

# SULTAN, WAQF AND CHARITY

## PADİŞAH, VAKIF VE HAYIRSEVERLİK

### ABSTRACT

*Though beneficial activities are witnessed in every region of the Islamic societies, it is obvious that those done by the sultans, the members of the ruling house and the administrative class, especially in terms of the significance of the afore-mentioned activities, have wider scope than the others. That those kinds of activities, when considered only the dimension of waqfs, have been realized with more than thirty-five thousand institutions has proved how much this type of understanding spread around the people. Those organizing the act of charity systematically have to be known as well as the causes that drive people in the Ottoman society to compete with other to be able to do favour for the others.*

*In this study I have tried to put forward how those activities done for the good of the society are to be evaluated and what the fundamental uses of them are. In other words I have discussed the hopes of the beneficent for their goodness and the rewards they got. Shortly, I have argued out the basic causes of philanthropic activities and aims of the sultans, members of the dynasty and the military class.*

**Keywords:** Ottoman, sultan, society, waqf, charity.

### ÖZET

*İslam toplumlarında hayırseverlik girişimleri her bölgede görülmekle birlikte, özellikle yapılan faaliyetlerin önemi bakımından padişahların, hanedan üyelerinin ve yönetici zümrenin yapmış olduğu işlerin, diğerlerine göre daha kapsamlı ve büyük olduğu dikkati çekmektedir. Osmanlı devrinde hayırseverliğin sadece vakıflar boyutu göz önüne alındığında, bu tür faaliyetlerin otuzbeşbinden fazla kuruluşla karşımıza çıkmış olması, toplumdaki iyilik yapma anlayışının ne kadar yayıldığını ortaya koymaktadır. Osmanlı toplumunda insanlara faydalı eserler ortaya koyabilmek için kişileri birbirleriyle yarışmaya iten sebepler kadar, hayırseverliği sistemli bir şekilde yönlendirenlerin de bilinmesi gerekmektedir.*

*Toplumun ihtiyaçlarını karşılamak için yapılan hayır faaliyetlerinin nasıl yorumlanması gerektiği ve iyiliklerden beklenen temel faydaların neler olduğu bu çalışmada ortaya konacaktır. Bir anlamda burada hayırseverlerin yaptıkları iyilikler karşılığında beklentilerini ve bunların toplumda gördüğü faydalardan bahsedilecektir.*

*Kısacası bu çalışma padişahlar, hanedan mensupları ve askerî sınıf mensuplarının sadaka veya vakıf kurmaya yönelik insansever/filantropik davranışlarının kökenlerini ve amaçlarını ele alacaktır.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Osmanlı, Padişah, Toplum, Vakıf, Hayırseverlik, Sadaka

### Ahmet KÖÇ

University of Balıkesir, Faculty of Science and Letters, Department of History, E-mail: ahmetkoc1974@gmail.com

Beneficence or charity<sup>1</sup> is a kind of thank for things bestowed upon one by Allah. In Islamic sense it is stated that charity is assessed in terms of alms obligation and that it is deemed as a virtuous act<sup>2</sup>. Charity that has swiftly spread among the Turks has, along with observance of zakat (offering), helped the culture of alms diffused. In this

context statesmen had frequently encouraged the activities to establish waqfs as a part of the culture noted above.

The spread of waqfs and the culture of almsgiving in the Islamic societies have brought about the questions regarding where the roots of those can be traced. One has to think deeply why the culture in question that has been tried by the Ottomans to be spread throughout 3 continents is identified with establishing waqfs. What are the impulses that have driven the Muslim Turks in this service or why the

1 The two will be used synonymously.

2 Halil İnalcık, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Ekonomik ve Sosyal Tarihi I(1300- 1600)*, trans. Halil Berktaş, Eren Yayınları, İstanbul, 2000, p. 84.

Ottoman people have actualized their charity by establishing waqfs. Even only the numbers of waqfs, which amounted to 35 thousand, is enough to show the scope of the Turks' benevolence. Waqfs founded by the charitable Turks had a wide range of fields from religious activities to infrastructural health services, and from urbanism to social security. During the Ottoman period the government had many jobs on it observed by those institutions.

There have always been charitable works throughout history either by individuals or states though in different ways of social cooperation and solidarity. Those kinds of works have been called charity, benevolence and generosity; as at the core of this action lies the act of "giving" by the rich to those who are in need. In short these types of activities have become an indispensable part of the Islamic society as in other societies, and named as philanthropy or charity.

Charity matters the beneficiary as well as the beneficent. Because on the one hand it is a donation in terms of Islamic law, and on the other a kind of protection and sustenance of those below in the social pyramid. From this point of view the charity culture maintained by individuals has both met their expectations and enhanced the motivation of those who accept it. By their charitable works the benevolent have continued their status obtained inevitably as a reward of giving, their superiority and prestige in the eyes of the people.<sup>3</sup>

One has to pay more attention to why the sultans, members of the ruling family and the military class of the Ottoman society had established gorgeous waqfs. The answer of this question is to be found in the Koran. "Spend your wealth for the cause of Allah, and be not cast by your own hands to ruin; and do good. Lo! Allah loveth the beneficent"<sup>4</sup>, "Ye will not attain unto piety until ye spend of that which ye love. And whatsoever ye spend, Allah is aware

thereof."<sup>5</sup>, "Those who spend (of that which Allah hath given them) in ease and in adversity, those who control their wrath and are forgiving toward mankind; Allah loveth the good"<sup>6</sup>, "Lo! Allah is with those who keep their duty unto Him and those who are doers of good."<sup>7</sup>, The given verses from the Koran emphasizing goodness is interpreted by the Ottomans to do everyone what is unto him. Despite the death of the founders of waqfs the gate of earnest prayer from behind them—as the institutions are everlasting—has never been closed. This culture has its root in a tradition of the Prophet (pbuh) that follows, "When a man dies, his deeds come to an end except for three things: Sadaqah Jariyah (ceaseless charity); knowledge which is beneficial; or a virtuous descendant who prays for him (the deceased)."

Though the word waqf not openly mentioned in the Koran and termed as "sadaqa al-jariyah" (ceaseless charity) in the tradition, every kind of good deeds and abstinence referring to the aims of waqfs have been encouraged. The advices by the Koran heartening "good deeds and abstinence" have been deemed as an order to "come together, help each other and keep solidarity" and they have helped goodness spread. When all those subjects noted up to this line are brought together, people saw the almsgiving culture as the easiest way to attain happiness and wellbeing both here and in the hereafter. Thus they would found monumental buildings here and these buildings would content them in both abodes and help them approach Allah.

In the foundation charters (waqfiyya) written during the reign of Ottomans it was stressed that one would be exempt from responsibilities if one did favour when he could. At length the foundation of these kinds of waqfs had psychological incentives such as leaving a good name behind, namely making his name eventual<sup>8</sup> as well as drawing near to Allah and attaining bliss in the hereafter. On the other hand among the aims of establishing waqfs there have been various social tendencies like being distingu-

3 According to the western writers, to make donations to a particular individual or an institution working in the name of the people is a positive manner for order and stability of the society. Those kinds of charity works, it was believed, were effective to enhance the fidelity of the people felt towards their state, and help them adjust to the political and social system. And these grants done for the lower classes of the society prevented the order from destruction. (Amy Singer *İyilik Yap Denize At: Müslüman Toplumlarında Hayırseverlik*, trans. Ali Özdamar, Kitap Yayınevi, İstanbul 2011, p. 24).

4 Koran, 2/195.

5 Koran, 3/92.

6 Koran, 3/134.

7 Koran, 16/128.

8 In another waqfiyya it reads, "... Though how much wealth and facilities one has, one day life is to come to an end. However, one always wants to live more, to get a position that will help him remembered well, and to be a man that has gained the consent of Allah after one's demise" Nazif Öztürk, "Sosyal Siyaset Açısından Osmanlı Dönemi Vakıfları", 1999, p. 35-36.

ished amid one's peers or getting a higher position. What is inferred from the historical documents is that people, after heaping up a considerable sum of wealth, have tried to guarantee their savings.<sup>9</sup>

Farabi, the Islamic scholar, explains charity as man's solidarity after freeing himself from selfishness. In his *Medinetu'l-Fazıla* he notes that "*man can neither sustain himself on his own nor get perfected. But only does he attain perfection by coming together and cooperation*". Looking at what he says only the city that aims to have solidarity in the ways of the true happiness can be a perfect one. And those nations of whose citizens help each other can be perfect in the strict sense of the word<sup>10</sup>.

The earlier period Ottoman authors as well write about the significance of benevolence for the good of the society. In Ahmedî's work *Osman Ghazi* is recorded to say, "maşjids and pulpits he built and so many he restored". Aşıkpaşazade on the other hand recommends the statesmen to serve their people saying, "it is wealth if it is spent for good." For him the Ottoman leading class had to *be owners of tables feeding the poor*. They would provide their people with the blessings of the earth. Furthermore Aşıkpaşazade noted that one of the main responsibilities of the statesmen was to present their savings for public service; and thus, keeping them full, help them live in justice, peace and security<sup>11</sup>. Another one of the authors, Tursun Beg, writes that "man that has been embellished with a high glory and honour is a social being naturally and has to live in society." Then it is possible to maintain that social life in embedded in the nature of man. Tursun Beg stressed upon the fact that man needs his fellows to be able to help each other; and it is only feasible by gathering together.<sup>12</sup>

In fact in his charter named after himself, Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror stated that sultanate and the crown is transient; and what is significant is to gain the hearts of the subjects saying, "talent is to build

a city, and to make one's people happy<sup>13</sup>". When it was said, in another line, that "all the military victories and conquests were lesser jihad" but "the toils underwent to transform Constantinople into Istanbul was greater."<sup>14</sup> It was surely a proof of the importance put to the maintenance of the order of state and the welfare of the citizens<sup>15</sup>.

The establishment and reinforcement of the waqfs in the Ottoman society is deeply related with the politics adopted in the search of becoming a welfare state. In fact the capacity of the state to dole out was in greater extent covered by the taxes and the mechanism is kept going with these kinds of regular income<sup>16</sup>. Unless there was noticeable fluctuations in the income rates of a waqf or any decision to change the type of aid delivery was taken a steady level of service maintained over the years. As it was pointed out by Barkan as well, social services in the Ottoman Empire was in no small part covered with spoils, military pays and waqfs<sup>17</sup>.

Following the conquest of Istanbul, Sultan Mehmed called the knowledgeable, sheikhs, faqih, amirs and the wealthy to come together and asked them to start<sup>18</sup> doing charity works in Istanbul out of those spoils and the blessings Allah had bestowed

9 Bahaeddin Yediyıldız, XVIII. yüzyılda Türkiye'de Vakıf Müessesesi, 2003, p. 11- 12 and Nazif Öztürk, "Sosyal Siyaset Açısından Osmanlı Dönemi Vakıfları", 1999, p. 37.

10 Bahaeddin Yediyıldız "Osmanlı Döneminde Türk Vakıfları ya da Türk Hayrât Sistemi", 1999, p. 23.

11 Nazif Öztürk, "Osmanlı Döneminde Vakıflar" 2002, p. 373 and Bahaeddin Yediyıldız "Osmanlı Döneminde Türk Vakıfları ya da Türk Hayrât Sistemi", 1999, p. 17.

12 Tursun Beğ, *Tarih-i Ebû'l-Feth*, p. 12.

13 Farabi had a remarkable effect for Sultan Mehmed II to put emphasis on urbanization. For the full article see Bahaeddin Yediyıldız- Nazif Öztürk "Oturulabilir Şehir ve Türk Vakıf Sistemi", p. 2.

14 For the basis of Mehmed the Conqueror's urbanization see Ömer. L. Barkan- E. Hakkı Ayverdi, *İstanbul Vakıfları Tahrir Defterleri (953/1546 Tarihli)*. And also have look at Halil İnalçık, "İstanbul: An Islamic City", and Fahri Unan, *Kuruluşundan Günümüze Fatih Külliyesi*, and Mehmet Öz, "Merkeziyetçi İmparatorluğu Doğru Fatih Devrinde Siyasi ve Sosyal Değişmeler".

15 There is also scraps of information in Evliya Çelebi's masterpiece, see *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesinden Seçmeler*.

16 Randi Deguilhem, "Waqf in the Ottoman Empire to 1914", *EI XI*, Leiden 2002, p. 89.

17 Murat Çizakça, "Osmanlı Dönemi Vakıflarının Tarihsel ve Ekonomik Boyutları", 2000, p. 22 and Ö. L. Barkan, "Bir İskan ve Kolonizasyon Metodu Olarak Vakıflar ve Temlikler I, İstila Devrinin Kolonizatör Türk Dervişleri ve Zâviyeler", 1942, p. 285.

18 Mehmet Öz, "Merkeziyetçi İmparatorluğu Doğru Fatih Devrinde Siyasi ve Sosyal Değişmeler", 2003, p. 30.

upon them. Kritovoulos also talks about the urbanizing activities Mehmed II put in practice. It is conspicuous that those around the latter acted to do what the sultan ordered them to.

The fundamental purposes of the sultan and his family that established and kept waqfs alive were to make it possible for thousands to observe their prayers, and to provide the facilities for them to teach and to learn, to build soup kitchens to feed the poor, and hospitals to heal. By subleasing land and building shops in order to meet the expenses, the management of the charitable foundations tried to keep the cycle going. Thus the needs of the society were met and leading to the wellbeing of the people it served, over time, the number of the needy to go down<sup>19</sup>.

The culture of almsgiving as well as the waqfs was one the mechanism used for the sustenance and protection of the poor and needy. It was required for the culture of zakat and almsgiving to support those in need just as how the waqfs were founded to cover the needs of a group of people in a particular region. Although zakat is one of the five pillars of Islam, it has never been deemed to be equal with almsgiving. However, from the givers point of view the situation was not the same; as in religious sources both zakat and alms givers have been described to be charitable. So it is a fact that the almsgiving culture frees people from selfishness and enhances the spirit of solidarity.

Located in the act of giving and being a part of almsgiving activity establishing a foundation is not the only system to which the Muslim community refers with regard to solidarity. Apart from founding a waqf, the grants distributed to those in need are part of philanthropy. In this case the kind of help that is first remembered is the distribution of alms. It was required the foundation of waqfs; nor there was no need for any type of cheque or contract penned and signed before the witnesses. However, it is not possible to claim that the distribution had continuity.

One of the principle charity works in the Ottoman society for those who had not enough wealth to establish a waqf was to make smaller donation for the needy. In fact, no one in Islamic societies is far from doing good regarding their economic conditions. Supporting the poor "even with a half date" is the best manner that Islam dictates. That is why the foreign travellers cannot stop speaking about those

who helped and who were helped.<sup>20</sup>

Then for one outside the military class and had not the means to found a waqf it had to be the common type of charity to distribute alms or to support a waqf. The support given by the subjects to the waqfs that they deemed appropriate had rendered the benefactors to raise an emotional bond towards the waqfs. Therefore, providing support to the foundations at certain times each year and giving alms can be deemed as the attachment of the subjects to their religious practices. So we have to clear out here that distribution of alms was as important as establishing a waqf for the Ottomans.

Sultans<sup>21</sup>, members of their families<sup>22</sup> and statesmen, apart from the waqfs founded by themselves, gave considerable support for those had already been established. As the owner of the state the sultan's not turning those asking for help down<sup>23</sup> could be regarded as a manner that was possibly attributed to the generosity of the donor, his/her religious beliefs and instinct altruist or selfish. As a matter of fact, in a petition presented to Sultan Selim II it was noted that though the sultan gave a great deal of money for the restoration of the Mawlawi complex, in a lodge around the tomb of Mawlana Jalaladdin Rumi dervishes had difficulty in finding anything to eat. Upon the incidence all the expenses of the 25 dervishes was covered by the sultan<sup>24</sup>.

### The Provision of Basic Needs

Since the feeding of the poor was deemed as the

19 Randi Deguilhem, "Waqf in the Ottoman Empire to 1914", *EI XI*, 2002, p. 89.

20 The observations of the foreigners on Turkish generosity create a body of interesting examples. G. Antonio Menavino, *Türklerin Hayatı ve Âdetleri Üzerine Bir İnceleme*, 2011, p.133 and William Eton, *19. Yüzyıl Başında Osmanlı İmparatorluğu*, 2009, p. 77.

21 There can be found lots of examples for the support of the sultans to the waqfs. Even only those that were done by Sultan Selim III and Mahmud II for the Mawlawi lodge in Konya deserve separate studies.

22 For example Nur Banu Sultan laid it down as a condition in her waqf to be given particular amount of wheat out of the crops of the villages in Yeni il. See Ömer Demirel, "Sivas Mevlevîhânesi ve Mevlevî Şeyhlerinin Sosyal Hayatlarına Dair Bazı Tespitler", p. 219.

23 With the monetary support of Sultan Abdulhamid II on 23 Rajab 1306 the need for a mosque was covered (BOA. Y. PRK. ASK. 54/5).

24 İ. Hakkı Konyalı, *Âbideleri ve Kitâbeleri ile Konya Tarihi*, 1964, p. 71.

general problem of the Islamic societies the increase in the number of the needy had often been interpreted as a sign of deterioration. As the augmentation in the number of poor people or through coming together their dragging into turmoil would damage the layout, sultans would have to take measures. In order to maintain the existing order of the society Ottoman sultans had to observe the lower parts of the society. The sultans took heed of the feeding of the poor as well as the charity works done for the waqfs. Satisfying of the lower classes and the helpless meant their calming down and thus keeping away from any type of social fluctuations.

The continuous generosity of the sultans would start upon the birth of their children. Then the circumcision ceremonies of the male infants were like feasts and necessarily the poor and needy would not be forgotten. The wedding ceremonies were also deemed as a means of feeding of the poor. Apart from those the religious feasts and special days were always occasions for the benefactors to help the poor. Moreover it had become a tradition to make the helpless feel the superiority of the man of glorious power on particular days such as Friday, eve, Islamic festivals, “qandil” (lamp) nights<sup>25</sup> and while the “surra” (pilgrimage procession) set off. Again the sultan would gift and confer in the occasion of the feasts<sup>26</sup> taking place during the year, and his trips<sup>27</sup>, after victories gained and following the interpretation of his dreams that would gladden him. Thus the goodness and granting of the statesmen would go on till Ramadan that was allegedly the sultan of twelve months. Sultans were always ready to help and observe the needs of their subjects in their hard times as well as during their happy and good days. At least when there were requests for assistance from the capital, Ottoman sultans would invariably provide material and moral support. In this context the charitable activities following fi-

res<sup>28</sup>, earthquakes<sup>29</sup>, torrents and famine<sup>30</sup> would reach the highest level.

Though they could be personal as well, the charity works done by the Ottoman emperors, their family members<sup>31</sup> and emirs<sup>32</sup> were institutional for much time. Institutional aid was in the form of improvements made to the budgets of the foundations. On the other hand, individual assistance consisted of donations to people in need. These grants were mostly basic needs such as bread, food, water, clothing and housing. This being the case it is possible to infer that the corporate and individual grants of the sultans composed of materials far from luxury and easy to find in any home. There was no way for the food and other materials used in the waqfs to be luxurious. The due care was shown in this sense. If attentively analysed the charity of the statesmen was aimed at meeting the essential needs of institutions.

Those who would ask for aid from the sultan were bound to write a petition. They knew in advance that they would not be granted more than they needed. As all the needs of an individual would be covered by the sultan and those around him, the foundations serving the people had longer life-span. Therefore it is easy to infer that the Ottoman rulers, through their grants to the waqfs in question, helped those foundations keep their functionality.

Just as the aids in kind and in cash, in every era of the history of Islam there had always been places

25 The Ottoman sultan Abdulmajid gave money to the needy asking for help following the prayer of feast on 1 Muharram 1272 (BOA. A. MKT. DV. 83/49).

26 The distribution of armful of shiny coins in Fatma Sultan's wedding summarizes what was happening in other like ceremonies. See L. Pierce, *The Imperial Harem*, 1993, p. 202.

27 Sultan Abdulmajid helped the people asking for aid during his trip on 3 January 1859 (BOA. A. MKT. DV. 134/41).

28 (34) Halil, who had lost his home due to fire in 1883, asked for the help of Sultan Abdulhamid II (BOA. Y. PRK. AZJ. 8/58).

29 After the earthquake occurred on 9 March 1893 in Malatya, the people of the region thanked and expressed their gratitude for Sultan Abdulhamid for the money raised and for the ardour showed in their sake.

30 In 1887 the people of Sinop who had been afflicted by famine sought help from the sultan and he did not turned them down.

31 Kösem Sultan would give two hundred people, of the Prophet's descent, their pays during the months of Rabaj, Shaban and Ramadan. She was not the only example in this sense; there were many others helping the poor.

32 It is clear from the note sent to Hasip Pasha for the collection of 50.000 kurus from the Imperial Mint that Sultan Abdulmajid granted the sum for the professors lecturing in some of the madrasas and mosques (BOA. C. MF 116/5763).

for feeding the poor. Those places could sometimes be the houses of a wealthy or a hopeless man as well as a soup kitchen in the centre of the city, and a (dervish) lodge on the road or on a mountain top. Furthermore the story of the man sharing his bread with those who are road bound and having nothing to eat is a standard narrative of all times.

Due to the religious significance attributed to, Mecca and Medina were always involved in the charity works done by the Ottoman sultans saying “there were lots of poor in these lands.” Besides that the reward for any charitable activity done in/for the region would be multiplied it was the spiritual atmosphere and the religious importance of those places that was primary incentive for the sultans to do charity works for this region. It is enough to assess the generality of the act of charity to know the investments done by the coming sultans, namely by Murad II, Bayezid II, Suleiman the Magnificent, Selim II, Mehmed III, Ahmed II and Murad IV<sup>33</sup>. Those investments were just like the others in different territories in the sense that the sultans not only founded waqfs but also supported those established before. The number of these kinds of foundations under protection had an increase over years.<sup>34</sup>

Other than their waqfs the Ottoman sultans had no obstacle for their other kinds of charity works and grants. Because as the head and owner of the state they were supposed to be generous and feeding their subjects. Other members of the ruling dynasty, just like the sultans, could dispense any type of grants to those who are in need. If the sultan or his family would transfer the sources of the state openly or by secret to the poor it would not be condemned or opposed. In their eyes it meant the hand of mercy of the sultan as the owner of the crown reaching to the poor and the weak.

Especially in some cases the grants by the sultans or their family members would be done from Treasury situated in Istanbul and in others from the leased lands. In those cases Ottoman sultans often do favours for people they knew not. So it was a

33 Mustafa Güler, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Haremeyn Vakıfları* (16. ve 17. yüzyıllar), 2002, pp. 101- 144.

34 It has been witnessed that not only in Anatolia but also in Africa foundations were built anew and those that had been built were supported. And some preferred to make aid, as Hoexter noted, for the waqfs that had already been established in Mecca and Medina instead of founding new ones in Algeria. See Miriam Hoexter, “Waqf Studies in the Twentieth Century: The State of the Art”, 1998, p. 56.

state policy to meet the needs of the waqfs carrying on projects in the fields of religion, education, infrastructure, security and social responsibility. It is clear that the sultans as the highest authority leading the state and their family members would allocate the most profitable leases<sup>35</sup> to those foundations in order to meet the needs of those in need<sup>36</sup>. Besides, the Ottoman sultans would take those, who were to profit from the leases, into consideration and for much time would make it possible for the two parts (the leaser and the needy). Thus they did not let these foundations to undergo any hardships against the evolving financial circumstances<sup>37</sup>. Because waqfs would only survive through the sustenance of those that were assisted. Then it was improbable to imagine that the Ottoman sultans would react with an unexpected manner. It was their foremost and invariable duty to take measures against any possibility of the disruption in the system of these foundations. That's why the empire heeded the continuity of the institutions for the survival of the body of the state and to this purpose provided all kinds of support.

The Ottoman sultans, in the frame of traditions inherited from the past, to be able to keep them firm gave direct support for the charity foundations that had lost their efficiency over time.<sup>38</sup> Those grants and support of the sultans and the royal family members for most of the time continued, instead of founding new waqfs, with the provision of the waqfs that had already been founded with person-

35 In a 20 September 1636 dated register it is understood that for the expenses of food of the Mawlawi lodge in Ankara 25 akça had been allotted. Sultan Abdulhamid II had also helped for Sütluçe, Hatuniye, Yahyazade and Sheikh Ali Effendi (the Glassman) lodges located in the same city (BOA. Y. PRK. MŞ. 1/61).

36 Murat Çizakça, “Osmanlı Dönemi Vakıflarının Tarihsel ve Ekonomik Boyutları”, 2000, s. 23.

37 According to Şevket Pamuk, in the XVIIth century, to the foundational activities there had aroused the need for allocation from the central treasury due to the inflation and the Jelali revolts. See Ş. Pamuk, “Osmanlılarda Para ve Enflasyon”, *Cogito* 19, İstanbul 1999, s. 188.

38 The relation between the central government and the Mawlawi sect is a good example in this sense. The centre never let the Mawlawi dervishes and the sheikhs fall destitute (AŞS. 28/714: 704-705).

nel pays, cloths, shoes, food<sup>39</sup>, victuals<sup>40</sup>, firewood, coal, candles; in short, with any kinds of good and money<sup>41</sup>. In fact, on the basis of this kind of behaviour there lies the self-sacrificing manner that can be expressed in the form of modesty and avoidance of waste.

We may have a deeper look at the basic political expectations lying under the favours done by the Ottoman sultans, royal members of the palace and other statesmen. Sultans and the other statesmen had only one aim as a result of all their support and grants for mosques<sup>42</sup>, madrasas, masjids, schools, soup kitchens, hospitals and for dervish lodges, and in was to help<sup>43</sup> maintain the loyalty of the subjects to the royal family and thus ensure the existence of the state. Through their aids and support sultans would try to keep the institutions working on one hand and guaranteeing the existence and unity of the dynasty.

Except from establishing new waqfs, helping those that had already established and distributing alms at certain times the Ottoman sultans and the members of the royal family had another way to show their benevolence: to create means for per-

sonal requests. Covering the needs of their people was a clear sign<sup>44</sup> for the sultans' close interest in their subjects. Although these kinds of behaviours, including the distribution of alms, would not bring any formal obligation on the sultans and the regal family members, they did not turn down the requests of their subjects as it was in their sphere of responsibility. For instance, taking place in the 19<sup>th</sup> century the case of a pupil named Mehmed, who had asked for help to take his books back that had been grabbed away by the rebels during his travel, is meaningful. Mehmed, a madrasa student, asked Sultan Abdulmajid, of whose generosity he was sure, to bring him back his stolen books.<sup>45</sup> It is easy to admit then that Mehmed has trust in the sultan both as the provider of security and as a source of personal support.

### Conclusion

Called as the third sector today, the institution of waqf is obviously singled out from the other sectors with its bulk and the scope it has reached. That the economy of the long-time welfare states had undergone a kind of stall gave way to the increase of the institutions that had cooperated in favour and support. Today, as charity works are done through state-backed policies rather than private individuals, it is not wrong to say that these activities have been left to the monopoly of the public institutions.<sup>46</sup> The relation in the society between the one hand taking and the other giving signifies the differentiation of the state politics.

To sum up, it is inferred that one of the main causes of the Islamic society to become benevolent is the belief in Allah and loyalty to the truths of the

39 From the Mukataa (Lease) of Cendere in 1636, there had been reserved some money for the Mawlawi dervishes for their food expenses. See A. Köç, "Mevlevîler ve Devlet: Ankara Mevlevîhânesi Örneği (Ekonomik Statü, Vakıflar ve Yönetim)", *Bellelen LXXXVI*, s. 535.

40 See the 14/700 numbered register for the rice aid done from Beypazarı Rice Lease (Çeltik Mukataası) to some of the lodges in Ankara.

41 Out the revenues obtained from the Trebizond Harbour Customs Lease and of the Linen Cloth Lease there were covered the expenses of the mosques and masjids around. For more information see N. Aygün, "Dini Hizmetlerin Gerçekleşmesinde Devletin Rolü Üzerine Bazı Tespitler; Osmanlı Dönemi Doğu Karadeniz Örneği", 2009, p. 73. For the rice aid done for some lodges in Ankara from the Rice Mukataa of Beypazarı see 14/700 numbered court records.(AŞS. 14/700: 925-1081- 1082).

42 Especially in the building of mosques and masjids Sultan Abdulhamid had a great share. For instance see (BOA. Y. PRK. HH. 22/50).

43 In fact in a firman sent to the Mawlawi sheikh of Ankara lodge he was asked to "pray for the poor; for and the Caliph five times a day to have a long life and state" (AŞS. 76/762:799).

44 When asked the sultan for the help due to his unfortunate situation Mehmed Akif was almost sure to get what he wanted (BOA. Y. PRK. AZJ. 56/102).

45 Orhan Sabev, "Tales of Ottoman Book Theft", 2007, pp. 173- 201.

46 When looked back there seems a particular change for the Ottomans in their understanding of charity towards the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. There lies the phenomenon of modern state at the core of the afore-mentioned social change. With the evolvement of the power, authority and governmental systems the styles of management of the foundations and the expectations from them had changed over time. Therefore the new model of social state developed over the system of foundations sustained for long had caused the non-governmental institutions to be seen in a different way.

Koran. These two have given the motivation to the people to do any kinds of favour. The prominent characters of the charity works was the sultans and the royal members of the family. Those activities observed by the governing class had been thought to be their responsibilities regarding their positions and status.

The benevolence of the Ottoman sultans, as put forward by Halil İnalçık in his work titled *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Ekonomik ve Sosyal Tarihi*, identifies with the notion of the “*empire's being a welfare state*”.<sup>47</sup> Just as maintained by the author, there are Islamic ideals at the core of philanthropy forming the permanent values of the empire.<sup>48</sup> In fact, though İnalçık stresses that the basic aims of the sultans was to ensure the well-being of the public in the borders of their dominions, we hold the idea that they just tried to keep the charity and almsgiving tradition going.<sup>49</sup> Thus, while founding new institutions on one hand to ensure the balance of income among the elements of the society, on the other hand Ottoman sultans controlled the urban markets to provide the public with materials they needed. If the sultans would let famine crop up, any shortage of goods be experienced or as a result let poverty prevail in the society, that would have led their sovereignty to be challenged. Therefore the Ottoman sultans were bound to think about the needs of their subjects in order to assure their happiness; and they had to create new politics for this purpose.

There have been observed various types of charity activities in the regions Islam has spread over time since the Middle Ages; and as the French scholar Desroche indicated, *religious change has come along with the social one* and that has continued in a balanced manner. Therefore the benevolent, while observing the religious duty to help the poor unnoticed, found the chance –as Guillaume Postel the

traveller states- to send in advance their charitable activities to Jannah.

Thus, on the one hand to provide the balance of the Ottoman sultans in society is creating a new charitable organizations, on the other hand reaya needed materials readily available in urban markets to be able to have the basic tasks such as controlling.

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47 What is implied by the welfare state is the extension of the limits of the social activities through helping those who were economically in a bad condition.

48 According to İnalçık the obligation of almsgiving is a highly virtuous behaviour. And in fact the Ottoman sultans frequently had sheep sacrificed on several occasions and distributed them to those in need. They had the same purpose while they were serving food for the poor through the soup kitchens. See Halil İnalçık *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Ekonomik ve Sosyal Tarihi I(1300- 1600)*, 2000, p. 84.

49 Compare and contrast İnalçık and Amy Singer for h views on this very subject.



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