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The Ottomans and the Weak Hadiths

When states and kingdoms arise on dreams and myths, while not knowing the extent of their credibility, it is not surprising that these states and kingdoms exploit religious sentiments and mystical methods and their paths in order to establish the foundations of their rule and exploit them for the benefit of the state. This is what actually happened with the Ottoman Empire, which adopted a myth in which it found its intention to establish and strengthen the state. In this regard, the researcher and Professor Hatem Al-Tahawi, a specialist in early Ottoman history, says: **“This is how the legend of Othman’s dream appears in Ottoman historical sources that establish the entire Ottoman history. This is considered an arbitrary tradition within the tradition of Islamic and Byzantine historical writing, in order to impose a mythical aura on the person and his dynasty after him. In order to convey a message that their country was nothing but an expression of the will of heaven, especially after it was linked to religion, based on Othman’s overnight stay while reading the Qur’an in the house of Sheikh “Edeballi”. In addition, this myth, like its predecessors, which relied on the “Dream of the tree”. It was previously invented in order to forge a political and military legitimacy blessed from heaven for a prince of humble social origin that would allow him - and his family - to expand under a spiritual umbrella that requires the support and obedience of all followers and subjects”.**

Regarding this, a very important question comes to mind. This state was built on the basis of the legend of the “Dream of the tree”. Is this state incapable of falsifying history or exploiting the noble prophetic hadiths in the interest of the survival and expansion of the state, and imparting the aura and sanctity of the establishment of their state? This includes, but is not limited to: The hadith “saying” attributed to the Prophet, which is incorrect, and was reported by Al-Suyuti in Al-Jami Al-Saghir: **“The Romans are people of patience and will remain until the end of time. They are your companions as long as you live”.** Some Turks interpreted it by saying that what is meant by your companions is that they include the Sultanate and the Emirate over the Arabs until the end of time. This saying is circulated by some fanatics of the Ottoman Turks, and they say that what is meant by the Romans are the Ottoman Turks. However, this hadith was classed as weak by Al-Albani in the series of weak hadiths. On the other hand, if we assume that this hadith is correct, then is the intended Roman element in this hadith, the Turkish element? Or is it an attempt to employ some texts to suit the Ottoman state and its aspirations in the Arab countries, and to find arguments for entering their regions and seizing them by stirring up emotions? Or is it an attempt to falsify the facts and use them for their benefit?

An example of distorting and changing the contexts of the noble Prophet’s hadiths from their true course in favor of inflating the leaders and sultans of the Ottoman Empire is the famous hadith: **“You will conquer Constantinople. Its prince is one of the best princes, and its army is one of the best armies”.** This hadith was classed as weak by Hadith scholars because there are two reasons in it in terms of the narration and the source. The first of them is that the narrator of the hadith (Abdullah Ibn Bashr Al-Khathami) is classified by the scholars of the amendment as an anonymous narrator. Only Al-Walid ibn Al-Mughira Al-Maafiri reported this hadith from him. It was narrated by Imam Ahmad in his Musnad, as well as by Al-Hakim in his Musnad, and Sheikh Al-Albani and Al-Arnaut classed it as weak. Therefore, it is classified as weak because the narrator is anonymous. As for the second reason: among the narrators of the hadith is Zaid ibn al-Habab, and scholars differed regarding his name, his father’s name and his lineage. For these reasons, the hadith has been weakened by the scholars of amendment.

Another question may arise, assuming the authenticity of the hadith. Is the intended prince, Muhammad Al-Fateh, or otherwise? What is meant here is not Sultan Mehmed II, but another prince at the end of time. This is one of the signs of the coming of the Day of Resurrection. It has been proven in Sahih Muslim that Constantinople will be conquered at the end of time, in the time of the Mahdi. Abu Hurairah narrated that the Prophet Muhammad said: **“The Last Hour would not come until the Romans would land at al-A’maq or in Dabiq. An army consisting of the best (soldiers) of the people of the earth at that time will come from Medina (to counteract them). When they will arrange themselves in ranks, the Romans would say: Do not stand between us and those (Muslims) who took prisoners from amongst us. Let us fight with them; and the Muslims would say: Nay, by Allah, we would never get aside from you and from our brethren that you may fight them. They will then fight and a third (part) of the army would run away, whom Allah will never forgive. A third (part of the army), which would be constituted of excellent martyrs in Allah’s eye, would be killed and the third who would never be put to trial would win and they would be conquerors of Constantinople. And as they would be busy in distributing the spoils of war (amongst themselves) after hanging their swords by the olive trees, the Satan would cry: The Dajjal has taken your place among your family. They would then come out, but it would be of no avail. And when they would come to Syria, he would come out while they would be still preparing themselves for battle drawing up the ranks. Certainly, the time of prayer shall come and then Jesus (peace be upon him) son of Mary would descend and would lead them in prayer. When the enemy of Allah would see him, it would (disappear) just as the salt dissolves itself in water and if he (Jesus) were not to confront them at all, even then it would dissolve completely, but Allah would kill them by his hand and he would show them their blood on his lance (the lance of Jesus Christ)”. In the hadith of Amr bin Auf, he said: “Then the best Muslims, the people of the Hijaz, who fear no one but Allah will come out to them, so that Allah will help them conquer Constantinople and Rourieh thanks to glorification and takbeer”.** The conquest intended in the hadith appears to have taken place only at the hands of the Arabs. This is because it is related to the great saga before The Dajjal came out.

On the other hand, historical sources indicate that the army of Sultan Muhammed Al-Fatih, with which he conquered Constantinople, included quite a few Christians supporting the Ottomans. Are they included in that? There are a number of contemporary scholars and historians of the period of Muhammad Al-Fatih who did not link the hadith and the conquest of Constantinople with Muhammad Al-Fatih, although they praised his efforts in that. Among them are Imam Al-Suyuti and Imam Al-Sakhawi, because they know the weakness of the interpretations in that hadith or its connection with epics at the end of time. Hence, we can say that the Ottoman Turks attributed the intended meaning of the noble prophetic hadiths to their sultans in a way that suits their political and religious status in order to give them a space of religious aura among Muslims. Perhaps this would be a substitute for not performing the Hajj, one of the most important pillars of Islam. Some may explain that they are busy with jihad! Wasn’t the Abbasid Caliph Harun Al-Rashid performing the Hajj for a year and invading the following year? Jihad never prevented him from performing the Hajj, so where is the defect? Did the weak hadiths come to save the Sultans of the Ottoman family and give them something of a religious character and a sacred aura?