



AZİZ MAHMUD HÛDÂYÎ FOUNDATION

A Five Century Oak of Mercy and Compassion



THE SULTAN OF HEARTS AZIZ MAHMUD HÜDÂYÎ

-qaddasallahu sirrah- (1541-1628)

Aziz Mahmud Hüdâyî's real name is Mahmud. *Aziz* is an appellation given to him during his life as a mark of respect and reverence. As for *Hüdâyî*, that was in all likelihood either a nickname given by his sheikh Üftâde or a pseudonym he used in his poems. No detailed information exists regarding his father Fazlullah bin Mahmud and his profession. Hüdâyî, according to reports, is a descendant of Junayd Baghdadi, and therefore a sayyid, a descendant of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him.

Hüdâyî was born in the town of Koçhisar near Ankara, in the year 948 AH/1541 AD. He spent his early years of childhood in the town of Sivrihisar, of Eskisehir province. Beginning his early education in local Sivrihisar, Hüdâyî later came to Istanbul, where he enrolled in the Medrese of Küçük Ayasofya. There, his promising scholarly talents were noticed by Nazirzade Ramazan Efendi who made Hüdâyî his *muid*, i.e. assistant. The intense Sufi ambiance of the times coupled with the profound zeal for *marifa* in his heart, Hüdâyî soon found himself attending the Sufi talks of Nureddinzade Muslihuddin Efendi.

After various stints in medreses across Istanbul by the side of his teacher Nazirzade, Hüdâyî was appointed to teach at the Me-

drese of Edirne, after which he again joined his teacher to serve as the *qadi* or the judge of Cairo and later Damascus. When Nazirzade was appointed the Head Qadi of Bursa, Hüdâyî became his deputy and a *mudarris* at the Medrese of Ferahiye.

In Bursa, like before, Hüdâyî entered the tasawwuf scene of the town, frequenting the talks of Muhyiddin Üftâde -qaddasallahu sirrah-, acknowledged as the *qutb* of Bursa. Before his initiation into the way, Üftâde demanded Hüdâyî do three things:

1. Distribute all his wealth among the poor.
2. Quit his positions as *mudarris* and deputy *qadi*.
3. Embark on a grueling struggle to refine his self under the supervision of his Sheikh.

Accepting each demand laid down by his Sheikh, Hüdâyî gave all he had to charity, quit his posts as lecturer and judge and began a demanding struggle towards purification.

During his *sayr'u suluk*, Sheikh Üftâde presented Hüdâyî with the severest of tests, all of which he passed, eventually completing his passage in a matter of three short years. Affiliated with his Sheikh at the age of thirty-six, Hüdâyî was made a *khalifa* before he had turned forty, and was subsequently sent to his town of Sivrihisar.



Unable to stand the separation of his Sheikh for too long, Hüdâyî soon returned to Bursa. But his return to Bursa virtually turned out to be a condolence visit, for not long after, Sheikh Üftâde passed away (988 h./1580 m.). Beginning to feel uncomfortable in Bursa after the bereavement of his Sheikh, Hüdâyî set out towards the Balkans, journeying briefly through Rumelia.

Hüdâyî eventually returned to Istanbul, the capital of knowledge and wisdom, and took residence in the suburb of Küçük Ayasofya where he had already spent a greater part of his youth.

While occupied with guiding people to the right path in Istanbul, Hüdâyî decided to move across to the other side of the Bosphorus, to Üsküdar, where he purchased a patch of land to build a mosque and a lodge. Soon, to supervise their construction more closely, he relocated his residence to Üsküdar, in close vicinity of the Rumi Mehmed Pasha Mosque. The building of the lodge was completed in the year 1003 AH (1594 AD), just as the reign of Sultan Murad III was coming to an end. For a further four years, Hüdâyî nonetheless continued giving sermons at the Fatih Mosque, across the Bosphorus, like before, transferring thereafter to the Mihrimah Sultan Mosque by the shore of Üsküdar. The reign of Mehmed III, who ascended the throne following his father Murad III, saw Hüdâyî continue his preaching services around Üsküdar.

Throughout the nearly ten year reign of Sultan Mehmed III, Hüdâyî lived a life distant from the Istanbul environment and the Palace scene.

Ahmed I, who assumed the throne after Mehmed III, is significant as a sultan renowned for his deep feelings of respect for Hüdâyî. Subsequent to Ahmed I, in

the time of Osman II, Hüdâyî continued offering his valuable services.

Come the time of Murad IV, who donned Hüdâyî with the Sword of the Sultanate at Eyüp, as the ‘most eminent Sheikh of the time’, Hüdâyî had reached old age.

Leaving behind him hundreds and thousands of devotees and followers, numerous works (thirty in total, including seven in Turkish) and a Foundation, Hüdâyî walked to Divine Mercy on the 3rd of Safar, 1038 AH (October 2, 1628). Today, he lies in the tomb next to the mosque built within his *külliye*, which was completely restored by Abdulmecid after being completely destroyed by a fire that broke out in 1850. Survived to this day is also his *çilehane* near Camlica-Bulgurlu, a haven to where he would retreat from time to time and give himself to contemplation and worship.

It is said that one day, reminding how Abdulqadir Jilani is said to intercede on behalf of his devotees in the Hereafter, Sultan Ahmed asked Hüdâyî “...and do you not have a similar promise for us?”. Thereupon Hüdâyî, lifting his hands aloft, prayed:

“Those who enter our way till the very last day and those whose paths cross with our tomb and recite a *Fatiha* even if it be once in their lives are among us. Let those who are attached to us never drown at sea, or undergo poverty in their elderly years. Let them not breathe their final breaths until they salvage their *iman*; let them sense their deaths from beforehand and inform their loved ones.”

Some of the works of Hüdâyî and related studies can be accessed at www.hudayivakfi.org



SOUP KITCHEN

As specified in its deed of trust, the Hüdâyî Foundation prepares meals to provide for approximately five-hundred people everyday, including two-hundred to take home in food containers, a continuing practice since its founding. In the month of Ramadan and on sacred days and nights, this number reaches beyond a thousand.



Stated in the deed of trust of the Foundation are the words:

“Meals shall be prepared in the buildings adjacent to the Mosque of the Foundation of His Excellence, on Fridays,

during the month of Ramadan and the remaining sacred days and nights, and distributed among the poor...”

Sponsored by the benefactors of Üsküdar, preparing meals for the underprivileged today continues in a more systematic manner, true the spirit of the Hüdâyî deed of trust.

THE SUPPLIES DISTRIBUTION UNIT

Each month on a regular basis, with vehicles specifically allotted for that purpose, supplies of food are taken to the doors of the some two-thousand needy families residing in various parts of Istanbul, assessed on the spot as being underprivileged.

The meat of stock slaughtered at the Foun-

ation is likewise immediately delivered to these needy tables.

Besides the aid of food supplies, around two-hundred families receive additional financial assistance, including the covering of their heating expenses in winter.

GOODS ASSISTANCE

The Foundation acts as a vital bridge between the giver and the disadvantaged receiver in conveying the goods donated to its doorstep. Thousands of pairs of shoes, clothes, tons of coal for heating are only to mention a few of what comes to and is delivered by the Foundation, from door to door.

These goods are also delivered by the spirited personnel of the Foundation, to needy families, ascertained with diligent precision as being underprivileged.

OFFERINGS AND SACRIFICES AT HÜDÂYÎ

Sacrifices are an expression of our gratitude to Allah, glory unto Him. The core of sacrifice is therefore the remembrance the commemoration of the Almighty.

Donations of live stock and meat, during the Eid of Adha and other times alike, are delicately assessed with sensitivity worthy of the Foundation’s ethos. We would like to thank, once again, our philanthropic members of society who have provided such donation to the Foundation.

The purely intended offerings and sacrifices of stock made at Hüdâyî are used:

1. In the hot meals prepared each day at the Foundation Center to hundreds of needy people,
2. In the supply packets distributed to the disadvantaged,
3. In the meals of students accommodated at various divisions of our Foundation.

The Foundation accepts donations of sacrifice of stock, which includes the option for it to be slaughtered in Central Asia, the Balkans and various parts of Africa. Incoming stock donations are slaughtered by partner corporations, under the supervision of Hüdâyî servicemen and volunteers. The sentiments of our benefactors are thus taken to the four corners of the world.

MEDICINE AND HEALTH



All costs of diagnosis and treatment of the ill dispatched from Hüdâyî are covered by the Foundation. Those needing further surgical treatment are sent to other hospitals and given all the support needed for a healthy recuperation.

HÜDÂYÎ EMERGENCY AID UNIT (HAY)

An emergency aid unit, abbreviated as HAY (*Hüdâyî Acil Yardım*), was established within the Foundation following the 1999 Izmit-Adapazari Earthquake, with the purpose of providing emergency aid in the aftermath of earthquakes and similar catastrophes. Equipped with advanced supplies and equipment that undergo constant upgrades, the unit is kept on its toes for emergency situations.



In spite of striking quite a distance away from Turkey, the HAY provided relief services in and around Aceh following the tsunami catastrophe.

Our Foundation was far from remaining insensitive to the recent humanitarian tragedy in Gaza, delivering the support of the Hüdâyî beneficiaries in the form of medical and food supplies.

ORGANIZATIONAL SERVICES

The Hüdâyî Foundation also lends a public service in accommodating various social activities, including weddings, kermises and *iftar* meals.

Our Foundation places particular importance on family, the pillars of society, and gives due assistance to the establishment of happy and peaceful families. The organizing of wedding and circumcision ceremonies, are just a couple of the services provided in this regard.

WOMEN'S CULTURAL CENTER

The Şehbal Women's Culture House in Fatih, aimed at providing educational and cultural services to women, contributes towards the flourishing of women's social, cultural and occupational developments.

STUDENT BOARDING HOUSES

The rearing of quality human beings is the most important investment that can be made in the future of a nation. The Hüdâyî Foundation makes a massive investment in this regard, from boarding, sponsoring students and giving them scholarships, to offering enormous financial support for postgraduate research, which are just to mention a few.



Boarding high school and tertiary students is one of the services lent in the educational arena by the Foundation since its establishment. On the back of a twenty year experience in providing boarding services for high school and tertiary students, our Foundation now carries a significant expertise that could be considered exemplary in the field. Two exceptional examples are the Hüdâyî High School Dormitory of Ihlamurkuyu and the Konak Student Dormitory, later established under the roof of a separate association, aimed especially towards lending service to tertiary students who have come from abroad to study in Turkey.

SCHOLARSHIPS

The Aziz Mahmud Hüdâyî Foundation continues to award scholarships to students of distinct levels. With foremost priority given to underprivileged and successful students, the scholarships continue until graduation, given the students maintain their levels of success.



QURAN SCHOOLS

The Alemdağ Quran School for Males

The Alemdağ Quran School for Males opened its doors to education in 1999 and, with a capacity of two-hundred students, has continued to this day. It has been commended by the Presidency of Religious Affairs as an 'exemplary' in the field. With the students' accommodation and food expenses covered by the Aziz Mahmud Hüdâyî Foundation, and a teaching staff with a strong pedagogic background, the Alemdağ Quran School continues to set an example.

Consistent with the curriculum set by the Presidency of Religious Affairs, the Alemdağ Quran School offers courses on the Holy Quran (*tajwid, ta'lim, ma'al*) and basic religious knowledge, electing students, who show promise in reciting the Quran and display an aptitude for memorization, for further training in *hifz*, that is, memorizing the Quran.

Aziz Mahmud Hüdâyî Quran Schools for Females

The Aziz Mahmud Hüdâyî Quran School for Females continues to offer education to four-hundred and fifty enrolled students, including three-hundred and fifty boarders. Assisted by a strong team offering their services in a selfless manner, the School has gained a reputation among other Quran Schools for Females, pioneering in the founding of many others. These achievements have lead to a growing interest in the School, which is testified by its receiving of applications well above its capacity, whereby it has been able to reach a quality group of students.



The Gülistan Quran School was thus established to answer that growing need. Our schools offer courses in both reciting and memorizing the Quran. The Aziz Mahmud Hüdâyî

Quran School for Females features prominently in *hifz* competitions.

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES FOR KINDRED NATIONS AND COMMUNITIES

The Hüdâyî Foundation offers considerable boarding and scholarship opportunities for both students from abroad who successfully gain entrance into an undergraduate course through the YOS exam, and students brought by the Presidency of Religious Affairs, through the intermediary of YOK, from the Turkic States, Caucasia, the Balkans and other kindred nations and communities for undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate studies.

The Foundation similarly covers the living and boarding expenses of a significant portion of male and female students brought from the relevant countries, by the Presidency of Religious Affairs, to be trained in Quran Schools.

These services have definitely not gone to waste, and their fruits have been reaped in very short amount of time. We are now made to stand witness to the flourishing of similar activities undertaken by these students in their countries of origin, assisted by an intimate acquaintance with the Turkish-Islamic culture. In some countries, there has even been promising establishments of non-governmental organizations, like foundations and associations of similar caliber.

Another service lent by the Hüdâyî Foundation in the cultural sphere is its contribution towards rebuilding the

identities of kindred peoples. Many young students in the process of receiving education in the Hüdâyî circle spend time each summer in lands like Azerbaijan, Crimea, Albania, Kazakhstan, Caucasia and Turkistan, helping the locals regain consciousness of their identities and at the same time reinforce the ties of friendship between two countries.

POSTGRADUATE SERVICES

Academic Research Center (İlmî Araştırmalar Merkezi - İLAM)

The Hüdâyî Foundation is an exemplary non-governmental organization also in terms of its contributions to academic life. Having founded the Academic Research Center, better



known as İLAM, in 1993-1994, to cover the need of human resources felt by Turkey and kindred countries alike, it has since provided an environment for the training of numerous talented academics and researchers specially selected on the basis of potential. In 1995, the Center was entrusted to the management of Çilehane Academic Research Association. Returned to the supervision of the Foundation after the latter was given rights over the site, the Center now continues to train people for the world of learning.

An assistance of graduate and postgraduate researchers, ranging from their supervision and discussion of possible research areas to helping them get hold of texts vital for their research, has meant that İLAM has provided an ideal environment for the producing of scholars with success in their fields.

A substantial research library at the heart of İLAM sees to the needs of academics and researchers.



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