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## Enslavement Yards in Ottoman History..

### Enslavement of Sex, Work, and Wars!!

In the "Ottoman" racist society, which is extremely intolerant of Turkish race, poor and socially downtrodden classes who were looking for opportunities of life, protection, money and social rising had to enter the world of (slaves, harem, and Janissaries). It is the social mixture which defined the Sultanate features for long decades. This has led families to try to climb the social scale through presenting their daughters and sons to be slaves of Ottoman princes.

Enslavement in the Sultanate was not a mere human behavior as is the case among other nations. Rather, it turned into a systematic policy with deep roots inside critical parts of Ottoman life. Laws and "Firmans" were issued to regulate and form the enslavement actions; and even enslavement classes. Partially castrated slave is different from completely castrated slave; European slave dominates African slave, and the concubine girl who becomes closely related to the Sultan has a higher rank than other girls.

It is very strange that slaves in Ottoman state were a scale towards advancement and success in a racist society which deemed that Turkish race was the surviving and only race that deserved a decent life.

Slave community was diverse according to the diverse need to it. Janissary slaves- an army of slaves- mostly came from European and Arab children. Young people were forcibly kidnapped from their families and were turned to young recruits in the army of Ottoman Emperor. It was a pure military enslavement as the child was separated from his family, then, he learns the Turkish language. His life becomes devoted to serve, protect, fight for and die instead of his Turkish master. They were the most important and the strongest divisions of Ottoman army upon whom the army depended. They were raised on the principle of absolute compliance and obedience as their loyalty was only to Sultan.

This was not the only source of slave children; Ottoman state has applied to occupied areas, especially in the countries of Balkan and Europe, a human tax known as "Devshirme". Families in occupied areas were forced to hand over some of their children every year as a blood tax so that they would automatically be slaves in the Sultanate. They were turned into either Janissaries or servants in palaces.

In the overall kidnappings, there were tens of thousands of young girls who were kidnapped from their mothers' arms. Army leaders, senior statesmen, and male members of the ruling Ottoman family deemed it permissible to sleep with them. Thus, they started their "sexual" enslavement journey which was a long journey of merciless torment. The little girl was harnessed for pleasure and sex once she arrived at palaces.

Beautiful girls joined the palaces of Bani Ottoman princes. They had several roles including escorting and serving princesses, or they were sent to an Ottoman prince to be one of his bondmaids.

Most of slaves were Greeks, Georgians, Armenians, Circassians, and Arabs, as well as Africans who were brought from Sub-Saharan Africa.

Enslavement has formed in Ottoman Sultanate a deep and influential structure within life classes in a secretive and closed society. This was strongly shown in the army, as well as palaces of Sultans and princes. Some slaves and bondmaids were turned into influential people and dynamic forces with social privileges that cannot be ignored.

Moreover, mothers of some sultans were bondmaids who were taken captive when they were young so that they would later become concubines, and start exercising the authority from which they have been deprived for a long time. They have caused conflicts, assassinations, toppling government of royal court. This was either because they have given birth to princes, or because sultans fell in love with them.

Ottomans used a strange system by which they violated Sharia' law which they claimed to apply. In addition to stealing and kidnapping young people from occupied villages and countries, young male were (castrated) so that they could serve in palaces among women. It was a profitable trade as they were rotated in slave markets of cities from Istanbul to the occupied cities of Damascus and Cairo, down to Mecca.

Europe tried hard to stop the systematic slave trade managed by Ottoman Sultanate. It obliged "Astana" to sign Brussels Treaty in 1890 to criminalize slavery. That treaty greatly limited the enslavement of European slaves but it did not limit Ottoman behavior with regard to enslaving Arabs.

Many Arab researchers described how Ottoman Sultanate turned "Libya" into a large container of slaves due to its geographical location in the middle of Ottoman spheres of influence. In addition, Ottomans built the so-called slave yards where black slaves coming from central Africa were gathered along with Arabs and Berbers. Then, they were deported to Istanbul.

This organized process was not only to bring slaves, but it was also to use them for trade. Selling kidnapped male and female children who were stranded and lost in Libyan Desert, and huddled in "slave yards" waiting for their ominous fate, became a profitable trade that generated millions of Ottoman liras for the workers of sultans, war merchants, and the Sultanate treasury itself.

The strict enslavement system built by Ottomans to serve them, and to ensure permanent human supply "for sex, work, war acts on behalf of others", was one of the black spots in the history of Ottoman Sultanate. Enslavement was present and well-known in human history, but it was mostly based on gangs that kidnapped male and female children, as well as free people to sell them and gain profit. On the contrary, Ottomans enacted laws and legislations that legalized such enslavement behaviors and guaranteed its continuity, dissemination, and harnessing it to serve the Turkish body.