

## A PSYCHO-SOCIAL SOLUTION TO PROBLEMS RELATED TO SOCIAL ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS: ‘SADAQA STONES MODELING’

Faruk TAŞCI\*

### ABSTRACT

Social assistance generally means eliminating the needs of people by providing goods or financial support. There might be some problems with social assistance, particularly at the stage of conveying assistance to the “recipients”. For the most part, these problems consist of “being labeled and humiliated”, “discrimination and clientelism”, “idleness and dependence”, and “abuse”. The aim of this article is to offer a “psycho-social” modeling as a solution to the problems related to those who receive social assistance. At this point, the “*sadaqa stones*” modeling will be considered as a springboard for finding a solution. Thus, interpretations of how the social assistance modeling should be at the present time will be taken up in this article.

**Keywords:** Social assistance, social assistance recipients, *sadaqa stones*, neediness, social policy, Ottoman State.

## SOSYAL YARDIM ALICILARI İLE İLGİLİ SORUNLARA PSİKO-SOSYAL ÇÖZÜM: ‘SADAKA TAŞLARI MODELLEMESİ’

### ÖZET

Genel anlamda, kişilerin muhtaçlıklarının aynı yardımlar veya nakdi ödemeler yoluyla giderilmesi anlamına gelen sosyal yardımlarda, özellikle “alıcıları”na iletilmesi sürecinde belli sorunlar söz konusu olabilmektedir. Bu sorunlar, temel olarak “damgalanma ve küçük düşürülme”, “ayrımcılık ve kayırmacılık”, “tembellik ve bağımlılık” ve “istismar etme” şeklinde ortaya çıkmaktadır. İşte bu makalenin amacı, sosyal yardım alıcıları ile ilgili işaret edilen sorunlara çözüm olarak bir “psiko-sosyal” model ortaya koymaktır. Bu anlamda bir çözüm modellemesi denemesi olarak “sadaka taşları” örneği (sıçrama tahtası olarak) ele alınacaktır. Böylece günümüzde nasıl bir sosyal yardım modeli olması gerektiği üzerine değerlendirmelere yer verilecektir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Sosyal yardım, sosyal yardım alıcıları, sadaka taşları, muhtaçlık, sosyal politika, Osmanlı Devleti.

---

\* Assist. Prof. Dr., Istanbul University, Faculty of Economics, Department of Labor Economics and Industrial Relations, ftasci@istanbul.edu.tr

## **Introduction**

Social assistance generally means eliminating the needs of people by providing goods or financial support. There might be some problems with social assistance, particularly at the stage of conveying assistance to the “recipients”. For the most part, these problems consist of “being labeled and humiliated”, “discrimination and clientelism”, “idleness and dependence”, and “being abused”.

This being labeled and humiliated, as it results in the “need to prove oneself” of the people who in need in order to benefit from the social assistance, means that a degrading attitude and implementation is observed upon the person.

Another problem with the implementation of social assistance is discrimination and clientelism. It is possible that discrimination in social assistance occurs due to reasons such as being a close friend, relative or someone who is from the same town, being affiliated with the people or institutions (government, municipalities, foundations, non-governmental organizations etc.) that convey social assistances. In addition there are some cases in which social assistance can be distributed through clientelist means such as political patronage.

Another problem related to social assistance is the dependence of recipients on social assistance. The result of this can appear as a “chronic” idleness, a state in which people have no intention to work.

Final problem is the fact that social assistance is prone to be “abused” by the recipients. There are two ways that being abused might occur. The first one is that people may request and attain social assistance although they are truly not in need, while the second is that they may get social assistance from different institutions at one and the same time.

So, the aim of this article is to discuss the possibility of the “psycho-social” model as a solution to the problems encountered with the recipients of social assistance; a large part of these problems is related to the social and psychological world of the recipients of social assistance. In this regard, the “*sadaqa stones*” model which was the main application during the Ottoman period as a possible solution to the problems in questions will be considered. Based on this model, issues such as how to adjust it to today’s social assistance implementations will be discussed.

## 1- A Brief Assessment of Social Assistance in Western and Ottoman Societies

Since ancient times social assistance has always existed under different names. However, the phrase “social assistance” is a product of the industrialization period, though its first use is not known exactly. In this regard, it can be stated that modern social assistance came into existence during the industrialization era, particularly during the redistribution of wealth (Karataş, 1999: 42).

Social assistance is interpreted as a last resort that consists of transference of wealth to prevent poverty. Social assistance is not the same as benefiting from social welfare functions or the main income policy. Its aim is to prevent extreme poverty (Jewell, 2007: 281) among the poor by eliminating social marginalization or alienation (OECD, 1998: 9).

In *the West* social assistance first appeared and developed among family members, relatives, neighbors and religious communities. In this period, which is known as the Middle Ages, there was economic depression, and the responsibility for supporting the poor was up to the families. It seems that the family circle was broadened to include the neighbors, and later on social assistance was implemented with religious drives and a perception of charity (Koşar, 2000: 8). The living standards, necessities and expectations were not very high at these times. Similarly, there was not much difference between the incomes and living standards of the lower and upper classes (Ersöz, 2003: 124). Therefore, this period is tended to be called “short-term assistance” based on the arbitrariness in terms of the characteristics of social assistance (Türkcan, 2003: 29).

The most significant feature of this age for the West is that social assistance was not related to religious feelings and it was carried out mostly by means of the government and some local foundations (Dilik, 1991: 52). It is observed that the social structure was shaped and changed according to the requirements of modern industry. As a result, traditional social assistance institutions lost a significant proportion of their importance and some of them were completely removed (Kutal, 1977: 201). It is also thought that at this time individualism came to the fore. Economic prosperity was crucial for the people, and being in need (poverty) was the fault of the individual (Ersöz, 2003: 125).

During *the Ottoman* era the best implementations of social assistance seemed in *waqf* (pious foundations) as the central institution and *ahi chest* system within *ahi* (artisan) organization.

Particularly in connection with the Ottoman period, the *waqf* is to be evaluated as the main institution of social assistance and solidarity. It was a form of social assistance that was implemented independent of the government budget and carried out by the public as a civil social policy (Abay, 2004: 84). For example, during the establishment of the *waqf* system it was obligatory for the founder to donate a certain piece of land and/or other fixtures. This directly affected the distribution of the property (Şahin, 1990: 58). In this regard *waqfs* possessed efficient social assistance functions in providing social justice and preventing class distinction (Öztürk, 1983: 136).

In addition to the social assistance carried out by the *waqfs*, there were also some other social assistance applications which were affiliated with the *ahi* organization during the Ottoman era. At this time, the *ahi chest* appeared to help those *ahis* who were in need (Kal'a, 1994: 1). In this manner, every evening after work, members of the *ahi* organization would take some portion of their daily earnings to *Ahi Baba* (the chairman of the foundation). This money would be spent on hot meals, fruit or other goods that were essential for the *zaviyes* (dervish lodges), and were delivered to the people who were in need (Çağatay, 1981: 103). It was with this *ahi chest* that problems which members of a guild might encounter were dealt with. In this way any *ahi* who is in need, trouble, ill, has lost a close relative or has been struck by a natural disaster would be helped. These funds were also lent to the *ahi* members (Solak, 1997: 74), thus allowing the *ahi* foundation to function as a social assistance center.

In the *Tanzimat* (reform) era of the Ottoman, that is, during the 19th century, *the waqfs* lost their function of providing social assistance (Özbek, 2004: 25). At the same time, other traditional social assistance systems also disappeared. In this period, during the process of centralization, in addition the incomes of the *waqfs* were absorbed by the treasury and the income sources of the foundations were limited (Özbek, 1999/2000: 115). In this framework, legal arrangements implemented for the organization of the fields of activity related to poverty, which were increased by the

centralization can be seen as the Ottoman's being a social state in modern sense (Özbek, 2006: 36).

## **2- Psycho-social Problems for Recipients of Social Assistance in the Modern Period**

### **2.1. The Problem of Being Labeled and Humiliated**

When we consider the negative sides of social assistance, humiliating treatment that is a result of the necessity of proving one's poverty comes to the fore (Gerek & Oral, 2004: 44). This situation, which means that one "is labeled" when applying for social assistance (Özdemir, 2004: 129), has many drawbacks, due to the negative psychological effects on individuals. From this aspect, there is a process caused and developed by the fact that those in need have to prove their level of poverty. In this process the needy are subject to being officially recognized by the authorities (Dilik, 1980: 71).

"Being labeled" happens particularly at the investigation stage, when it is examined whether the person is in need or not. There is a poverty perception that lays in it. For instance, being poor is considered to be a personal issue and a moral fault in the United States. It is for this reason that people who ask for social assistance are felt to be "humiliated" (Özdemir, 1989: 47).

There is also a technical side of being labeled. This requires that information about the people and their families is kept confidential and when evaluating the neediness of people the circumstances are never made public (Duru, 1939: 18).

It has been stated that because of this negative aspect of social assistance, those in need tend to define their severe conditions (their neediness) as unimportant and therefore deny their needs (Buğra, 2003/2004: 78). In other words, the fear of "being labeled" can prevent those in need from seeking and demanding assistance.

### **2.2. Discrimination and Clientelism**

Another problem in evaluating the need of people is concerned with "discrimination". There are some drawbacks in social assistance

applications that are the result of acting based on criteria like political partisanship, blood relationship, nationality, regionalism, sectarianism or friendship (Seyyar, 2006: 295). Such discrimination in social assistance leads people to think that “the one who has more *social capital* can get social assistance easier” (Hyggen, 2006: 494).

A research carried out in the USA states that gender and race are influential criteria in the distribution of social assistance (Meyer, 1994: 8-28). Also in Turkey, although who and how can benefit from social assistance are laid out in the law, it is possible that such discrimination might occur, especially in the cities located mostly in the eastern side of Turkey (Seyyar, 2006: 253).

Clientelism, a more political version of discrimination, is also a problem in social assistance. As a result of clientelism public offices become vulnerable to partisan influence and pressure (Ferrera, 2006: 209). In this regard, clientelism, favoritism and corruption are common in planning and distributing processes of social assistance. Furthermore, there is an impact of political parties that try to collect the benefits for political support in social assistance applications (Gough, 2006: 232). It is for this reason that the scope of social policies can be shaped by the power of elites and some interest groups rather than social and class demands (Pérez-Baltodano, 2004: 55).

### **2.3. Abuse**

Another problem with social assistance is its openness to be “abused” by the recipients. Being abused in social assistance can generally occur in two ways. The first is when a person asks and receives social assistance while he/she has no need. The second type of being abused is concerned with repetitive assistance, which consists of attaining social assistance from different institutions at the same time.

These kinds of problems are based on troubles of “income-test”. Therefore, this problem is related to the “source of the information” about the recipients, who are being evaluated in relation to their needs. It is almost impossible to decide about the actual situation, problems, constraints or urgent needs of people based solely on information provided by the would-

be recipients. It is also necessary to survey and obtain information from their families, neighbors, co-workers and official sources (Duru, 1939: 18). This is exactly where the problem appears. The sources of information can mislead the investigator due to a number of reasons, such as hostility and conflict with the people in need. On the other hand, the sources may represent the people as being “in need” when they are not, due to reasons of affection or family relations (Saran, 1997: 436).

This type of being abused, which causes hesitation in the distribution of social assistance, can be easily detected in small towns, but it is more difficult to discern it in larger cities; thus constituting a major problem in the distribution of assistance (Çengelci, 1985: 58). According to a research carried out by the Dost Eli and Deniz Feneri Foundations in Konya, Turkey, 70% of the people applied for social assistance were guilty of some forms of exploitation (Arı, 2003: 166). This research is important in terms of showing to what extent social assistance is prone to being abused. However, it is better to see this result as evidence of the existence of exploitation rather than evidence that being abused is high.

## **2.4. Idleness and Dependence**

Benefiting from social assistance for a long time, or depending on social assistance system (Walker, 2005: 213) can also be called “welfare dependence”. This is a recognized negative aspect of social assistance. This criticism of social assistance states that social assistance makes those who accept it idle and creates recipients dependent upon assistances. Accordingly, for Adam Smith, social assistance for those in needs is not beneficial since it leads people to get accustomed to idleness (Çakır & Aldemir, 2001: 179).

In England in 1795 there was opposition to a law that not only allowed people to benefit from social assistance if they remained at home, but also provided additional social assistance in proportion to the number of people in the family, in an attempt to increase the income to match the basic requirements of the family. The reason of this opposition was that it had been asserted that this kind of social assistance would only induce to idleness and give rise to demoralization (Çengelci, 1985: 48-49).

A similar claim that social assistance only causes idleness and dependence was also made in the USA. As cited by Ducker, when social assistance applications increase, the people in need, particularly the Afro-American population, become poorer and more desperate. It is stated that this situation weakens social assistance of the USA instead of strengthening it (Çakır & Aldemir, 2001: 180). The Bulgarian Roman population abuses and makes a living off social assistance and thus this group is known as "social assistance consumers" (Marinova, <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/NISPAcee/UNPAN018444.pdf>).

### **3. Searching for Solutions for the Problems of Modern Age Based on the "Sadaqa Stones" Implementation in the Ottomans**

#### **3.1. "Sadaqa Stones" as a Reflection of the "Sadaqa Perception"**

##### **3.1.1. Sadaqa Perception**

The word *sadaqa* stems from the Arabic word *sidq* which means "reality, honesty" (Duman, 2008: 383) and is used to denote to doing a favor, treating or helping the people who are poor and in need without any expectations (Karaman et.al., 2009: 496). However, in this article the term *sadaqa* will be used to refer to voluntary donations (Duman, 2008: 384) instead of compulsory payments such as *zakah*, votives (*fitrah*), or ransom.

In this regard, three features of the *sadaqa* perception stand out. First of all, providing *sadaqa* is not limited with the wealthy people. Fundamentally, we are reminded of the responsibilities of the wealthy in a hadith of Prophet Muhammad, who said: "If someone starves to death in a country, everybody in this country is guilty of murder." (Zaim, 1992: 84) But, in the *sadaqa* perception, it is expected that "even" those who are in need "will take care of others whose needs are greater" (Duman, 2008: 384). In this aspect, the *sadaqa* perception includes *isâr*; meaning "using the opportunities to help others who are in need even though you are in need yourself; sacrificing for the well-being of others" (Yaşaroğlu, 2003: 373).

The other two features of *sadaqa* perception are related to the method of donating and the quality of the property donated. In this regard, it is expected that the one who gives *sadaqa* should be sincere and humble, not showing off, taunting or hurting the feelings of the one who is in need (El-

Mübarek, 1978: 207). The goods that are to be given as *sadaqa* should be useful to the people who will accept them. It is not right to give anything that is not useful (Duman, 2008: 384).

### *Sadaqa Stones*

Although the exact date is not known, the *sadaqa stones* that were first appeared in the Seljukid era, and also known as the *zakah stone*, *zakah well*, beggar's pulpit (*dilenci mihrabı*), need stone (*hacet taşı*), place of alms (*ihtiyaçgâh*), the poor stone (*fukara taşı*) and charity hole (*hayrat deliği*) (Sevim, 2009: 87) were a clear reflection of the *sadaqa* perception.

Although *sadaqa stones* applications were widespread in the Ottoman era, there have been few studies carried out on it.<sup>1\*</sup> However, it is possible to examine some of the basic features, functions and structures of the *sadaqa stones*.

- For every three to five districts there would be one *sadaqa stones* (Sevim, 2009: 88). The total number of *sadaqa stones* in Istanbul was 173 (Kazıcı, <http://insaniyardim.ihh.org.tr/35.-sayi-/kultur-osmanlida-hayir-muesseseleri-ve-sadaka-taslari-9.html>).
- Despite having different structures, in general the *sadaqa stones* were composed of a column approximately 2 meters, with a hole near the top (Ünver, <http://www.kardelendergisi.com/yazi.php?yazi=211>). Another description states that they were usually white, cylindrical, ancient marble columns which were firmly planted in the ground, measuring around 120 to 130 cm (Özönder, [http://www.tulipandrose.net/turkce/dinfeneri/sadaka\\_taslari.htm](http://www.tulipandrose.net/turkce/dinfeneri/sadaka_taslari.htm)).
- A *sadaqa stone* was located in almost every Ottoman city, with a large number existing in Istanbul. From the available information we can say that there were *sadaqa stones* in cities such as Edirne, Bursa, Konya, Sivas, Kayseri, Bilecik, Kastamonu and Antakya (Sevim, 2009: 83, 101).

<sup>1\*</sup> An article by Ahmet Suheyl Ünver named as “Sadaka Taşları” was published in *Hayat Tarih Mecmuası* in 1967. Also an article, “Taşların Dili Sadaka Taşı” by Abdülkerim Abdülkadiroğulları was published in *Diyanet Newspaper* in 1977. In addition, a report by Hasan Özönder “Türk Mahallelerinde Sadaka Taşlarının Yeri ve Önemi” was presented in *IV. Türk Kültürü Kongresi*. There are some authors who “mentioned” *sadaqa stones* in their articles as well. See: Sevim, 2009: 113-114.

- *Sadaqa stones* were erected in ; i) the conjunction point of three and five districts, ii) in front of buildings where poor, ill, or homeless people lived, iii) close to places which people visited to attain assistance or prayers, such as *tekkes*, *dergâh* or *zaviye* (dervish lodges), cemeteries or tombs, iv) places where people suffering from epidemic illnesses resided, v) close to masjids or mosques, vi) by bridges that were frequently used, vii) near public drinking fountains, and viii) near places where orphans or homeless people resided (Sevim, 2009: 106-108).
- The donations were not only in the form of coins as in-cash assistance, but could include clothing, dry goods or even cooked food as in-kind assistance (Demir, [http://www.sonpeygamber.info/Infak-Kulturunun-Zarif-Anitlari--Sadaka-Taslari-\\_241.html](http://www.sonpeygamber.info/Infak-Kulturunun-Zarif-Anitlari--Sadaka-Taslari-_241.html)).
- Another form of *sadaqa stones* was that of the *Miskinler Tekkesi*, which was built by Selim I in 1514 on the Bagdat Menzil Road; this was a road that was used by pilgrims and soldiers returning to the capital city (Sarı & Kurt, 2006: 365). The *Miskinler Tekkesi* was not an ordinary dervish lodge, as it had been built with the intention of treating soldiers who had contracted leprosy after the war in Egypt and to reintegrate the lepers into society. The word *miskinler* (dervishes) was used here so as not to offend the lepers, while the idea of the *tekke* (lodge) was to allow them to be reintegrated into society (Özemre, 2007: 106). Between seven and eight *sadaqa stones* were placed around the convent. If the people crossing the street wanted to provide *sadaqa*, they would leave money on these stones. The “elderly watchman” (*gözcü dede*) of the convent would inform the lepers that money had been left and they would pray all together for the person who had left the donation (Sarı & Kurt, 2006: 376).

### 3.1.2. The Functions of Sadaqa Stones

The *sadaqa stones* have some obvious functions, mainly concerned with “the elimination of being labeled and humiliated”, “developing social solidarity”, “functions of restoring order”, and “wealthy people”.

The important point of the *sadaqa stones* in the avoidance of *being*

*labeled* is that the person who gives *sadaqa* does not know who will receive the donation, and the poor person is not known by the rich. In this regard, the most important feature of the *sadaqa stones* are that they provided help for people with a large degree of anonymity. Indeed, the *sadaqa stones* were so constructed that it was impossible for a passer-by to understand if the person was placing money in the stone or taking money from it (Demir, [http://www.sonpeygamber.info/Infak-Kulturunun-Zarif-Anitlari--Sadaka-Taslari-\\_241.html](http://www.sonpeygamber.info/Infak-Kulturunun-Zarif-Anitlari--Sadaka-Taslari-_241.html)).

Another significant point in the avoidance of humiliation was that *sadaqa* was left on the *sadaqa stones* in the darkness of the night. In particular, people who were going for the *isha salat* (night prayer) would leave *sadaqa* on the *sadaqa stones*. As it would be dark at this time, the person who was leaving the money would not be seen, and the person who took the money would remain unknown as well (Kazıcı, <http://insaniyardim.ihh.org.tr/35.-sayi-/kultur-osmanlida-hayir-muesseseleri-ve-sadaka-taslari-9.html>).

In the application, people in need from other quarter came to the quarter where the *sadaqa stones* were located, and were able to benefit from *sadaqa stones*. This aspect is another reflection of the function of avoiding humiliation (Sevim, 2009: 112). Thus, the poor were confident that they would not be identified or labeled, as the residents of the quarter would not recognize people from other quarters even in the daytime.

Another function of the *sadaqa stones* was social solidarity. In this respect, the *sadaqa stones* differ to a certain extent from other social assistance methods. In other social assistance methods, it is the rich who help the poor. However, in the *sadaqa stones* implementation, in addition to the wealthy making contributions, the poor residents of the district would also leave money/goods on the *sadaqa stones*. As a result, there was a greater degree of social solidarity due to assistance arrangements among people who are neighbors and close friends (Demir, [http://www.sonpeygamber.info/Infak-Kulturunun-Zarif-Anitlari--Sadaka-Taslari-\\_241.html](http://www.sonpeygamber.info/Infak-Kulturunun-Zarif-Anitlari--Sadaka-Taslari-_241.html)). In this regard, “the poor also cared for the poor”. This means that a poor person would not take more than he/she needed from the *sadaqa stones*, because they would take into consideration the “other deprived people” (Özemre, 2007: 106-107). This kind of situation can be confirmed by the testimony of a French traveler who tells about Istanbul in the 17th century. The

traveler observed a *sadaqa stone* for a week and did not see any one who came and took the money (Sevim, 2009: 113).

One more function of the *sadaqa stones* is to restore public order. In this regard, the implementation of the *sadaqa stones* prevented people from acting dishonestly, stealing or being immoral (Sevim, 2009: 40). The *sadaqa stones* played a vital role, particularly in preventing or minimizing begging (Duman, 2008: 384). At the same time, wealthy people who used their advantages to help those who were deprived (confidentially or openly) were respected by the poor. Therefore, instead of class distinction and hatred, there was harmony and order (Zaim, 1992: 88).

Another function of the *sadaqa stones* is related to wealthy people. As the wealthy did not know who they were helping, this donation was not subject to pride, and there was no way to disparage or offend the poor. In this way, a *sadaqa stones* were not means for showing off or publicizing good deeds (Kazıcı, <http://insaniyardim.ihh.org.tr/35.-sayi-/kultur-osmanlida-hayir-muesseseleri-ve-sadaka-taslari-9.html>).

### **3.2. Does Sadaqa Stones Application Constitute a Model for Social Assistance Recipients' Problems in the Present?**

It is necessary to emphasize once again that the implementation of the *sadaqa stones* played an important role in Ottoman society. For instance, wealthy people would help those who were in debt but could not pay their loans, thus preventing them from being sent to prison. Moreover, the wealthy would go to the grocers and pay the debts of the poor people, choosing a name randomly from the grocers' list of debtors. This practice was particularly common during the month of Ramadan (Sevim, 2009: 67). These events help to understand that the *sadaqa stones* implementation was an ordinary part of daily life for the Ottoman society.

On the other hand, today this implementation can be perceived as something strange, incredible, or even impossible, though it was a regular part of the life at the Ottoman time. Is the implementation of the *sadaqa stones* really so incredible, and thus impossible to apply as social assistance today? Is it possible to improve a model based on the *sadaqa stones* implementation that would work in today's social assistance system? What are the possibilities or impossibilities inherent in it?

### 3.2.1. The Intellectual Background to the Modeling

The most important parameter of the *sadaqa stones* implementations today is related to *mentality*, which is the most important problem in social assistances. There are two aspects to this problem. The first one is related to those who implement social assistance, while the second one is concerned with social assistance recipients (Taşcı, 2009: 1745-1746).

Today there is almost an agreement among those who implement social assistance that it is a “right”. However, there are different approaches about what the “right” is dependent on. Those who agree with the ideas of T. H. Marshall suggest that having a “right” must be accompanied by “citizenship”. According to this thought, citizenship is a status granted to full members of a society. Everybody who has this status is equal in terms of the rights and responsibilities that are provided by the status (Marshall, 2006: 26). Therefore, the main requirement to be eligible to benefit from social assistance is not living and residing in a country, but rather being a citizen of this country. In other words, it is not possible to benefit from social assistance without being a citizen (Taşcı, 2009: 1745-1746).

However, when this idea is evaluated from the aspect of those who receive social assistance, we can see that there is a “humanitarian” problem here. Social assistance is related to *human*. Therefore, it is obvious that attributing a value to social assistance is the value that is attributed to the human being. For this reason, any difference in status, race, language, religion or gender should not be a criterion for the distribution of social assistance (Akkaya, 1966: 20); rather, the only criterion should be being a human being.

When we examine the matter from this aspect, it is clear that as far as being eligible for social assistance is concerned, rather than approaching the matter on the basis of “citizenship”, the basic criterion should be “being human”. In other words, when the issue is considered from the aspect of “citizenship”, there is a “gaining of right”, thus the attaining of a lost right; however, when the matter is considered in terms of “being human”, there is no need to look for any other parameter, and the existence of a “natural right” that comes from his/her birth is obvious. In this case, if a person who resides in a country or lives in the country for any reason is in need, they should be able to attain social assistance irrespective of any other criteria;

simply being human should be a sufficiently “universal” criterion (Taşcı, 2009: 1746).

The *sadaqa stones* implementation has an intellectual background in which “only being human” is sufficient. With such an intellectual background it is possible to use the *sadaqa stones* as a model in social assistance applications.

### **3.2.2. Psycho-social Background for Modeling: Individual and Social Ethics**

An important aspect of the *sadaqa stones* implementation is related to “ethics”. It is clear that the wealthy people who left money and goods on the *sadaqa stones*; and the poor who would only take “what they needed” had “individual ethics”. People would leave donations on the *sadaqa stones* “voluntarily”, without coercion and pressure. Those who received the social assistance were neither greedy, nor did they abuse this application. These are all indications of individual ethics. The fact that this implementation continued over a number of centuries demonstrates the presence of internalized “social ethics”.

Today, those who contribute to social assistance may have attitudes that are disparaging, taunting or consist of showing off. In addition, recipients of social assistance sometimes abuse, become dependent or idle. This situation demonstrates the level of “individual ethics” in both groups of people.

Currently, it is almost impossible for social assistance to resemble the *sadaqa stones*, because in *sadaqa stones* implementations it was difficult to distinguish between “the giver and the recipient”, and the recipients “did not take more than they needed”.

### **3.2.3. Practical Background for the Modeling**

In addition to intellectual and ethical background for modeling *sadaqa stones* implementations in social assistance today, it is also important to understand how this will work in “practice”.

Today, modern social assistance applications are carried out by central and local governments, businesses and civil organizations (NGOs, religious foundations, family etc.). In social assistance performed by central, local, private or civil institutions, there are “income tests” and “criteria” for neediness. These tests and criteria are collected by the experts from surveys into economic, social, psychological, cultural and familial situations; thereby information about the poor appears (Tomanbay, 1999: 247). This process is the eligibility for and continuance of social assistance (Gerek & Oral, 2004: 42).

As can be understood, today the “evaluation” of this process is necessary to get assistance and to provide its continuation. However, with the *sadaqa stones* there were no investigations, questioning or determinations. Thus, the identity of “actor” who makes a donation to social assistance was not important. The important point in *sadaqa stones* is that not only could anyone leave anything at anytime, but also anyone could take anything at anytime.

In this case, the following question might arise in one’s mind: “Is it possible to adapt *sadaqa stones* to modern social assistance applications through an institution?” The answer to this question is not “yes”, even if the “intellectual” or “ethical” backgrounds necessary for modeling the *sadaqa stones* implementations have been completed. The reason why is that it would be contrary to the *sadaqa stones* implementation to involve any third person between the donor and recipient. However, it can be understood that “volunteer organizations” (like NGOs) in particular can play an important role as “a bridge” between the donor and the recipient. Thus, in this light, volunteer organizations may be considered to be “modern *sadaqa stones*”.

## Conclusion

It is possible to describe the *sadaqa stones*, which were an important implementation in the Ottoman era, as “micro-hospitals of society” in both physical and moral issues. Thus, with the functions of the *sadaqa stones* implementation, such as the functions of social solidarity and order in society, the psycho-social moods of both the needy and non-needy can be educated and individual ethics can be developed. As a result, hostility

between the poor and the wealthy will not arise, and instances such as robbery, looting etc. will become more infrequent, as there would be a bond of trust in the wealthy. This sense of trust will have been indoctrinated in society and as a result social ethics will become an inherent norm.

However, *sadaqa* is not the main aim; it is only a temporary measure. It is like a “spark” that converts hopelessness into hope. *Sadaqa* is a movement to get people again onto “the main path” or “the right way”. Therefore, the main path is “giving”, not “taking or receiving”. A car can break down on the highway; however, the core thing is to repair it and get it back on the road. *Sadaqa* repairs people both physically and morally as the way the car is repaired.

This method of repair has two main themes; “intellectual” and “ethical”. First, people in need of social assistance should not think of themselves as holding out their hands to receive assistance. Secondly, people who contribute to social assistance should donate aid by considering that receiving such an aid is a “right” and that the donation is the fulfillment of this “right”. Thus, contributions to social assistance should not be carried out in a mood of pride, show off, or disparagement.

In order to allow both the donators and the recipients to take on such a mentality, people need to be “ethically educated”, as ethics is the union of rules and methods which tell us how to behave and what is important (Başdemir, 2007: 49). Ethics is not temporary. It must be internalized and it exhibits a holistic perspective, becoming a part of the human being. Ethics also means that one does their duty willingly and without any obligation. (Çağrıçı, 2006: 17-18). In order to attain this ethics (as seen in the *sadaqa stones* implementation) “medium and long-term education” is necessary.

## REFERENCES

- Abay, A.R. (2004), “Bir Sosyal Politika Olarak Yoksullukla Mücadelede Sosyal Yardımlaşma ve Dayanışma Vakıflarının Yeri,” **Sivil Toplum**, C. 2, S. 6-7, s. 77-92.
- Akkaya, Z. (1966), “Atatürk, Sosyal Hizmet ve Toplum Kalkınması,” **Sosyal Hizmet**, C. 3, S. 1, s. 20-23.

- Arı, A. (2003), “Yoksullukla Mücadelede Yerel Bir Dost: Dost Eli,” iç. **Yoksulluk Sempozyumu III**, (der. A.E. Bilgili & İ. Altan), İstanbul: Deniz Feneri Derneği, s. 160-167.
- Başdemir, H. Y. (2007), “Ahlâk Metafiziği,” iç. **Teorik ve Pratik Yönleriyle Ahlâk**, (R. Kaymakcan & M. Uyanık), İstanbul: DEM, s. 49-65.
- Buğra, A. (2003/2004). “Devletçi Dönemde Yoksulluğa Bakış ve Sosyal Politika: ‘Zenginlerimiz Nerede?’” **Toplum ve Bilim**, S. 99, s. 75-97.
- Çağatay, N. (1981), **Bir Türk Kurumu Olan Ahilik**, 2. bs., Konya: Selçuk Üniversitesi.
- Çağrı, M. (2006), **Anahatlarıyla İslâm Ahlâkı**, 4. bs., İstanbul: Ensar.
- Çakır, M., & Aldemir Ş. (2001), “Yoksulluğun Küresel Boyutları,” **Avrupa Araştırmaları**, C. 9, S. 2, s. 175-200.
- Çengelci, E. (1985), “Türkiye’de Sosyal Yardımlar: Bir Model Geliştirme Denemesi,” (Yayınlanmamış Doktora Tezi, Ankara Üniversitesi, SBE), Ankara.
- Demir, F. (t.y.), “İnfak Kültürünün Zarif Anıtları: Sadaka Taşları,” (Çevrimiçi) [http://www.sonpeygamber.info/Infak-Kulturunun-Zarif-Anitlari--Sadaka-Taslari-\\_241.html](http://www.sonpeygamber.info/Infak-Kulturunun-Zarif-Anitlari--Sadaka-Taslari-_241.html), 17 Nisan 2010.
- Dilik, S. (1991), **Sosyal Güvenlik**, Ankara: Kamu-İş.
- Dilik, S. (1980), “Sosyal Yardımlar-İki Anlamlı Bir Terim,” **Ankara Üniversitesi SBF Dergisi**, C. 35, S. 1-4, s. 55-72.
- Duman, A. (2008), “Sadaka,” iç. **TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi**, C. 35, (der. M.A. Aydın), İstanbul: TDV, s. 383-384.
- Duru, M. C. (1939), **Sosyal Yardım: Prensipleri ve Tatbikleri**, İstanbul: Ebüzziya.
- El-Mübârek, M. (1978), **İslâm’da İktisat Nizamı**, (Çev. H. Cemal), İstanbul: Çığır.
- Ersöz, H. Y. (2003), “Doğuşundan Günümüze Sosyal Politika Anlayışı ve Sosyal Politika Kurumlarının Değişen Rolü,” **İ.Ü. İktisat Fakültesi Mecmuası**, C. 52, S. 2, s. 119-144.

- Ferrera, M. (2006), "Sosyal Avrupa'da 'Güney Avrupa Modeli'," iç. **Sosyal Politika Yazıları** (der. A. Buğra & Ç. Keyder), İstanbul: İletişim, s. 195-229.
- Gerek, N. & Oral, A.İ. (2004), **Sosyal Güvenlik Hukuku**, Eskişehir: Anadolu Üniversitesi.
- Gough, I. (2006), Güney Avrupa'da Sosyal Yardım," iç. **Sosyal Politika Yazıları** (der. A. Buğra & Ç. Keyder), İstanbul: İletişim, s. 231-260.
- Hyggen, C. (2006), "Risks and Resources: Social Capital among Social Assistance Recipients in Norway," **Social Policy and Administration**, Vol. 40, No. 5, p. 493-508.
- Jewell, C.J. (2007), "Assessing Need in the United States, Germany, and Sweden: The Organization of Welfare Casework and the Potential for Responsiveness in the 'Three Worlds,'" **Law and Policy**, Vol. 29, No. 3, p. 380-406.
- Kal'a, E.S. (1994), "Osmanlılarda Sosyal Güvenlik-Sosyal Sigortalar (1865-1923)," (Yayınlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi, İstanbul Üniversitesi, SBE), İstanbul.
- Karaman, F. vd. (2009), **Dinî Kavramlar Sözlüğü**, İstanbul: DİB.
- Karataş, K. (1999), "Sosyal Refah: Kavramsal Boyutu, Gelişimi ve Nitelikleri," iç. **Yaşam Boyu Sosyal Hizmet: Prof.Dr. Sema Kut'a Armağan** (der. N.G. Koşar), Ankara: Hacettepe Üniversitesi, s. 33-43.
- Kazıcı, Z. (2008), "Osmanlı'da Hayır Müesseseleri ve Sadaka Taşları," **İnsanî Yardım Dergisi**, S. 35 (Çevrimiçi) <http://insaniyardim.ihh.org.tr/35.-sayi-/kultur-osmanlida-hayir-muesseseleri-ve-sadaka-taslari-9.html>, 17 Nisan 2010.
- Koşar, N.G. (2000), **Sosyal Hizmetlerde Sosyal Yardım Alanı**, Ankara: Şafak.
- Kutal, M. (1977), "Türkiye'de Sosyal Güvenlik ve Başlıca Sorunları," iç. **İ.Ü. İktisat Fakültesi Fındıkoğlu Armağanı** (der. O. Tuna), İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi, s. 201-216.
- Marinova, E. (t.y.), "From Social Assistance to Social Employment: New

- Trends in the Application of the Bulgaria Social Assistance Act for Low Income Families and Social Assistance Users from Roma Origin,” (Çevrimiçi) <http://unpan1.un.org/intrdoc/groups/public/documents/NISPAcee/UNPAN018444.pdf>, 5 Mayıs 2010.
- Marshall, T.M. (2006), “Yurttaşlık ve Sosyal Sınıf,” iç. **Sosyal Politika Yazıları** (der. A. Buğra & Ç. Keyder), İstanbul: İletişim, s. 19-32.
- Meyer, M.H. (1994), “Gender, Race and the Distribution of Social Assistance: Medicaid Use of among the Frail Elderly,” **Gender and Society**, Vol. 8, No. 1, p. 8-28.
- OECD (1998), **The Battle Against Exclusion II: Social Assistance in Belgium, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands and Norway**, Paris: OECD.
- Özbek, N. (2006), **Cumhuriyet Türkiye’sinde Sosyal Güvenlik ve Sosyal Politikalar**, İstanbul: EGM.
- (2004), **Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda Sosyal Devlet: Siyaset, İktidar ve Meşruiyet (1876-1914)**, 2. bs., İstanbul: İletişim.
- (1999/2000), “Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda ‘Sosyal Yardım’ Uygulamaları: 1839-1918,” **Toplum ve Bilim**, S. 83, s. 111-131.
- Özdemir, M. (1989), “Sosyal Yardımlaşma ve Dayanışma Vakfı: Ankara İli Keçiören Örneği,” (Yayınlanmamış Uzmanlık Tezi, TODAİE), Ankara.
- Özdemir, S. (2004), **Küreselleşme Sürecinde Refah Devleti**, İstanbul: İTO.
- Özemre, A.Y. (2007), **Hasretini Çektiğim Üsküdar**, İstanbul: Kubbealtı.
- Özönder, H., “Sadaka Taşları: Sadaka Vermenin Zarif Yöntemi,” (Çevrimiçi) [http://www.tulipandrose.net/turkce/dinfeneri/sadaka\\_taslari.htm](http://www.tulipandrose.net/turkce/dinfeneri/sadaka_taslari.htm), 17 Nisan 2010.
- Öztürk, N. (1983), **Menşei ve Tarihi Gelişimi Açısından Vakıflar**, Ankara: Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü.
- Pérez-Baltodano, A. (2004), “Globalization, Human Security and Social Policy: North and South,” iç. **A Handbook of Comparative Social Policy** (der. P. Kennett), UK: Edward Elgar, p. 50-68.

- Saran, M.U. (1997), "Sosyal Yardımlaşma ve Dayanışma Teşvik Fonu ve Sosyal Yardımlaşma ve Dayanışma Vakıfları," **Vakıflar Dergisi**, S. 26, s. 427-440.
- Sarı, N. & Kurt, Ü.E. (2006), "Üsküdar Miskinler Tekkesi," iç. **Üsküdar Sempozyumu IV Bildiriler Kitabı**, İstanbul: Üsküdar Belediyesi, s. 365-390.
- Sevim, N. (2009), **Medeniyetimizde Toplumsal Dayanışma ve Sadaka Taşları**, İstanbul: Kitapdostu.
- Seyyar, A. (2006), **Değişen Dünyada ve Türkiye'de Sosyal Politikalar**, İstanbul: Değişim.
- Solak, F. (1997), "Ahilik," iç. **İktisat ve Din**, 2. bs., (der. M. Özel), İstanbul: İz, s. 69-79.
- Şahin, M. (1990), "Vakıf Kurumunun Sosyal Hizmetleri Üzerine Bir Araştırma," (Yayınlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi, İstanbul Üniversitesi, SBE), İstanbul.
- Taşcı, F. (2009), "Türkiye'de Sosyal Yardımların Geleceği," iç. **Uluslararası 7. Bilgi, Ekonomi ve Yönetim Kongresi Bildiriler Kitabı**, Yalova: Yalova Üniversitesi, s. 1741-1753.
- Tomanbay, İ. (1999), **Sosyal Çalışma Sözlüğü**, Ankara: Selvi.
- Türkcan, R. (2003), "Yerel Yönetimlerde Sosyal Yardım Hizmetleri," (Yayınlanmamış Uzmanlık Tezi, TODAİE), Ankara.
- Ünver, S. (1967), "Sadaka Taşı," **Hayat Tarih Mecmuası**, S. 11 (Çevrimiçi) <http://www.kardelendergisi.com/yazi.php?yazi=211>, 5 Mayıs 2010.
- Walker, R. (2005), **Social Security and Welfare: Concepts and Comparisons**, UK: Open University.
- Yaşaroğlu, M.K. (2003), "Sosyal Dengenin Sağlanması ve Varlık-Yoksul Dayanışmasında İki Önemli Kavram: İnfâk ve İsâr," iç. **Yoksulluk Sempozyumu II** (der. A.E. Bilgili & İ. Atlan) İstanbul: Deniz Feneri, s. 373-385.
- Zaim, S. (1992), **İslâm-İnsan-Ekonomi**, İstanbul: Yeni Asya.