Industrial City. Gaziantep, previously and still informally called Antep is a city in southeast Turkey and amongst the oldest continually inhabited cities in the world. Dating back to the 4th millennium BCE, Gaziantep has traces of Hittite settlement that continued till about 1183 when it was conquered by Turks. Till then it was predominantly a Syrian town named 'Hamtap'. The Ottoman Empire conquered the place in the early 16th century and named it 'Ayintab' meaning 'good spring'. The rule continues for three centuries uninterrupted until 1919 when it was occupied by the British, which was followed by a French control in 1920. In 1922 however the Turks won back their land from the French troops and the prefix 'Gazi' was added meaning 'war veteran - wounded veteran' and hence the name Gaziantep.

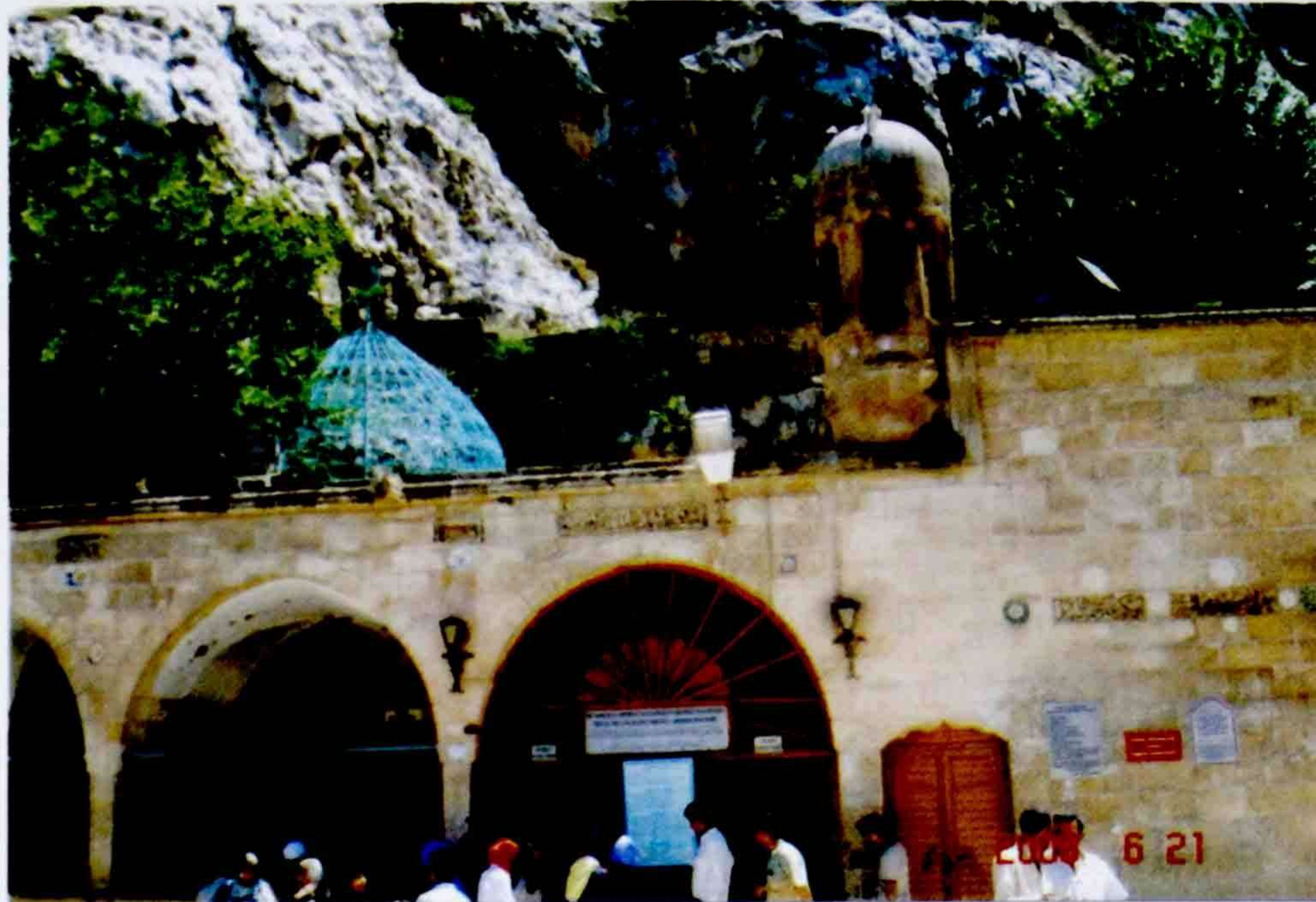
There, in Gaziantep Bus Terminal, Mr. Erkan Erkal was waiting with his car. There are large number of mills, factories and industrial complex, especially carpet mills. Mr. Erkan Erkal first took us to his office on the upstairs and then entertained us with tea and snack.

Their connection with Bangladesh is deep. He travels to Bangladesh to purchase raw jute. In connection with business tour they visited Chittagong, Cox's Bazar, even Bandarban. Gaziantep is an ancient city. There are ancient citadels including old installations. The city is small and not very prosperous. It is neither comparable to Mersin or Adana nor even to Konya, in the least, but it has its importance as an industrial city with an airport spending some time in the office of that business friend. We were taken by him to a famous restaurant located in the heart of the city, in order to entertain us with lunch like Iran. Sleek Kebab of chicken is very popular in Turkey. When they are served together with it boiled vegetables in large quantity is also served. In the midst of it, a long sized green chilly is given. This chilly is without hot taste, tastes very delicious. This kind of food is very suitable for me in view of my stomach trouble. As such, like in Iran, I used to eat chicken sleek, locally known as chicken kebab. Before entering the restaurant, I spoke of Chicken Kebab - Ayran looking like congealed milk was added to it.

This is very favorite to me as it is much helpful for me. Thereafter, I became fond of Ayran and ate them for some days with great relish. Although the restaurants of Antep are famed and are of developed standard, they are not as much modern and luxuriant as those of Mersin situated by the side of the sea. After we finished eating lunch, we went to Antep Hotel towards 4 pm in which we had prior booking and it is not very far from this restaurant.

10 to 12 storied with 3 Star mark, this hotel is situated in the heart of the city on plain land at a corner. As usual, I booked a single room and Mr. Shakhawat and Mr. Emdad booked another room for them like in Mersin, the mosque is very near to the hotel. The Sun sets in Gaziantep towards 8 p.m. in the evening. As a result, taking advantage of this, I offered Maghrib and Isha in near by mosque side by side with offering of Namaz; I used to engage myself with talk with the Imam and well conversant Mussallis on different aspects and matters of Turkey in order to know Turkey.

## Şanlıurfa-the birth place of Hazrat Ibrahim (A)



*The house at the foot of the hill where Ibrahim (A) was born*

In the South-East and nearest to the borders of Syria, Urfa an ancient city of Turkey is situated. Şanlı means "great, glorious, dignified" in Turkish, and Urfa was with authorization renamed Şanlıurfa (Urfa the Glorious) by the Turkish Grand National Assembly in 1984, in recognition of the local resistance in the Turkish War of Independence against France. The title was achieved following repeated requests by the city's members of parliament, desirous to earn a title similar to those of neighboring cities 'Gazi' (veteran) Antep and 'Kahraman' (Heroic) Maras. Turks know it as the Prophets' City because of legends saying that the Hazrat Ibrahim was born in a cave here. The Bible does say he stayed at Harran, 50 km [31 miles] south. The cave, and other legendary locations, is visited annually by hundreds of thousands of Muslim pilgrims.

It's certain that Urfa, as it's commonly called, is very old, dating back at least 3500 years to Hittite times.

The region in which Urfa is located has always been a juncture of East and West. The trade routes which joined the ancient civilizations of the Aegean Basin and Mesopotamia and Iran crossed through this region and contributed to the founding of cities which prospered and reached a high level of civilization since the late 2nd millennium B.C.

Hazrat Ibrahim (A) was born in this city. The palace of infamous emperor Nimrod is situated on top of the hill. The Arabian Peninsula and the Kingdom of Sam are the most ancient places of human habit align on this earth.

After the First World War, the Osmanli Sultanate collapsed, fundamentally due to the instigation of the British. The kingdom of Sham was a part of Osmanli Sultanate.

Palestine the usurped Land of Palestine, presently known as Israel, Labanon, Syria, Jordan, the western region of Iraq, the eastern part of Egypt and the South-Western region of Turkey comprised the Mulk-E-Sham. Like the Osmanli Sultanate it also disintegrated as part of Osmanli Sultanate. Urfa, too was also in the Mulk-E-Sham is situated in the South-Eastern region of Turkey. Turkey is comprised of 80% Turks and nearly 20% Kurds. However, there are a small number of among its population who mostly live in Urfa in this very city. Hazrat Ibrahim (A) was born and attained the Prophet hood. After passing there his childhood and adolescence, Ibrahim (A) is called the Patriarch of the believers community. In stature of Prophet hood, he holds 2nd position after Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), he is a much popular and discussed Prophet. His name transcends over the Muslims. He is famous among the Jews and Christians as well.

Majority of the Muslims are conversant with many events connected with the Prophethood of Ibrahim (A). The Holy Qaaba was rebuilt by him. Many rites and rituals of Hajj, spanning 5 days centre round Prophet Ibrahim (A), his wife

Bibi Hazera (A) and his son Ismail (A), specially the sacrifice, frantic between Safa and Marwa. Even 2 Rakats of Namaz, after circumambulation of Qaaba is prescribed. This Namaz is performed in front of the Makam-E-Ibrahim, attached to the holy Qaaba.

The greatest gift to the Muslims in the world is Abe-Zamzam. The origin of this fount centres round Hazrat Ibrahim (A) and his son Ismail (A).

In the Holy Quran, there are mentions of Hazrat Ibrahim (A) in 20 Surahs of 63 verses. Allah Pak in the Holy Quran says, "Verily I have given guidance and advice knowledge of righteous path right from the beginning and was aware of his conduct. Allah Pak the great, declares further in the Holy Quran Oh Muhammad (pbuh). Thereafter, I sent my revelation to you so that you followed the religion of Ibrahim (A) he who made prostration and obeisance to Allah only (Surah an Nahal - verse 123).

In fact, Hazrat Ibrahim (A) was the descendant of Hazrat Nuh (A) and Ismail (A), the son of Ibrahim (A), is the predecessor of Hazrat Muhammad (pbuh) in genealogical order downward. The upward the higher /upward Prophet Ibrahim (A) is as follows from the bottom to the top:

Hazrat Ibrahim (A) Ibne Tareq, Ibne Nahur, Ibne Sharuz, Ibne Rao, Ibne Fateh, Ibne Aber, Ibne Saleh, Ibne Arafaqshuk, Ibne Shaam, Ibne Hazrat Nuha (A).

In the Holy Quran, the father of Ibrahim (A) has been mentioned as Azar. In Taurat his father's name has been mentioned as Tareq. Both the names are related to the same person. Tareq is a personal noun and Azar is a qualitative noun since Hazrat Ibrahim (A) spent the early life in Urfa since his birth, the then anti and adverse religious condition of Urfa evoked his aversion. Prophet messenger since the inception of his birth, holds the faith of monothese mand unity of Allah very earnestly the essence of which is opposite to the religion polluted by polytheism.

### **Hazrat Ibrahim (A) is not exception to this.**

With the advancement of his age, he could not countenance the activities antagonistic to the unity of Allah as a result, seizing an opportunity he resolved at the root of Idolatry. One day the perverted people were engaged in an annual ceremony in another place. During this lonely and desolate condition he entered the place of worship of the infidel without being noticed and broke the all the idols but one with an axe. He hung the axe on the shoulder of the biggest Idol all the idolaters held Ibrahim (A) responsible on seeing the ransacked condition of the images after their return from the unholy ceremony sure Ibrahim (A) opposed the worshipper of the idols publicly. Ibrahim (A) gave a very cogent answer and opened that the image that bore the axe on its shoulder is responsible for this. If it were not then the chief witness should be asked as to who was responsible for it. If it cannot give correct answer as to the happening of such occurrence in its presence, if even is not able to speak, then what is the meaning of worshipping such an inanimate object as God. At last, this news reached the ear of the king. The title of that kingdom was Nimrod as the title of king of Egypt was pharaoh. The people of the area used to regard Nimrod as God and showed great respect to the deities as well. Nimrod thought that he could not wipe this adversary for good his reign as a king would be threatened. So he resolved to throw Ibrahim (A) into a blazing pyre. Before he was thrown into blazing fire Ibrahim (A) added: only Allah is the great entity. In His lies the dispensation of life and death. He gives life and death at his will. Being enraged at this arrogant Nimrod who claimed to be the God said : I can give and take away life. In order to place a tangible example of this he killed an innocent man with helo of his executioner. Side by side, he gave amnesty to a person condemned to death and decreed for his release.

Then placing the instance before Hazrat Ibrahim (A) he tried to prove Nimrod the claimant to God head is also life giver of

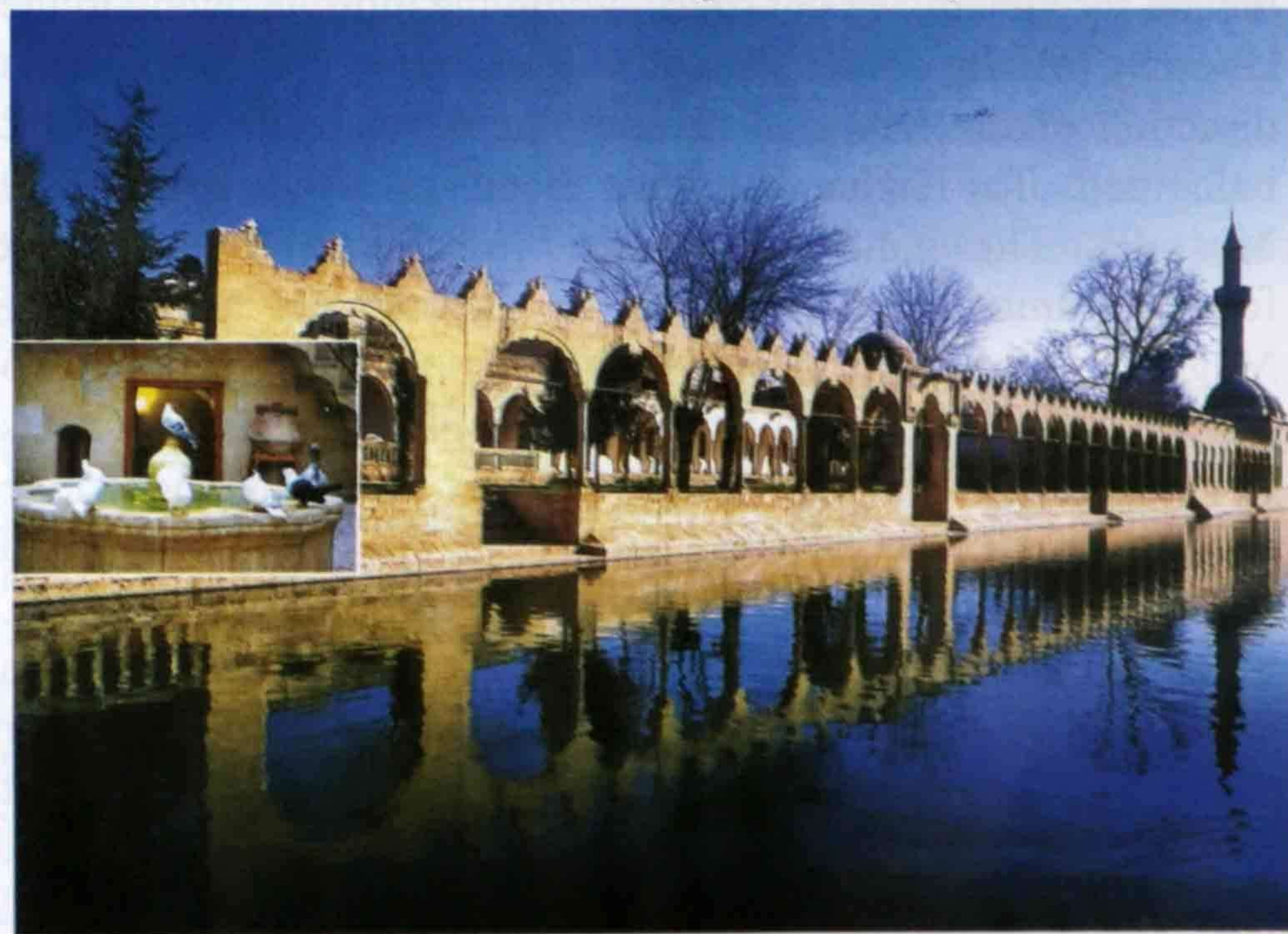
human beings. In this context, the holy Quran-E-Hakim observes: "Have you not seen the happening of that person who however; Holy Prophet Ibrahim (A.), debated with his creator about his supremacy of power. When Ibrahim (A.) said, My Lord, gives life and death. Then the Emperor said, I also give life and death. Then Ibrahim (A.) asserted the supreme lord of the creation causes the sun to rise in the east and set it in the west. If it is possible let the sun rise from the west and set in the east. As a result of this the infidel (king) became stunned and dumb. And ALLAH does not show way to the Tyrannical persons."

Thereafter, this tyrant king Nimrod made special arrangement on how his beloved Prophet into the burning pyre. But the merciful and the beneficent Allah made the burning pyre into a place of comfort and repulse.

In this context the gracious and merciful Allah reveals, all people gathered in the place shouted, help your gods and burn Ibrahim into ashes; if you want to do something in this regard. "ALLAH (saw) I commanded, "O, fire" be cool and comforting for my slave Ibrahim. And they were bent on making plot against Ibrahim. I turned their conspiracy into a futility" preaching Islam across the land beginning from Urfa shouldering the responsibility of Prophethood he expired in hebron of Palestine.

## One day at Urfa

I had expectations to visit some important places during my traveling of Turkey. Urfa is one of them since it is the birth place of Hazrat Ibrahim (A). The palace of Nimrod, the pyre of Nimrod, the house of Hazrat Ayub (A) and the place of his recovery were among them. On Thursday, the 19th June, we set out for Urfa and Antakya from the port city of Mersin and reached Gaziantep towards the noon. Our co-traveler Mr. Shakhawat's friend and owner collar let company accorded us reception in the bus terminal on the evening of that day and at night I discussed with Mr. Shakhawat and Mr. Emdad regarding our plan to visit Urfa and Antakya in the hotel room and at the restaurant. One can go to Antakya from Mersin.



*The site where notorious Nimrud cast Ibrahim (A) into pyre*

Mr. Shakhawat in view of busy business schedule, he did not give his consent. Mr. Emdad was reluctant to go. As such I did not dare going there alone since among many impediments, the language stood as an obstacle.

The distance, too, was not short, almost near about 200 km. So, I became very eager, after reaching Gaziantep City, to go to 2 places situated on the opposite sides on the following Friday and Saturday, spanning over 2 days, since we were scheduled to leave Gaziantep on the following Sunday morning for Istanbul en-route to Dhaka. The following day was Friday and Mr. Shakhawat had business engagement in Gaziantep, so it was not possible for him to go anywhere leaving the city. On the other hand, Mr. Emdad did not agree to give me company to go to Urfa or Antakya. As such, I spent the Thursday afternoon and the whole day of Friday visiting the old facilities, museum, market etc. In Antep sauntering about the city I offered Juma at the central mosque of Gaziantep, not far away from our hotel, I saw the mosque filled with both men and women. Mussallis as we are foreigners, we got space within the mosque owing to the sincerity of the local Mussallis. Except for the side of the direction of the Kibla, all 3 other sides are encircled with 2 balconies. The balconies have been reserved for female Mussallis. The number of female Mussallis in Turkey is not few in number. When I went to the mosque to say Asr, Maghreb and Esha, I engaged myself in talk with people who are conversant in English among the people on different aspects of Turkey. At this, the other Mussallis on being inquisitive surrounded me. His business partner Mr. Ali Ekin's son would take us to Urfa by his car on the morning of the following day. Since the Friday was spent in Gaziantep, without going to Antakya we gave priority to go to Urfa finding no other alternative. Urfa is 190 km away in the east from Gaziantep. It was already known that it is a first grade road. On the 21st June, Saturday, immediately after breakfast a youth appeared taking a big black car of BMW type.

The name of the youth is Yunus, the son of Mr. Ali Ekin, the industrialist. The age of Yunus Ekin is between 20 and 22. On the whole, he has working knowledge of English. Our car was proceeding towards the East, i.e. Urfa, after covering the Antep city scarcely had we passed the urban area than hill after hill came to our view. Sometimes we saw fruit garden in the low hilly area. The highway is laned with 3 lanes on each way and at the juncture of the roads we saw over bridge. As a result, curbing of the speed is not necessary. As we advanced further and further except for hilly area, the places of human habitation were all the more scant. The highway looked nearly empty the movement of vehicles seemed very low even then Yunus-a youngster was driving the car at a speed not exceeding the speed limit. The car did not exceed 120 km per hour. Unlike the Iranians, the Turks observe the traffic laws and drive the vehicles within the speed limits. Like Iran, so large number of the presence of police personnel are not visible on the roads, because everything is checked digitally. Turkey is an oblong country, stretching from the east to the west the seas are in the north and south on the west are Greece and Bulgaria of Europe, In the South East are Syria, Iraq, Iran, Armenia etc. In the east the Kurdish problem is acute with the hands of so-called giant countries for the oil in that region along with northern Iraq and Syria.

I believe, the communication system of this area of the country has been developed. Otherwise, Turkey would not have developed communication system in spite of less vehicular traffic. Our car entered the Urfa town passing through several smaller towns on the way covering a distance of 190 km within 2 hours, parking car at the proper spot and nearing the spot of the blazing pyre in which Ibrahim (A) was thrown, Yunus picked up a local guide.

On entering the city, we understood that among the residents there are significant numbers of Arabian population as they wore

Arabian dress and clothes. Within the trousers and shirts many Arabian cassocks and kerchiefs on head were visible. The headgear was braced with ringlet. The Saudis use red kerchief on head. In the other countries of the Arabian Peninsula which head kerchief is widely visible. But in Syria, Jordan, Iraq and Palestine the prevalent headdress is of Black-chequered color as it is in Urfa. On seeing the prevalence of Arabian clothes and dress in a large scale, it seemed to me that I was not in Turkey. It seemed as if I were in an Arabian country. But I was a bit surprised when I saw Arabian headgear and ringlet on the head of the women.

Coming at Urfa, I conduct thinking that I am not in Turkey. Seeing mass usage of the Arabia dress, it seemed to that I am in one of the Arabian Countries. We were guided to the spot of the furnace of the fire where Ibrahim (A) was thrown into the blazing pyre by tyrannical king Nimrod.

Through the auspices of statesmen this spot could have been preserved through the centuries as a spot of pyre, other than due to emotional excess and religious sentiment, a mosque has been built on this spot. It seemed to me that was not a wise step. In that area thousands of men and women were walking about. Since it is in border area, people of Syria, Iraq and other countries might have come here for sight seeing. In that one storied mosque of that area, many men and women were seen praying Namaz and reciting the holy Quran. In front of the mosque, we saw an oblong lake. On both sides of it shop and restaurants are there. The visitors persistently visit it coming out of the spot of blazing pyre. We proceeded to see the debris of Nimrod's palace. It is on the top of the hill and one has to ascend it through a circuitous way. The relevant body of the govt. has made arrangement to ascend the hill direct by digging a tunnel vertically. We began to ascend through the tunnel on buying tickets. It is risky for a heart patient to ascent the hill. We also became tired while ascending up. On the peak, this palace is no longer in a state of unscathed. The rubbles scatter

around after walking about for some time we came down through the separate ways. Then we went to the birth place of Hazrat Ibrahim (A) on foot. The birth place is at the foot hill of a high hill. The exact spot on which, he was born hence been fenced. The house of Ibrahim (A) is old. But it is not sure whether it is in its original state or rebuilt. Viewing a small sized museum here, we were taken to a restaurant by Yunus for having our lunch. The restaurant is as much developed as it is extravagant. Urfa is an ancient town as old as nearly 15 thousand years claimed the local people as well as the restaurant management. We were informed through the chat we have had with them. In fact, situated at the foot hill and top of the hill, the majority of the structures of this small town are outdated. It seemed the touch of modernity has not lunched this town many houses, built of stones came to our notice. Blatant indecency, like Istanbul and Mersin, in this town, is very rare like other cities of Turkey. We did not notice uncleanliness in Urfa in the least. Since there were a multitude of Arabian people, we had the advantage of talking to them. The neighboring hills are replete with multiple gardens of various types. Arabian colored hand carcief were found in different stalls.



*The visitors visiting the debris of the palace of notorious Nimrud*

## **THE VISIT TO THE SPOT OF RECOVERY OF PROPHET AYUB (A)**

Hazrat Ayub (A), the favorite messenger of Allah, was attacked with severe disease. To the Almighty Allah, and to the human beings, the Prophets and the apostles of Allah are personalities of high esteem and reverence stature. As such Allah (saw) placed them to severe test in different ways.

### **Recovery Place, Hazrat Ayub (A)**

Barring a few in the history of more than one lack messengers and apostles sent to this earth. The messengers and apostles of Allah confronted adverse circumstances, more and less. They stood the litmus test of Iman through their patience and forbearance. Among them Hazrat Ayub (A) is one of them. He suffered from ulcerous disease. His body became infected; parts of the body putrefied. Worms infested his body in consequence thereof, the members of his family forsook him. He lost everything in the midst of his precarious condition. All deserted and abandoned him under these circumstances; however, his virtuous wife Hazrat Bibi Rahima (A) stood by him through thick and thin. She did not desert him for a moment. She nursed him all the time. She, too, confronted many a diverse condition along with her husband and proved herself as a paragon of devoted wife.

After suffering from incurable ulcerous disease continuously for 13 years, he established the greatest faith in Allah and passed in the test of Iman (faith).

Then Allah Pak asked Hazrat Ayub (A) to stamp the earth with his foot. As soon as he stamp his foot on the soil, at the instance of Allah, holy water gushed out from the earth. By drinking and using that water Ayub (A) gradually began to recover from the disease. In context of this Allah Pak in the holy Quran says: Then I asked to strike the ground with his foot so he did instantly water welled up then I said: This is a

place of bath and drink. I further asked him: Take a bundle of wisp and strike and do not leave the true path. Verily I have found him patient and he is the best of his slaves doubtlessly he is inclined to Allah and returning to him (Sura Swad, Raku-4). We went to the spot of recovery from illness in the late afternoon by a car at a few kilometers of distance. The name of the place is Ayabia. The spot of his recovery is a large sized room with a door on it adjacent to the large mosque. The spot has been preserved with all sanctity. We saw men and women in large number.

The Holy Quran narrates accounts in plenty about Hazrat Ayub (A) and his revered wife Hazrat Rahima (A). After recovery from illness he held the charge of Prophet hood until he was 140 years old. He lived up to the 4th generation of his descendants he is regarded as the nearest later Prophet Hazrat Ibrahim (A) is the "Location of his Mazar is not far from Karbala of present Iraq.

Hazrat Ayub (A), according to a differing version suffered from the infection for 13 years at a stretch. In 1997, I had the opportunity to offer Zearah at the holy Mazar of this great messenger during my visit to Turkey for a week or so.

Since we had no haste, we started towards Gaziantep in the late afternoon. Although not fet during our journey to Urfa, on our return way, I saw strict check post of police in the western part of the country strict security measures have been taken in view of the heightened Kurdish movement in the east.

Guide Yunus stopped the car when the police signaled to stop it and talked to the police in Turkish language something from the driver's seat and proceeded towards Gaziantep. While driving, he told us that the Turkish government has again reinforced and stepped up security, on being curious, he informed us. Yunus told the military officer of that check post that we are Bangladeshi tourist and business partner of his



father. Passing off check post before the dusk came down, this large hearted Yunus, dropped us down in front of the hotel and bade us farewell.

We reached Gaziantep, situated in the South-West of Turkey. That day, we spent time journeying to and from Urfa. But in the care of the heart, I have had a regret. I regret I could not go to Antakya, an ancient town in view of the want of companions.

In the soil of Antakya, lie in eternal sleep Hazrat Habib Nazzar (A) and Hazrat Shamwin (a) their accounts have been narrated in the Surah Yasin of the holy Quran. Besides, there are Mazars of many messengers, companions and saints of successive times.

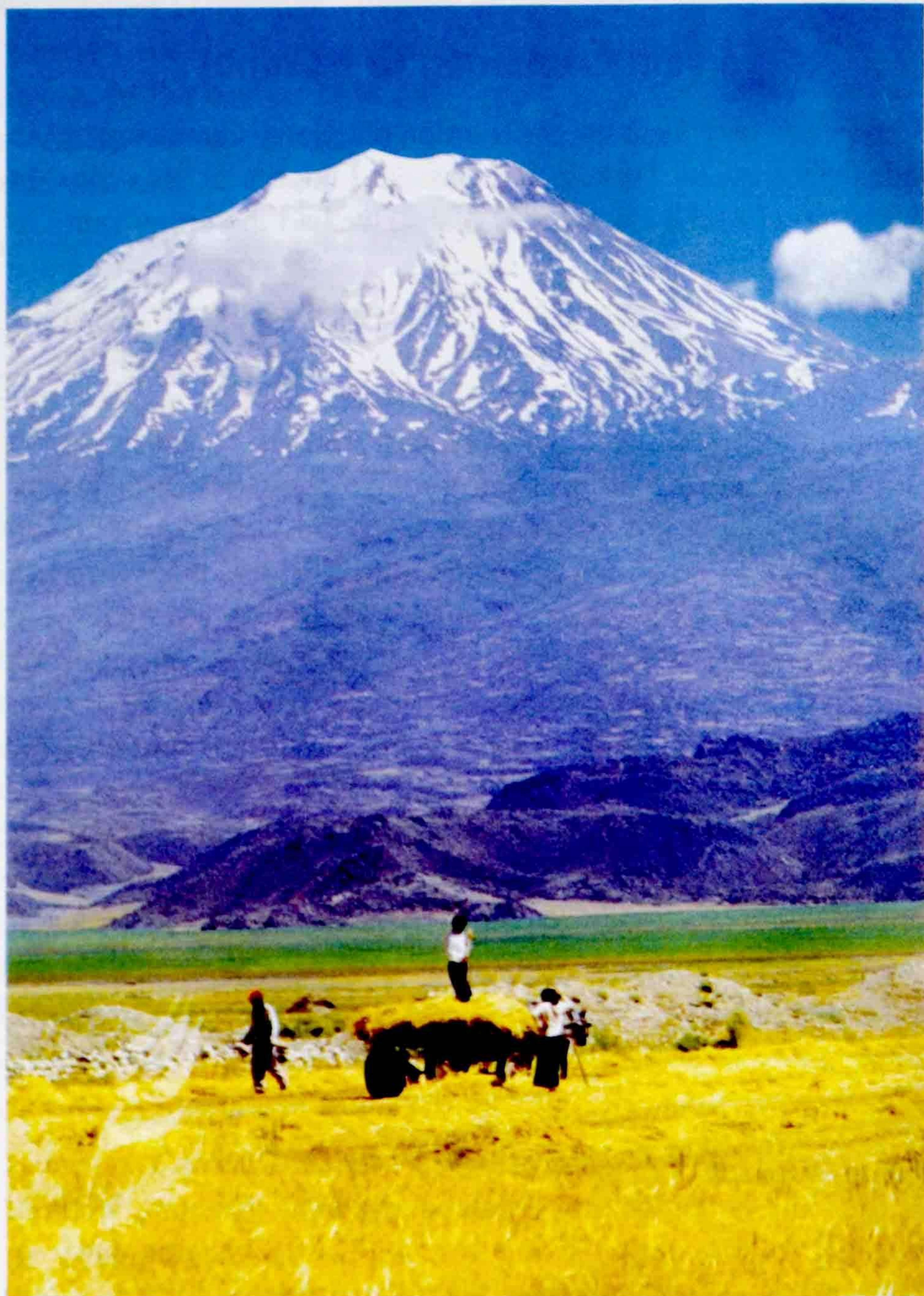
This Antakya is a part of former Mulk-E-Sham and very near to the Syrian Border. After sunset, the business partner of Mr. Shakawat, Mr. Erfan Imran came with his car and went out, taking us with him to visit plaza, Mall and Wal-Mart. Like other thriving cities of Turkey, Gaziantep is also a prosperous town. It is enriched with different establishment; large plaza and mall, like in other cities of Turkey, lend glamour and glitz to this city lights irradiate the city with a soothing touch. The price of everything seemed to be very high since their one Lira is equivalent to our 57 taka in spite of this we bought tidbits. We went to bed after dinner in the hotel without keeping awake late night; we would go to Istanbul in the morning by a domestic flight of the Turkish air. From Istanbul, the return to Dhaka has been programmed earlier.

## **From Gaziantep to Istanbul**

Somewhat very near to the border of Syria, Gaziantep is an industrial city of Turkey. We passed 3 nights in this city. In Aintal hotel of the standard of 3 star, we had the opportunity to spend comfortably for 3 nights. We have programmed to leave Gaziantep for Istanbul on Sunday morning on the 22nd June at 8.40 a.m. by Turkish Airline. Through the business partner of Mr. Shakhawat, we purchased advance tickets as per our programme in Turkey, since it is very difficult to get tickets in the nearest time in domestic flight. We were free from worry since we have collected tickets beforehand yesterday. The son of Shawkhat's business partner Yunus Erkin took us to Urfa with the very expensive car of his father. Shortly after 6 a.m. in the morning, he was to come to our hotel with the car of his father to take us to the airport. Preparation was made for breakfast. With the help of the bearer, we came down to the reception counter with the luggage. Then we entered the restaurant to have our breakfast by 7 a.m. The management of the Hotel restaurant is much more careful about standard than that of Iran. As a result, we enjoyed all the facilities of a 3 star hotel. As usual, breakfast is free of charge over and above, there were abundance of items. Before the other guests of the hotel, we came to the reception after eating breakfast. Already large hearted Yunus arrived with the car of his father.

On account of the generosity of Mr. Shakhawat's business partner, the hotel bill was received at a 50% discount. Without waiting for the help of the waiter, Yunus became busy in loading the car with luggage. At this we were a little puzzled. We set out for the Airport at around 7.30 a.m. Although Gaziantep

is not a big city, it is famous as an industrial city. In Turkey town signifies as town with a hilly surroundings, Gaziantep is not also an exception. We were covering the neat road in the morning. Passing the high and low road, scarcity had we passed



*The snow capped Mount Agri, the highest hill of Turkey*

8 to 10 kilometers when we reached the airport. For finishing the formalities at the airport, the passports were frequently looked for although the airport is not very big, it is furnished with all modern facilities. Before boarding the plane our passports were checked at 2 places.

After the end of the necessary formalities, we boarded on a medium sized Air bus of Turkish Air, the capacity of which is more than 2 hundred. Fully loaded with passengers, this plane took to the air on a journey of one hour and 15 minutes from the Antep airport.

Istanbul is at a distance of 1125 km from Gaziantep. We shall land on the Ataturk International Airpot in the European part of Istanbul. The other airport of Istanbul, Sabiha Gokcen Int'l Airport, was in the Asian part of Istanbul. From this airport, too, many international and domestic flights are operated. The Ataturk International is used both for domestic and international flight.

The hospitality within the plane for mornings snack is up to the mark. Although the majority of the women of Turkey are prone to mini dress, the clothes of the air hostess bear the mark of decency. The cabin crew is as smart as the crew of Europe and America. We observed the natural sights of Turkey through the window side by side with eating of snack. Sometimes the cloud made hindrance our sight. We reached near Istanbul after flying over the green covered hills, plains and landed on the Istanbul Ataturk Airport coming from the direction of Marmara Sea. Moving away from the runway and proceeding forward, as usual, we stood before the Domestic Terminal. Then we went through the boarding bridge, to the terminal within short time we received our luggage. Then we went towards the international and foreign terminal. In doing this, we had to get on to the lift twice. Such arrangement seemed to be outdated, i.e., their indication of direction was not easier for us. We were looking at expansiveness of this airport while we were moving

from the domestic terminal to the international terminal. Although this airport is not as neat and smart as the airports of Dubai, Bahrain, Riyadh, from the point view of its size it is by no means smaller than those airports. Rather it may be larger than those airports. This international airport of Istanbul seemed to me is similar to J. F. Kennedy airport of New York although J.F. Kennedy airport is one of the busiest airports of the world. Although this Airport of Istanbul is busy, it cannot come up for comparison with the J.F. Kennedy airport of New York J.F. Kennedy airport provides separate terminals for each famous Air companies of the world. It is pertinent to mention here that according to the statistic of 1995, among the busiest airports of the world, the Chicago airport figures first and in order of position the Atlanta Airport figures second. Then the Dallas airport stands as the third largest airport.

The U.S.A is a very large country as such; both internal and international flights operate in these airports. But, the Heathrow airport of London, although it is one of the busiest Airports, did not come up for consideration

We reached the international airline Terminal of a foreign company from the domestic terminal loading the luggage in trolley and following the indicators of airport and waited for plane to go to Dhaka.

We watched the noisy and bustling movement of the passengers of different airlines who had already returned from Istanbul. Saying Zohar prayer at the terminal mosque, I ate my lunch when the counter of the Gulf Air opened, we proceeded forward for our journey to Dhaka during our sojourn in Turkey for 10 days, we found the weather temperate and excellent. It is neither hot nor cold. If even heat or cold is felt anywhere, it is neither too hot nor too cold. It was at a tolerable limit as a result, our tour of Turkey in the middle of June was timely and convenient.

## From Istanbul to Dhaka

From Istanbul we had set programme to go to Dhaka on Sunday, the 22nd June '08 at 3 p.m. local time by flight from Istanbul to Dhaka via Bahrain within the Istanbul Ataturk International Airport, we had been waiting from 3 to 4 hours. When the counter of the Gulf Air opened towards 1 p.m, we along with other passengers beg to assemble. The personnel of the gulf air would not allow luggage beyond 20 k.g. per head without freight luggage weighing 30 k.g. and above are usually carried free although the weight is above 20 k.g. I was surprised at the insistence of the Gulf Air official's rigid attitude on not carrying luggage not beyond 20 k.g. without fare.



*A part of the Ataturk International Airport of Istanbul*

Without paying extra charge till the last moment, to the officials of the Gulf Air, we kept the excess luggage with us in the morning, while coming from Gaziantep, although our passports were checked twice the Turkish Airline did not take extra charge from us for our excess luggage in view of our foreign nationality. The behavior of the Gulf Air personnel seemed to be an 'excess'.

While returning from America to Dhaka via London, the Gulf Air personnel did not show miserliness in carrying luggage weighing more than 20 k.g. without charge at Heathrow Airport. We proceeded towards the immigration after handing over the luggage and receiving the boarding card. We stood in a line out of 8 to 10 lines along with innumerable passengers of different countries gradually proceeding further, on we completed the immigration process and moved towards our fixed entrance. Our number was 220 among the several hundred of gates or Boarding bridges.

At the Bahrain airport our transit time was only one hour. So, there was every possibility of missing the flight to Dhaka in the event of late departure of the plane from Istanbul Airport. But contrary to our apprehension, the plane from Bahrain arrived at the fixed time of 2 p.m. After announcement on the mike, we boarded the plane in time. Our fully loaded plane took to the air in time at 3 p.m. It was moving towards the North, i.e. over the Black Sea it seemed the plane, making a circle over the Black Sea, returned again to Turkey and, afterwards, rounding over Turkey, again, it moved towards the Mediterranean Sea and then it entered Egypt. In the meantime snack was served. The quality of the food was excellent. For me, food together with vegetables was served in packet designated for me on a tray. In the light of the previous experience it can be foretold that good treatment and excellent hospitality meted out to us during the journey from Istanbul to Bahrain would not be

available during our traveling from Bahrain to Dhaka. As presumed the treatment and hospitality were of ordinary standard while eating repast, the plane flew over the Red sea and then entered Saudi Arabia the differential treatment is obvious when the passengers from Dhaka go to the west via Bahrain. From Bahrain to the west, the crew treat the passengers with sweet demeanor and excellent hospitality on the contrary, during flight from Dhaka to the middle, the crew show indifference and ordinary treatment. However, the passengers are partly responsible for this. Entering Saudi Arabia from the west, the plane flew over Saudi Arabia for one hour and a half or so. Usually, passengers are allowed to perform Zearah and Umrah after landing at the Jeddah airport but, contrary to our expectation, the plane did not land at Jeddah. Barring a few countries, Muslims from all over the world are allowed to perform Zearah and Umrah at all time except during the time of Hajj. The dishonest travel agents who make illegal trafficking of manpower are no less responsible for it. The 6 gulf countries, i. e. Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, U.A.E and Oman mete out indecent and indecorous behaviour during the flights to Dhaka and from Dhaka to the Middle East. The travel agents thrive at the cost of the passengers some bureaucrats also act as accomplices. Their complicity further intensifies the agony of the travelers. The majority of the travel agents make shady deal. Consequently, the innocent people suffer in view of this, many countries of the world including Bangladesh; have earned disrepute in the Middle East. The sunset as soon as we entered Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and Turkey are in the same Greenwich Mean Time. We landed on the Bahrain airport at the appointed time. Since I was in ablution, immediately after landing, I offered 3 Rakat Maghreb prayer. Mr. Shakhawat feels a sense of unreasoned to say prayer at every place before the fixed time. He observes : It is indecorous and indecent I say: It is befitting and seemly.

I argued: when people make defecation at a place indiscriminately it is a matter of Shame but it is not at all indecorous to say prayer anywhere when the time of prayer approaches.

Through the Bahrain airport terminal we came to the counter of the Dhaka flight and there we lost ourselves amongst the multitude of passengers and boarded the Dhaka bound plane of the Gulf Air. After delay of one hour, the plane arrived. It is a large sized plane but is not as clean and neat as the plane of Istanbul-Bahrain route though its passenger capacity is very high. Low quality hospitality and ordinary treatment were meted out to the passengers, as usual. At dawn, we landed on Zia (presently Hazrat Shah Jalal International Airport). In view of one hour's delay at Bahrain Airport, I could say Eshar prayer at the airport on the previous night and Fazar prayer in Dhaka on the following morning.

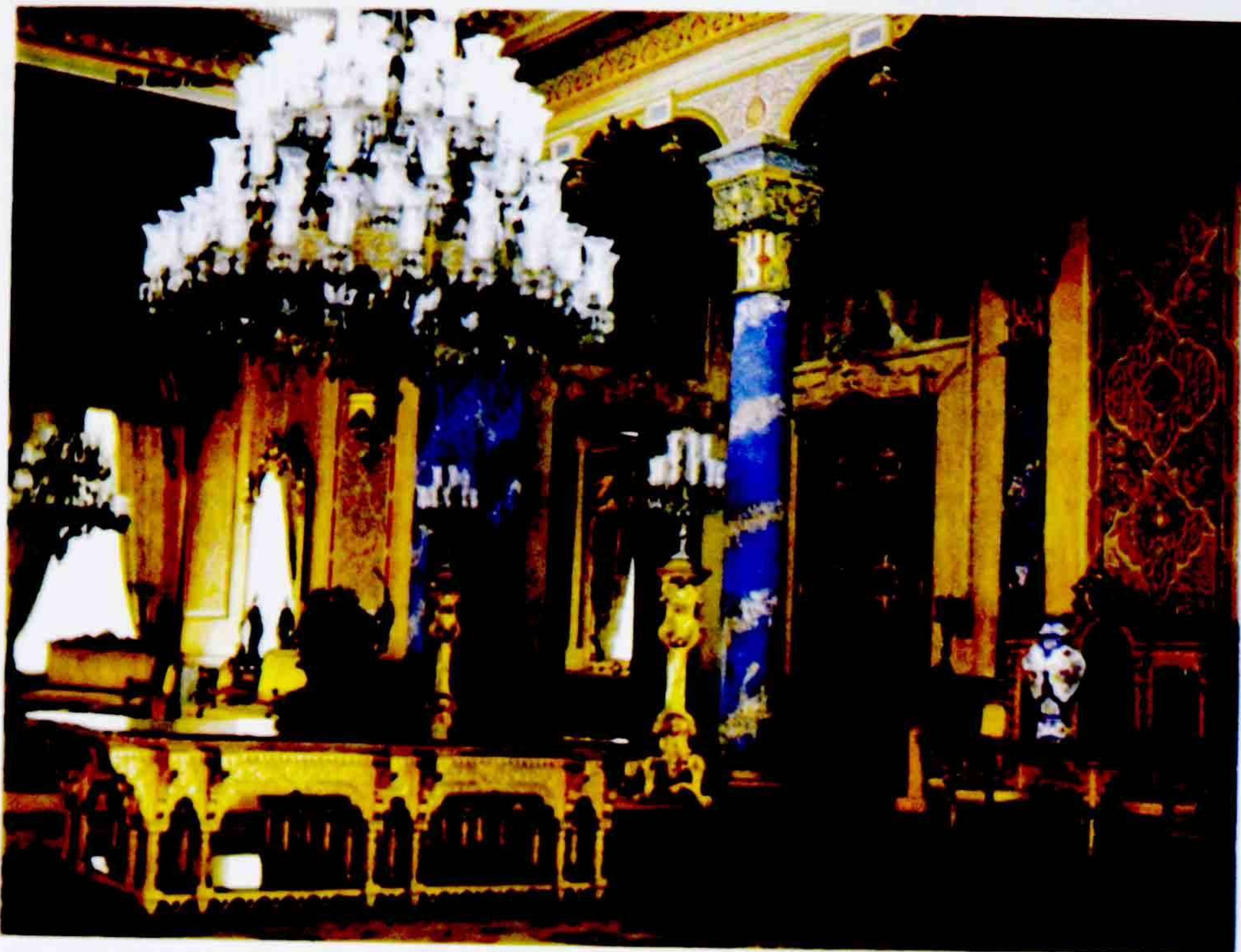
## Turkey Today

Ankara is the capital of modern Turkey a country consisted of 10 lakh square kilometers. 80% Turks and nearly 20% Kurds and a few Arab in the bordering area of Syria form the Turkish nation. It can be said that the number of non-Muslim is negligible in Turkey.

Once one of the vastest Empires of the world, the Osmani Sultanate's some regions went out of the control of the Sultans in the border towards the later period of Osmani Sultanate. Towards the later period of the 18th century, the situation of Istanbul the capital of the Osmanli Khilafat became precarious. As a consequence, the Northern region of Africa, a part of Arabian Peninsula, the neighboring regions of Eastern Europe slipped out of its hands. The aftermath of crushing defeat of Turkey in the First World War is the disintegration of the Osmani Sultanate. Under these circumstances, the existence of the present Turkey including Istanbul and Izmir was at a stake. At this critical juncture, Mustafa Kemal Pasha, an able general, later on named Ataturk of Armed forces, was able to play a very strong role in organizing the armed forces and the Turkish people as a result of which the sovereign state of Turkey - a country of 10 lakh square k.m and bigger than Bangladesh by nearly 6 times could maintain its sovereign status.

The Arab countries are the bigger parts of splintered Osmanli Sultanate in Africa and Asia, Saudi Arabia of Arabian Peninsula, its neighboring countries, Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Arab countries of Africa constituted a portion of the vast Osmanli Sultanate at the instigation of foreign powers. These countries seceded from the Sultanate. As a result of this

the Turkish people felt indignation and resentment against the Arabs. As a reaction to Arab betrayal, Arabic Language was spurned and expunged from religious, economic and social activities of Turkish life. Beard and cap of the males, scarf, and shroud of the females were banned through legislation and strictly enforced during Ataturk's time. Namaz, the holy Quran and the recitation of the holy Quran were converted into Turkish tongue were performed through the Turkish Language instead of Arabic Language on the other hand, a radical change was effected in the mode of dress, custom, culture and style of living for some years during Ismet Inonu, second president of Turkey, regime.



*An interior view of one of the palaces of Dolmabahce*

There is least sense of doubt that these steps have been taken by way of resentment retribution and indignation as a reaction to the secession of Arab States from the Osmani Sultanate. Naturally, as an aftermath of the forsaking of Islamic injunction and mode of dress, the Turks have become inclined to the neighboring Europeans. The famous mosques of Turkey became desolate of devotees and stood stolid. The massive mosques in

big cities became bereft of Mussalis including the mosques of Istanbul, Izmir. The religious institutions, i.e. the madrasahs became extinct by abandoning Arabic. Consequently, although there is prevalence of state law of Turkey in public life, they could understand that laws enacted by them for abandoning Arabic which is contrary to Islam. As a result, the gradual extinction of Arabic has come to a halt. It is staging a slow and steady com-back in view of its expediency. So, inspite of the passage of a century, the Turkish people, till to day, are observing Islam as their predecessors did during the time of Osmani Sultanate. But, as the majority of the Turkish people do not know Arabic till now, they feel shock and shame as they fail to observe Islam. Such extreme, harsh measures and mistake of Mustafa Kemal Pasha - Ataturk and his associates did not last long since no non-Arab Muslim can maintain his Muslim entity by forsaking Arabic i.e. Iman, The Persians reverted back to Arabic. During the early stage of Islam during, the heyday of Amirul Momenin, the ancient civilized country of Persia came under the control of the Arabs gradually.

Previously the Persians used to regard themselves as aristocrats and superior to the Arabs. But after their conversion to Islam, they had no other alternative but to give Arabic the topmost position since similarly, sure the Turks are Muslims, they could not observe religion. At present, due to Islamic revival in Turkey, at every place, the facilities for saying prayer have risen tremendously. Such as in airport, bus terminal, big restaurants adjacent to highways which were absent even 10 to 20 years ago.

The men in Turkey wear pants and shirts, pious women wear loose full shirt above the pants and scarf on the head, although in places under the government control the wearing of scarf on the head is banned. A debate is going on Turkey on the issue of wearing scarf. On the other hand, the number of people who adhere to modern style of living introduced by Kemal Pasha is not few since the modern style of living is in fashion for almost a hundred year.

Some of the intricately designed wall clocks used by the Sultans.



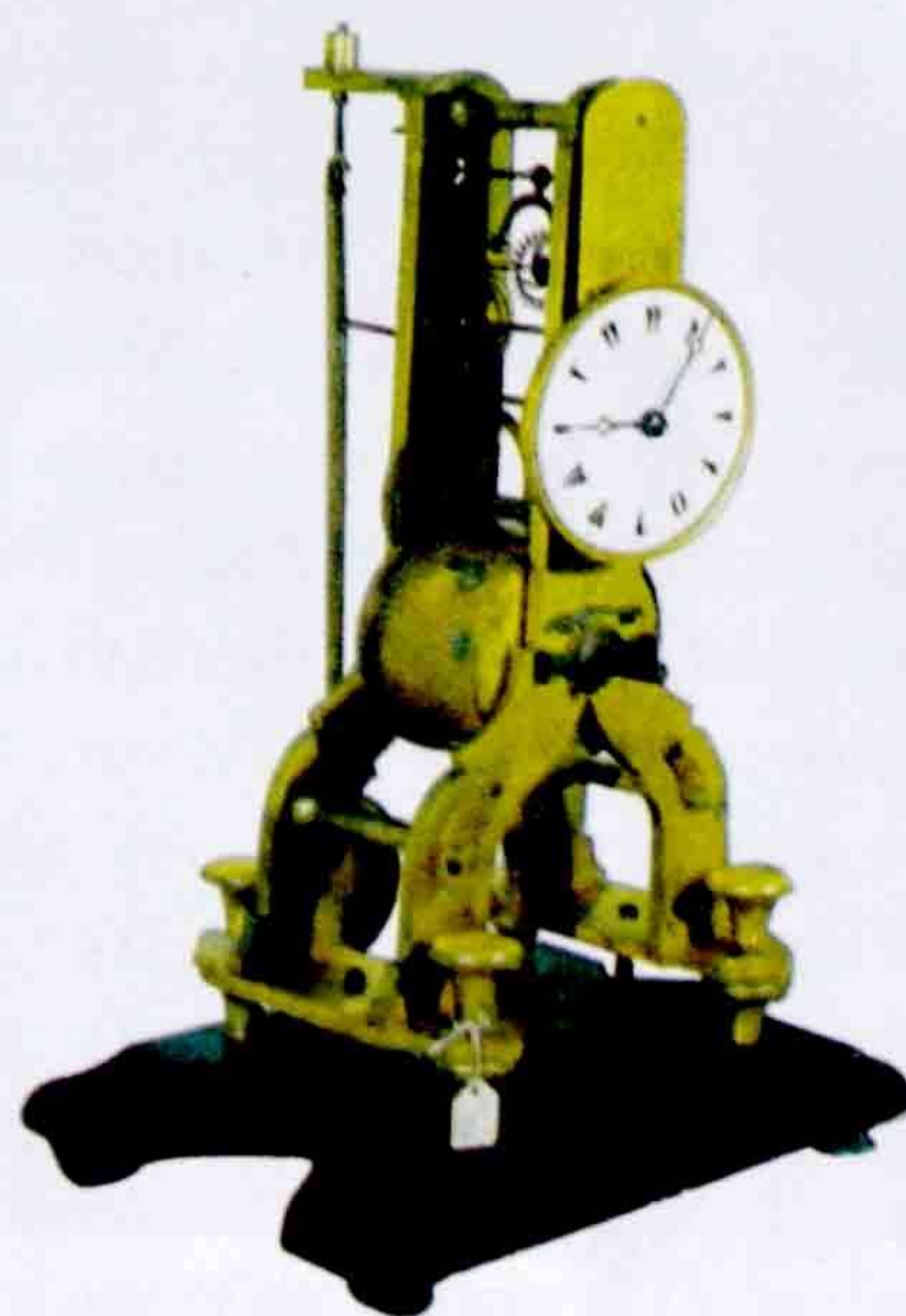
1750 years



1750 years



1870 years



1810 years

Although it is not presumable by seeing the men, it can be easily presumed by seeing the women. Their clothes, style of living are so free and open that they outstrip or surpass the Europeans in respect of wearing short and mini dress, it seems, they are contending with the Europeans.

The greater part of the Turkish women, it seemed, move and work Without hesitation, in office, court on roads, airport, bus terminal and everywhere they may wear short dress. There, number of people leading conjugal life according to Islamic Laws is all the more few. In number following Europe and American style of living, boys and girls, as friends, live together without any hesitation.

Since there is no bond of religion changing and swapping of partners are very common. There, the number of aged women is not few in number. They had no husband and they have no husband till now. No where in Turkey you will find any place where there in no night club. Everywhere there are abundance of night clubs. Istanbul the capital of Osmani Sultanate for hundreds of years are replete with, not with hundreds, but thousands of night clubs. The life style of present Turkish people is very clean no where dirty and unclean sight you will notice, whether it is in the city or in the village even in the lanes and by-lanes there is no mark of unclean lines. The food of their restaurants is of a very high quality. But since the value of our money is very low and by contrast the value of their money is high one has to make shopping under for bidding circumstances. It can be said that, there rate of crime is negligible. Since they are educated every where in Turkey people are respectful to Law. Land Communication is excellent. The buses of the various companies are luxurious and modern among them, most of the buses are of world famous Mercedes Brand. Both small and big cities are neat and clean are furnished with all modern facilities - toilet as well as restaurant managements. However, one has to pay for using toilets even for using the toilets of the mosque. Since Turkey is a cold country, the women as well as the men are prone to smoking no where anti-smoking publicity was seen. The physical constitution of the Turkish people is impressive all are white complexion. No where people either of black or brown color was seen on the whole, it can be said that the Turkish people are an educated and civilized nation.

## **A publishing ceremony a book named (Bengali) "Turkey: An Osmanli an Empire"**

On Saturday, the 31st March, 2011 the publishing ceremony was held at A.K. Khan Banglow (the residence of Salauddin Khan) on Batali Hills at evening in the city of Chittagong.

The honourable Ambassador of Turkey Mr. Mehmet Vakur Erkul was present in that ceremony as a chief guest and he unveiled the cover of the book.

The Honorary Consul General of Turkey and the publisher of the book Mr. Salahuddin Kasem Khan presided over the meeting. The Principal of International Hope School Mr. Bayram Saatci, the President of Bangladesh-Turkey Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Fikret Cicek, The Chairman of A. K. Khan



*The Honourable Ambassador of Turkey Mr. Vakur Erkul (in the middle) unveiling the Book "Turkey: An Osmanian Empire" at an occassion in presence of honourable dignitaries. On his right is Mr. Salauddin Kasem Khan, the honorary Consul General of Turkey in Bangladesh and by his side Mr. Shamshuddin Khan, Chairman A. K. Khan Group and Company. On the left side of the honourable Ambassador of Turkey, the Author of the book Mr. Ahmadul Islam Chowdhury and by his side Mr. Bayram Saatci, the principal of the Int'l Turkish Hope School in Bangladesh.*

Group of Company Mr. Shamsuddin Khan and the author of the book Mr. Ahmadul Islam Chowdhury delivered their speech.

The Honourable Ambassador of Turkey Mr. Vakur Erkul (in the middle) unveiling the Book "Turkey: An Osmanli an Empire" at an occassion in presence of honourable dignitaries. On his right is Mr. Salauddin Kasem Khan, the honorary Consul General of Turkey in Bangladesh and by his side Mr. Shamshuddin Khan, Chairman A. K. Khan Group and Company. On the left side of the honourable Ambassador of Turkey, the Author of the book Mr. Ahmadul Islam Chowdhury and by his side Mr. Bayram Saatci, the Principal of the Int'l Turkish Hope School of Bangladesh.

Besides the Chairman of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce & Industry Mr. Murshed Murad Ibrahim, Senior Vice President Mr. Mahbubul Alam,

The Director of Ispahani Limited, Mr. M. Sakir Ispahani, a famous businessman and social worker, Mr. Abdul Bari Chowdhury (Abbu), Many Professors, Businessmen, Doctors, Engineers and Many other elite persons were present in that meeting.

The honorable Ambassador Mr. Vakur said in his speech about the relation of brotherhood between Bangladesh and Turkey. He also remembered the relation between Monghal and Turkish Sultans about ship building at Chittagong Port and many other communications. He requested Mr. Salahuddin Kashem Khan for publishing the book in English.

It is notable that the ships which were built at Chittagong Port were very high in quality. That in why the Turkish Sultans used to purchase ships from Chittagong port.

N.B:- After publishing the book in Bengali, on that day, Mr. Salahuddin Kashem Khan published the book in English according to the desire of the honorable Ambassador of Turkey Mr. Vakur Erkul.



## USEFUL WEB PAGES

### **Visiting Turkey**

<http://www.turkiyemiz.gen.tr/>

<http://www.goreme.com/>

<http://www.goturkey.com/>

<http://www.turkeytravelplanner.com/>

<http://www.visiting-turkey.com/>

### **Ministry of Culture and Tourism of The Republic of Turkey**

<http://www.kultur.gov.tr>

### **3D Turkey**

<http://www.3dmekanlar.com/sites.html>

### **Topkapi Museum**

<http://www.topkapisarayi.gov.tr/>

### **The Blue Mosque**

<http://www.blue mosque.co/>

### **Dolmabahce Palace**

<http://www.dolmabahcepalace.com/>

### **National Museums Board**

<http://www.millisaraylar.gov.tr>

### **Hagia Sophia**

<http://www.ayasofyamuzesi.gov.tr/en/>

<http://www.hagiasophia.com/>

### **Tarsus**

<http://www.sacred-destinations.com/turkey/tarsus.htm>

### **Panorama Istanbul**

<http://www.panoramikmuze.com/>

### **Konya Mevlana Museum**

<http://www.mevlanamuzesi.net>

### **Sems-I Tebriz**

Live from Sems-I Tebriz Mosque and Tomb

<http://semsitebrizi.com/>

To watch, click on the followings.

Galeri,

Kamera Yayini icin tiklayin.

For the password and username, type misafir

### **Turkish Embassy in Dhaka**

<http://dhaka.emb.mfa.gov.tr/>

### **Turkish Airlines**

<http://www.turkishairlines.com/>

### **Turkey Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry**

[www.tbcci.net](http://www.tbcci.net)

### **Turkish Cuisine**

<http://turkish.homestead.com/>

<http://www.turkish-cuisine.org/>

<http://www.turkishfoodandrecipies.com/>

### **Live from Mecca**

<http://www.kure.tv/kure-tv-mekke/Canli-yayin-izle/65/>

### **Live from Madinah**

<http://www.kure.tv/kure-tv-medine/Canli-yayin-izle/66/>

### **Int'l Turkish Hope School**

<http://www.ithsbd.net/>