



**They have been forced to perform and dance...  
They were exploited for entertainment, pampering  
and depravity**

## **35 nationalities around the world were exploited as a source of maidservants for the Ottoman Palaces**

Ever since they established their state, the Ottoman sultans were not ashamed to announce to everyone that their state was based on bloodshed, festivities and slavery. The Ottoman family, who claimed to rule by Islam, did not feel any unpleasant as they legalized immorality and supported depravity and spread it everywhere.

Thus, it was not surprising that the maidservants' system became the most prominent institution of the Ottoman Empire. Since the early years of their rule, which lasted more than five centuries, during which they caused the backwardness of the Arab world, until it hit the bottom after it was at the lead; As the Turkish sultans filled their palaces with women and passing nights with singing and festivities, and the people can go to hell.

Perhaps it all started with Sultan Mehmet Al Fatih (1481-1444), who promoted the slave trade until Istanbul became a large market for slaves where the number of nationalities of maidservants reached 35 from all over the world. This led traders to be searching for maidservants with superior aesthetic features to sell them to the Ottoman family, who used to Purchase maidservants at exorbitant prices at a time when Muslims were suffering poverty and hunger under their reign.

**“ Mehmet Al Fatih promoted the slave trade, while the sultans paid exorbitant prices to buy maidservants. ”**

It never stopped at this point, although the main job of the maidservants is to fulfill the desires of the sultans only, and this is a matter that does not require skill or laws; the Turkish sultans were not satisfied with that, as they established a complete system for maidservants, which historians considered absurd and indicative of the extent of the obsession of the Ottoman family with women.

As for the maidservants' system, it begins by bringing maidservants to the palaces, this process is done in more than one way, the most famous of which is captivity in wars, or kidnapping children and raising them inside the Harem, where it is designated for the women of the Turkish sultans, and the other way is to purchase from slave traders.

Some historical sources elucidate the features of upbringing system for maidservants during the reign of the Ottoman sultans. As this system begins with the entry of the maidservants to the palace, and they live in two large halls, one of which is called the great hall and the other is called the small hall. Maidservants are to be divided based on age and tendencies, and according to the hierarchical system; maidservants in that period were called "Ajamiyat" before being subjected to a strict supervision by a special supervisor called "Kakhya Kadyen"

By dint of the "Kakhya Qadin", maidservants learn about the Ottoman protocol in addition to forcing them to learn some manual skills such as sewing and embroidery, erotic dancing, singing, playing musical instruments and how to narrate stories to amuse the Sultan.

Although maidservants were just women whose misfortune led them to serve in the palaces of the Ottoman family, but the Turkish sultans, who used to divide people, did the same with the maidservants; So, they had a hierarchical line starting from "Ajamiyat, i.e., the maidservants who recently came to the palaces, then the maidservant rises to a slightly higher position, which is Shakird, then as a Kilki and finally to Ostta, i.e. the maidservant who learned all the protocols of the Turkish sultans and is now able to teach others.

Furthermore, there was another division for the women whom the Sultan chose for his bed, and for festivities and singing, and these were called "Khasaki". A Khasaki, who gives birth to a son to the Sultan, enjoys a special privilege, as she goes through special ceremony to kiss the hand of the Sultan while wearing the crown and sable fur; subsequently, a private suite is to be assigned to her in the court, and the first to give birth to a son to the Sultan remains at the top and is to be called "Bash Qadin".

As for the third section, it is assigned for the maidservants who were not loved by the Sultan or undertake any work, and these are locked in their rooms and lose their lives day after day without any complain. This is considered by historians to be the cruelest prison in which a person can be imprisoned without committing any sin.

As for the other maidservants, they were no better; historical sources indicate that these women were forced to do immoral acts they could never imagine; some of them suffered from a mental disorder as a result of the depravity of the Turkish sultans and what they did inside the palaces, especially the private parties where everyone goes naked at the same time to please the Sultan. This confirms that this type of slavery was the most heinous in human history.

The English historian Bernard Lewis reveals in his book "Istanbul and the Civilization of the Islamic Caliphate", another aspect of the life of the maidservants inside the palaces of the Ottoman family, after he traveled to Istanbul in (1599), to present a gift from Queen Elizabeth to Sultan Mehmet III.

"Louis" managed to take a peek inside through a secret window into the life of the maidservants inside the Harem, as the Ottoman sultans imposed complete secrecy on this mysterious part of the palaces and killed everyone who tried to find out what was going on inside.

"Louis" was able to peek with the help of one of the Aghas of the Harem and says that he saw about thirty girls who were playing with the ball, at first, he thought that they were males, but when he saw their hair hanging on their backs with necklaces of small pearls on, and other clear signs, he realized that they were women and describe them as beautiful.

The English historian then goes further to describe the clothes of the maidservants, saying: They wear more than one headscarf "keffiyeh" of gold cloth on their heads, and there was no tie around their necks but an exorbitant pearl necklace, a diamond hanging on the chest of each one and earrings made of diamonds, some of their shirts were of red satin, others were blue, in addition to other colors; these shirts were tied with laces - meaning a transparent piece of cloth -. As for pants, they were made of first-class cotton fabric, white as snow and thin as water, revealing the legs described by "Louis" as beautiful, and lower leg was graced by anklets.

The system of maidservants grew little by little due to the craving of the Turkish sultans for women and leaning on beds. Some historians even estimated the number of maidservants in the palace of Topkapı Saray in 1475, to be about four hundred, in addition to two hundred and fifty maidservants in another palace, all of whom belong to the sultan. Historians wondered if this was the number at a time when the Ottoman Empire and its armies were still at war, how about the number of the maidservants then, when the Turkish sultans permanently resided in their palaces; we can know where the Muslims' money was spent if we knew that each maidservant was given a monthly allowance, in addition to Some jewels, not to mention the slaves serving these women who were also brought in with exorbitant prices.

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In conclusion, the Ottoman sultans' greed, panting after women, and pursuing their sordid desires, cleared the path for some of the maidservants to dominate the Ottoman family, and these women took control of the reins; subsequently, the maidservants became the mothers of the sultans who ruled the Arab world after that.

Nothing can demonstrate how important the maidservants were inside the palaces, but the prominent statements mentioned by the most important Turkish historian, Halil İnalcık, who said: "As for the Harem, which is the section dedicated to the spouses of the sultans, his maidservants and his family, it was a country within the court.



### References:

1) Halil İnalcık: History of the Ottoman Empire: from Origin to Decline, by: Muhammad Al-Arnaout, Beirut, 2002.

2) Bernard Lewis: Istanbul and the Civilization of the Islamic Caliphate, translated by: Syed Rizwan Ali.