

TURKISH IDENTITY: IN SEARCH OF A NEW SOCIAL ETHICS*Mehmet ATALAY (*)***Abstract**

Ethnicity (or ethnicity-related nationality) and religion (or the mainstream sect of the majority of a given society) constitute the two most important elements in the formation of a nation. However, they are also the two most prominent concepts, among many others, that are most widely open to be abused in identity politics.

More specifically, ethnicity and religion might strengthen the momentum of the process of nation formation and they are definitely of great value in keeping a society together. On the other hand, they might easily be abused: they might alienate large segments of a given nation in many ways, e.g., their being emphasized as though they are the two most primary stipulations for an individual to be considered as a member of a nation.

It seems that their being given great importance is largely due to the lack of a sense of security on the whole. On the other hand, their being considered as of second importance to, for instance, ethics of principles is mostly dependent on the tragic times in the history of a nation that give rise to paradigm shift in identity perception.

In this paper, I will follow and pin down the above-mentioned points focusing on the last 10 to 15 years of the Turkish people living with strong Asian roots in the modern-day Turkey. Also drawing on a personal perspective and experience, I will be aiming to point out that the tragic moments in the history of a given nation are conducive to paradigm shifts in identity perception and that the paradigm shifts taking place in the wake of the tragic moments are extremely sensitive about avoiding the possible abuses of both the mainstream ethnicity and the mainstream religion.

Key Words: Turkish Identity, Ethnicity, Religion, Identity Politics.

Türk Kimliği: Yeni Bir Sosyal Etik Arayışı**Özet**

Etnisite (ya da etnisite-ilintili milliyet) ve din (ya da herhangi bir toplumun ana-mecra mezhebi) bir milletin oluşumunda en önemli iki dinamik unsuru teşkil eder. Bununla beraber, bu iki unsur kimlik siyasetinde –başkaça birçok kavram arasında– geniş ölçüde istismara açık iki temel kavramdır.

Daha özgül olarak söylesek, etnisite ve din millet oluşturma sürecinin hızını artırabilir ve bu iki unsur bir toplumu birarada tutmada kesin olarak son derece önemlidir. Diğer taraftan, bu iki unsur istismar da edilebilir: bir toplumun geniş kesimlerini –bir bireyin bir milletin mensubu sayılması için en önde gelen şartlarıymış gibi vurgulanması durumunda olduğu gibi– birçok açıdan yabancılaştırabilir.

Öyle görünmektedir ki bu iki unsura büyük önem atfedilmesi önemli ölçekte güvenlik duygusunun eksikliğinden kaynaklanmaktadır. Diğer taraftan, bu iki unsurun –mesela– ilke ahlakına nisbetle ikincil önemde görülmesi, bir milletin tarihinde kimlik algısı açısından paradigma değişimine yol açan trajik zamanlardan güç bulmaktadır.

Bu makalede; yukarıda zikredilen yaklaşımları, güçlü Asyevî köklerle günümüz Türkiye'sinde yaşayan Türk halkının son 10-15 yılına yoğunlaşarak takip etmeye ve somutlaştırmaya çalışacağım. Kişisel bir perspektif ve tecrübeye de yaslanarak, ayrıca, bir milletin tarihindeki trajik zamanların kimlik algısında paradigma değişimine yol açtığı ve trajik zamanları takip eden paradigma değişimlerinin de hem ana-mecra etnisitenin hem de ana-mecra dinin muhtemel istismarından sakınma konusunda son derece hassas olduğu gerçeğini işaretlemeye çalışacağım.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Türk Kimliği, Etnisite, Din, Kimlik Siyaseti.

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When attempting to come up with an easy-to-understand analogy concerning Turkish identity in general a personal experience comes to mind, which is related to my birth place. I was actually born in Istanbul; so I am an ‘Istanbulian’. But my birth place somehow appeared in my state-given identity card as Trabzon, a major city in Northern Anatolia where both my parents were from. The shade of this little mistake followed me all the way from young adulthood to middle age years. The question ‘where are you from?’ always posed a problem on me, even extending to the football team I supported. In my early adulthood years, I was a supporter of Trabzonspor, the football team of my ostensible hometown due to the public perception still valid in Turkey that ‘you are from the town of your parents especially / or from the town of your father’. Then somehow I fell in love with Galatasaray, a football team of Istanbul whose main stadium was easily reachable for me by bus than those of Beşiktaş and Fenerbahçe. But that which led me to become a supporter of Galatasaray was not the easy-to-use bus route. It was a rematch of Galatasaray with PSV Eindhoven of Sweden in 1987. Just two weeks ago before the time of rematch, Galatasaray was defeated to PSV in Sweden by 3 to 0.

Assuming that I am already indulged to reevaluate the defeat, I can still enthusiastically ‘testify’ that the defeat was all unjust: the referee was ‘the worst’ of all in the history of European football and everything was designed to make Galatasaray get doomed to the defeat, not to mention Eric Geretz butchering Galatasaray’s front field players. I would like the reader to forget about the fancy description of the defeat I just made but for the sake of describing how unfair the defeat was, I should recall that I rushed into the stadium of Galatasaray in Istanbul when the time of rematch came. It was my first time to watch live football in a real stadium; and to be able to ‘bypass’ the long queue to get a ticket, I did what a couple of ‘vigilant’ supporters did: I jumped over the 4 to 5 meter-long barrier and landed on the area right in front of the cashier’s booth. At the time, I did not even know what I was really doing. People who were almost stuck in the booth trying to immediately get their tickets just gave me their lines seemingly out of respect for what I did. It was the urge to express support for Galatasaray having being exposed to an ‘unjust’ defeat that made me rush off to the stadium and it turned into love during that little expedition.

Consequently, though originally from Trabzon, I am actually an Istanbulian even in accord with another public perception in Turkey that ‘you are not from where you were born, you are from where you live and make a living’.¹ Moreover, having reserved my exclusive love toward the object of my little expedition, I should admit that I like both Galatasaray and Trabzonspor and I think I get to be a most professionally righteous observer when they play each other. Finally, I should also like to mention that Geretz, once the brutal defense player of PSV, became the coach of Galatasaray in 2006. I remember that in a derby match he got wounded in his head by a ‘sinister’ stone thrown from the supporters of the opposing team. One week later, I was proud to my core when some

1) This perception is referred to by a young Istanbulian Jewish woman as the following: “Home is where you make a living. If it is Saudi Arabia, home is Saudi Arabia for you” (as cited in Koçoğlu, 2001: 82).

reactive supporters of Galatasaray expressed their affection towards him stretching a huge banner in the stadium that read like this: ‘The blood in your forehead is our honor...’

Just like the complexity about where I am from and essentially my caring for both Galatasaray and Trabzonspor, Turkish identity today has a dual character aimed at some type of synthesis. In other words, however one fills in the content of that duality the ever big struggle of Turkish identity today is to abstain both from the position ‘either this or that’ and the position ‘neither this nor that’; and instead, to both attain and maintain the position ‘both this and that’. The content of this duality could be filled in as East and West or traditionalism and modernism and so on. One could even describe the content of this duality as Islam and secularism, provided that secularism does mean more than just freedom of religion and religious diversity. In each and every case, Turkish identity seems to have been determined not to give up on its search for the position and the challenge of ‘both this and that’.

Because the motto expressed as ‘both this and that’ can aptly amount to a general depiction of Turkish identity, it might provide crucial insights in laying out the specifics of the Turkish people. The renowned Orientalist and Turcologist Bernard Lewis’ account concerning the sources of Turkish civilization can also be seen as marking the main components of Turkish identity: local factor, Turkish, and Islam (1968: 1-179). One might contend that according to Lewis’ account, there seem to be the two main components of the Turkish identity today: Turkishness colored with both Anatolian and Central Asian ethnicities and Islam including its Alevi-Bektashi versions. Emphasized especially in the cold war era as the major way of resisting against communist expansion and keeping attached to Western democracies, Turkishness and Islam still mark the major aspects of Turkish identity. It should also be realized that these two terms are much interrelated and are widely used interchangeably especially among the Turkish immigrants from Balkan Peninsula. And to be able to come up with a comprehensive definition of Turkish identity, one should keep in mind that the terms of Turkishness and Islam are to be taken into account as both interrelated and separate realities.

At this point, it might be helpful to point out that Turkishness and Islam (particularly Sunni Islam) can be used interchangeably. Nevertheless, one could only be reminded of the fact that dividing identity into two main components one being ethnicity-centered or ‘unity in ideas’ and the other being religious homogeneity is only a wise policy for small nations since it is extremely protective of the nation against all types of assimilation. Thus, the fact that Turkishness and Islam are being used interchangeably would only be construed as a negative aspect of Turkish identity that leans on the tradition and experience of the big historic states in the past and that is now far away from the old-fear of both ethnically and religiously getting scattered around is no more a challenge for Turkish identity for basically two fundamental reasons:

- 1- Turkish identity would inevitably be inclusive of all types of ethnicities as it is mostly dependent on the residue of the Ottoman Empire. In this sense, the term Turk would considerably appear to mean something like ‘Euro-Anatolian’, denoting the peoples living in both European and Asian sides of the modern-day Turkey.

2- The Constitution of Turkey proclaims that ‘everybody who has the citizenship of Turkey is a Turk’. This definition is crucial in that it brings about a humanistic and thus inclusive approach to the definition of Turkish nation.

This is also the case concerning the stance of the founding architect of the Republic of Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Although he was a Turkish nationalist even at a mystical level² his “approach to the concept of nation was not based on pure racism. Instead, he accepted the nation as a historical, social and particularly as a cultural reality” (Genç, 1999: 5).

It should also be noted that the humanistic aspect of the definition of Turkish nation was both implemented and officially recognized in 1923 when the Republic of Turkey was established. For instance, the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey implemented in 1924 defines the term Turk as the following: “Everybody in Turkey, without discrimination of race and religion, is called Turk in terms of the citizenship” (as cited in Özdemir, 1995: 225). Nevertheless, there have been some hotly debated issues surrounding the definition of the constitutional Turkishness (or citizenship) and they seem to be pertaining not just into semantics. In 1994, for example, the Muslim conservative party of the time, Refah Partisi (Welfare Party), proposed to change the definition into the following: “Whoever has the bond of citizenship with the Turkish state is called Turkish citizen” (Özdemir, 1995: 231). On the other hand, Halkın Emek Partisi (People’s Labor Party), a political movement predominantly appealing to Kurdish voters, proposed to change the definition into this: “Whoever has the bond of citizenship with the Republic of Turkey is called the citizen of the Republic of Turkey” (Özdemir, 1995: 231). In short, there has been a tendency in Turkey for the last few decades now to redefine the constitutional Turkishness since it is seen as much protective of the whole people living in Turkey against discrimination as it is not diminishing the incentive to celebrate ethnic differences.

Therefore, one might contend that the concept of constitutional Turkishness has two basic functions: on the one hand, it impedes the interchangeable usage of the terms Turkishness and Islam (or Turk and Muslim); on the other, it might lead to artificial formation of a national union denying or ignoring ethnic differences. Whether the concept of constitutional Turkishness will be or stay as super ordinate identity (or upper identity) in the sense that for instance American identity is constitutes a huge challenge. The challenge was not evident until after the 1980s when the majority of Turkish population used to think that there were not any significant groups of people who were ethnically non-Turkish in Turkey and that Islam would only rub out ethnic differences of the people of Turkey.

It seems that the challenge can be met properly as the Turkish people are becoming more and more liberal. Since 1950, the year the first free general election was held after World War II, the governments of Turkey have been formed mostly by conservative parties. It is not little known that Turkish politics is predominantly conservative. However,

2) “If Atatürk had not been a nationalist to the degree that might be called mystical, perhaps there would not have been an entity called Turkey today” (Kaplan, 1998: 97).

when taken into account in terms of both economic and social fronts, the parties supposed to be conservative might be seen as liberal and vice versa. One reason why conservative parties seem to be liberal is the formulation of ‘both this and that’: they did not give up on both Islam and westernization. Another reason is that leftist parties did not much succeed in appealing to Turkish consciousness perhaps because of the much criticized inconsistencies almost intrinsically associated with them. It suffices to say that seemingly the major liberal party in Turkey, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (People’s Republic Party), has been against giving all civil rights to Kurdish population and gradually leaning towards Turkish nationalism for almost a decade now. On the other hand, the leading conservative party, Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (Justice and Development Party), regarding the economic front where no conservative party can seem more ‘conservative’ than CHP, is even aimed to give voice to the widespread liberal discourse so to explain its tendency for privatization: the smaller the state is in terms of its own economic enterprise the more welfare for everybody there is to be.

Based on the account given so far, one might contend that Turkish politics can be divided into two parts as before and after 1950. Moreover, both the leading party (CHP) till 1950 and the ones that mostly formed the governments after 1950 were conservative, but in majorly two different ways: whereas the CHP leaned toward Turkishness, the governments formed after 1950 generally leaned toward Islam or some sort of consciousness-against-communism sentiment.

In order to clarify the distinction of Turkish politics as before and after 1950, one should stress the two most fundamental social dynamics coming into play in the formation process of any political union throughout history: nationality and religion.³ These two factors can be substituted by similar concepts, which is somewhat to say that they may not have clear-cut contents. To stretch the contents of these two social dynamics –two factors of *asabiyyah*, in an Ibn Khaldunian sense– whereas the sense of nationality can be built upon common interests the sense of religion can be built upon religion-like common ideals. In any case, nationality and religion seem to be the most fundamental conceptual categories that lead to formation of political unions.⁴ One should keep in mind that as

3) The idea was taken from the reading of Ibn Khaldun’s *Muqaddimah* (1968) along with Eric Hoffer’s *The True Believer* (1951).

4) One can contend that these two factors are in fact the two most important elements in forming a nation and keeping a society together. In the modern-day Iran, for instance, the state organization turned the traditionally independent religious scholars (‘ulama) into state officials which only added momentum to forming a nation-state (Khosrokhavar & Roy, 2000: 15). The same thing, i.e., religious scholars turning into state officials, was only put into realization in the Ottoman Empire in the early 1880s (Akyol, 1999: 161-3), the era of the sultan Mahmut II which also marked the beginning of the formation of a nation-state specifically aimed at the Turkish population. It should also be noted that in the modern-day Iran, Shi’ism and Iranian nationalism were rendered identical (Khosrokhavar & Roy, 2000: 15) in an effort to fortify the Islamic revolution. This will surely point to the fact that nationality and religion are the two main elements in keeping a society together as well as the fact that they might separately constitute the major locus of abuse in political life. Khosrokhavar and Roy further note that “it was the Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988) that gave Khomeini the chance to come to a

these two concepts are extremely helpful in forming a nation and keeping it together the dark side of them is when they are conducive to some type of nationalism, respectively, ethnic and religious nationalisms.

In accordance with the assumption that nationality and religion are the two most basic conceptual categories, it is apt to classify Turkish politics since the establishment of the Republic till 1950 as having inclined toward Turkishness also making room for –or simply legitimizing– the westernization of the nation.

That nationality and religion as two basic factors conclusive to forming a nation or simply a political union also constitutes an easy way of understanding and classifying the history of the Turkish Republic. As in the case of most nations, these two factors are of equal importance in the Turkish experience of nationhood. And in the process of struggling against the dark side of one of these factors, the other would be understandably emphasized and exalted. In the 1920s the struggle was against the residue of the Ottoman Islamic institutions partly because of the civil war that took place between the government of Ankara and that of Istanbul during the war of independence and partly because of the fact that the new Republican era could not base its ideology on the religion of Islam in its immense effort to modernize its society. Hence, there came into existence the abolishing of the caliphate and the fast westernization of the whole nation including the Latinization of her alphabet and the hat revolution. No wonder Claude Farrère, the long time friend of Turkey, gave the account that in the 1920s Ankara almost irritatingly tried to refrain from every institution that was Islamic and Ottoman and, instead, gave rise to a strong perception of Turkish nationalism (1973: 181-230).

What is more, performing the *adhan*, the religious call to prayer which is chanted five times a day in the minarets of mosques, was banned and instead the Turkish version of *adhan* was legitimized and put to use. The ban, which can only be explained by the hermeneutic mistakes of the Turkish elites trying to follow the European experience on performing religious prayers in mother tongue and perhaps by their childish attempt to appeal to international community, lasted for 18 years. It was lifted when Democrat Party came to power in 1950 through the first democratically-held elections. The era of one party rule came to an end and the *adhan* in Turkey was changed into its Arabic original.⁵

Consequently, based on the duality of nationality and religion it does seem appropriate to classify Turkish politics as before and after 1950. The governments formed before 1950 were predominantly conservative but they were inclined toward Turkishness-oriented policies seeing it as an effective way of westernization and modernization.⁶ On the other hand, the governments formed after 1950 were predominantly of conservative background but they were mainly sensitive about promoting traditional values flavored with religion

synthesis between nationalism and Islam as well as the chance to discredit the opposition pushing it over to the side of the enemies of Iran and the Iranian revolution” (2000: 28).

5) For an extensive account on the ban, see: (Aydar & Atalay, 2006).

6) According to İsmail Tunali, a renowned philosopher in Turkey, “people in Istanbul in the early 1930s used to go to coffeehouses at night with their nightgowns” (2006: 194).

as a way of keeping connected to Western democracies. One should also keep in mind that the governments formed after 1950 were actually liberal in effect and conservative in appearance as they were mainly in accordance with the idea of true democracy: in terms of economic life, they were not conservative in the socialist sense but they were absolutely liberal in terms of societal freedom. Thus, it should not come as a surprise that after 1950 liberal values have almost always been promoted by parties of conservative background. In short, Turkish politics is basically a mixture: what is normally expected from a socialist party was put into realization by a conservative party and vice versa. Furthermore, the fact that political parties in Turkey cannot easily be classified as conservative or liberal might say something about Turkish identity. All the exceptions representative of extreme ends in Turkish politics aside, the bulk of Turkish society is not inimical to both conservative and liberal values. No wonder the partly Kurdish president Turgut Özal was the first statesman in the entire history of the Republic who said that Turkey should even debate about the idea of federation.

One effective way of depicting Turkish identity is to think of it as a product of both the clash and accordance of westernization and Islam and this was especially experienced heavily in the last two hundred years of the Ottoman Empire and the first quarter of the Republic. Henceforward, I will be attempting to fully tackle the issue and at the time emphasize the three fundamental aspects of Turkish identity: integration, empathy, and mysticism or Sufism.

It should come as no surprise that talking about the modern-day Turkish identity is almost equal to the now-imaginary Ottoman identity. In other words, as the eminent scholar of the Ottoman history İlber Ortaylı said, “one of the most important elements that constitute Turkish identity is the Ottoman, [and] the Ottoman history” (2001: 102).

Germany and the Ottoman Empire were allies in World War I. After the Entente Powers concluded Versailles Treaty with Germany at the end of the war, the Ottomans too were pushed to resign from the war. The Ottomans had to bring themselves to sign the Armistice of Mudros in October 30, 1918. Depending on the article 7 of the Armistice which according to Turkish historians was all eligible for an abusive interpretation,⁷ Greece began to invade the western provinces of Anatolia in 1919.⁸ Only a few days later, in May 19, Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), an Ottoman general at the time, landed in Samsun, a province in Northern Anatolia, with his ensemble to organize a public resistance against the invasion. To keep it short, the Anatolian Resistance led by Mustafa Kemal who later called on a general assembly fought three wars for about four years between 1919 and 1923: local battles against the occupying forces in various provinces, one major war

7) “The worst part of the Armistice was the Article 7. According to this, the Entente Powers had the right to temporarily occupy any strategic location in Turkey provided that their security was endangered” (Su & Mumcu, 1987: 21).

8) A dramatic description concerning the abuses of the above-mentioned armistice came from the late Turkish poet and author Cahit Zarifoğlu: “The united western countries that decided to wipe out the Ottoman state calling it ‘Sick Man’ in the treaties among themselves, abundantly exploited the seventh article of the Armistice of Mudros, which was signed in October 30, 1918” (1999: 75).

against the Greek armies in Western Anatolia⁹ and a civil war against the armies of the caliphate.¹⁰ By the time all these wars were won, “Anatolian people [Turkish people] hated the Ottoman palace and Vahdettin” [the last Ottoman sultan] because he made them and the armies of the caliphate fiercely crush each other” (Şapolyo, 1961: 471). As a result, the Ottoman sultanhip was abolished in 1922 which paved the way to officially put an end to the Ottoman Empire through the proclamation of the Republic in 1923.

Turkish people never liked the last Ottoman sultan but they still love his ancestors. Even the founding architect of the Republic, Atatürk, made special mention of one Ottoman sultan, Mehmet II, who is still widely known and praised for creating the Istanbul spirit.¹¹

One can easily contend that Istanbul, from the time of Mehmet II, has been the heart of both the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey. Being a metropolitan and one of the largest cities in the world, Istanbul is basically known as the home of ethnically and religiously diverse communities in Turkey. Thus, talking about Istanbul might provide an important clue with respect to Turkish identity: integration. For instance, one might get surprised that in Istanbul even the great mosques that were built in the Ottoman era are in perfect harmony with the old Byzantine ramparts surrounding the old parts of the city.

One interesting account is given by an Australian, Charles Ryan, who worked as a surgeon in the Ottoman army during the Ottoman–Russian war (1877-1878). Drawing on his expedition to the capital of the Ottoman Empire of the time, he wrote the following:

“Next morning... we saw Stanboul rising out of the Bosphorus, and my dreams were at last fulfilled. Fresh, as one might say, from Melbourne, which forty years before was a camping-ground for blacks, I saw before me in this gorgeous vision of mosques and minarets, dark green cypress groves, towers of gleaming marble, and gilded pinnacles of the far Seraglio, a city of unknown antiquity. The story goes that, more than hundred years before the Christian era, the Athenians, inspired by the burning of Demosthenes, fought to defend it against Philip of Macedon. One dark night, so the veracious historians of that period tell us, the Macedonians were on the point of carrying the city by assault, when a shining crescent appeared in the sky, disclosed the creeping forms of the enemy, and enabled the beleaguered forces to repel the attack with such vigour that the Macedonians raised the siege and retired. Such was the origin of the crescent which figures on old Byzantine coins, and when the Osmanlis [Ottomans] captured Constantinople they adopted it as their national device. It is a pretty story,

9) For an account as to how the invasion of the Greek armies of İzmir (Smyrna) was unlawful and illegitimate in the eyes of Turkish people at the time, see: (Tahir, 1973: 313-4).

10) For an indirect yet astounding account on this little emphasized fact, see: (Yılmaz, 1992: 311-312, 315; Akşin, 2009: 103-4).

11) According to Harold Lamb, for instance, Mehmet II, after having conquered Istanbul, proclaimed the equality between Muslims and non-Muslims in his country (Lamb, 2005: 17).

and well –“*si non é vero é ben trovato*”. I saw before me a city which had already been besieged twenty-four times since its foundation and captured six times. Among others, Persians, Spartans, Athenians, Romans, Avars, Araps, Russians, Crusaders and Greeks had besieged it before it fell at last under the terrific assault of the forces of Mahomed II [Mehmet II] in 1453. I landed at Galata, the post of Pera” (Ryan, 2007: 11-2).

Charles Ryan’s account is very interesting and it does not just reveal a little detail about the Turkish flag that still has the sign of crescent as its main element. Although it is little known in modern-day Turkey that the sign of crescent in the Turkish flag might have come from Byzantine origin (Lamb, 2005: 124), the mainstream accounts concerning the formation of the Turkish flag (Eyice, 1991; Bozkurt, 1998) do leave a space for seriously considering the Byzantine origin.

The fact that the might-be Byzantine origin of the Turkish flag was given scanty attention in modern Turkey has to do with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire: the large coalition ended and the Turkish part located in the European continent was confined only to Eastern Thrace. Recalling the origin of the Turkish flag now may not prove practical in terms of inclusiveness. No wonder the translator of Ryan’s book into Turkish rendered the meaning of the phrase ‘*si non é vero é ben trovato*’ as ‘it is not true, but it is a good story’ (‘doğru olmasa da iyi bulunmuştu’) (Ryan, 2005: 23), instead of translating it as ‘if it is not true, it is a good story’ (‘şayet doğru değilse, en azından iyi bir hikaye’).

Although Atatürk was a Turkish nationalist to the degree that can be described as mystical, he gave rise to Turkishness as the main foundation of the social dynamics of Turkish society and he espoused Turkishness as a way that is not inimical to westernization. His espousing Turkishness as the major way of integrating into the international community in the 1920s explains why he loved Mehmet II among many of the Ottoman sultans.

One should not get surprised upon realizing that westernization in the history of Turkish people emerged in the early centuries of the Ottoman Empire which also might easily traced back to the era of Mehmet II: the influence of the Byzantine state establishments on the Ottoman state is not little known. Their expansion toward East and especially toward Arabia was, according to an eminent scholar of Islamic history, because of the impetus to protect the holy places of Islam from Dutch and particularly Portuguese imperialism (Sırma, 1980; Sırma, 1991: 139-40). The Ottomans came back from Arabia with the burden of the caliphate on their shoulders. Their attack on Iran was only a response to Shiite expansionism which basically resulted in the Ottoman State becoming more and more Sunni and Iran becoming more and more Shiite.

On the other hand, the accounts concerning the emergence of westernization in the Ottoman history agree upon the idea that it came about as a response to the dysfunction of the state organization and especially that of the Ottoman army. But it should be of small wonder that the search for solution in the face of the dysfunction of the state was not necessarily in opposition to Islam and Islamic law. In other words, westernization in its true sense and the pure Islam should not necessarily be perceived as being inimical

to each other. More specifically, in the case of the whole Turkish history, it should not come as a big surprise that the religion of Islam was mostly perceived as the movement of fundamental rights, freedom, and peace.

The dysfunction of the Ottoman army became fully manifest at the Kahlenberg War which took place during the second siege of Vienna in 1683. The whole campaign was against the Islamic Law that was adopted by the Ottoman Empire. The greedy grand vizier of the time, Kara Mustafa Paşa, was determined to finish what Süleyman the magnificent once tried: taking over Vienna. This is what the historians say by and large to explain the siege. But there is more to the story.

One non-official scholar of Islam and a Sufi at the time, Osman Fazlî, who was also the spiritual teacher of the eminent commentator of the Quran, İsmail Hakkı Bursevî, advised Kara Mustafa against attacking Vienna because it would only mean breaking the peace treaty between the Ottomans and the Habsburg dynasty and thus it would be against the teachings of the Holy Quran (Aynî, 1944: 34). The grand vizier did not take that advice into account. Perhaps he was more like a modern-day secular leader than a prudent and wise Ottoman statesman of that time.

Kara Mustafa's religious advisor, Vâni Mehmet Efendi, who took part in expelling another eminent Sufi, Niyâzî-i Mîsrî, was "somebody who did look down on non-Turkish people and was famous for his bigotry against Sufism" (Erdoğan, 1998: Lxxiv). It should also be noted that in that era, even Sufi dancing was banned for 18 years beginning in 1666. The ban ended only the following year after the siege of Vienna in 1683 (Erdoğan, 1998).

The second siege of Vienna and the events leading to it constituted the peak level of the dysfunction of the Ottoman state and was the manifestation of the malady that already clung on the paradigm of the Ottoman state and thus *Pax Turcica*.

The eminent Turkish scholar of Islam and Sufi İsmail Hakkı Bursevî of the seventeenth century provided two accounts concerning the disastrous siege of Vienna in 1683 and its aftermath in his hefty commentary of the Quran, which was written in Arabic with Persian poems cited on occasions. First, he talks about the founding architect of the Ottoman Empire, Osman Gazi, as to how he was generous to travelers in his town as a regional lord of the Anatolian Selcukis and how he was respectful of the Quran. Then he brings up the subject of talking about Mehmet IV, the Ottoman sultan of the era in which the siege took place. "Do you not see" says Bursevî, "when the sultan Mehmet IV and his ensemble did cease to act upon the Quran and choose the way of animosity and oppression, God exposed them and thus their subjects to the calamity of famine and terror. The prosperous castles got out of their hands. The infidels occupied so many Ottoman cities that they almost slavered after Istanbul. The terror reached such a degree that people started grumbling as to where to escape. All of this occurred because of his wicked ensemble: they were encouraging the Sultan to act against the teachings of the Quran" (Bursevî, 1969: 4/28-9).

Bursevî's account is prone to explain the dysfunctions of the Ottoman state organization as the result of violating or acting against the teachings of the Quran. In other words,

the account, albeit abstract, only points to a correlation between the severe signs of the decline and the damages eating on the paradigm of the Ottoman Empire. Another account given again by Bursevî concerning the same matter is more tangible than the former. This account can also be seen as an indication of the second major aspect of Turkish identity, empathy, which can aptly explain the lasting of the Ottoman Empire over 600 years:

“The poor guy says that from the year 1094 till now, which is the year 1100 [1682-1688], in Rumi towns [Rumi land: Rumeli: the European parts of the Empire stretching over Central Europe], Black Sea and the Mediterranean, we have seen aggression and occupation of infidels that people before us have never seen. And no one knows what will happen next. The events are only up to the will of God. All these atrocities came into existence because of the oppression and extreme injustice against both Muslims and non-Muslims living in the Ottoman State” (Bursevî, 1969: 3/423).

The paradigm of the Empire which was enjoyed by both Muslim and non-Muslim communities was severely damaged. It is of small wonder that the grand vizier who waged the campaign against Vienna did not even like the idea of non-Muslim communities in Istanbul praying for the victory of his army and that even the grand mufti of Istanbul (the top official scholar of Islam: Shaykhul-Islam), did not give fatwa to legitimize the breaking of Vasvár Treaty (Finkel, 2007: 255).¹² The grand vizier moved forward anyway, with all the sinister tactics employed even deceiving the sultan, which sufficiently explains the fact that although he gathered the biggest army Central Europe has never seen until the end of the seventeenth century he did not equip it with large field cannons that he would ferociously need to take over such a castle as that of Vienna.

One feels compelled to think that this campaign was a determined move towards forming a new paradigm over the existing one of the sultanate of that time. In other words, one can contend, Kara Mustafa Paşa was in urgent need to lean on a victory over the great Catholic Empire in Central Europe so that he would be able to build upon a new paradigm in the very fabric of the Ottoman Empire.¹³ According to a former minister of education, Hasan Âli Yücel (d. 1961), there were two major attempts in Turkish history directly aimed to overtake the sultanate. The first one was a coup concerted against the Ottoman sultan Abdülaziz in 1876. The second one was the Turkish Revolution in 1908, which was all under the control of the Young Turks. The former one did not comply with Russians and got willingly engaged in a war (1877-1878 Ottoman-Russian War) in search of a decisive victory to lean upon for the purpose of implementing its agenda. The latter one, on the other hand, was only pushed to a war in 1912 with the four allied Balkan states, Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria and Montenegro. Unfortunately, both wars did result in

12) It is also known as Eisenberg Treaty.

13) The eminent Turkish historian Enver Behnan Şapolyo sees the absence of a new ideology among the reasons why the Ottoman Empire collapsed (1957: 30).

complete disasters for the Turkish-Muslim population living in the European parts of the Ottoman Empire (Yücel, 1998: 2/737, 741, 835, 907, 913).¹⁴ Turkish Independence War (1919-1922), on the other hand, led by another Mustafa, who later took the last name of Atatürk, was all a magnificent success. With the wind of this success, the new government of Ankara was all able to issue a law pronouncing the Ottoman sultanhip as nullified and void. As for the caliphate, the government abolished it in 1924 conveying its function to the Turkish Parliament (Meclis) with the following amendment: ‘The caliphate is imbedded in the body of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey’ (Yılmaz, 1991: 135).

The third aspect of Turkish identity worth taking a look at would be mysticism or Sufism-related conduct. There can be various manifestations of this aspect such as intimacy, being ambiguous when invited to have a meal and not being eager to make a choice.

The attitude of not being eager to make a choice when asked to make one can be best explained through the mirror metaphor much emphasized in Sufi literature. According to Sufi perception the human heart is a mirror and it should be cleaned off until it becomes all luminous. When it is luminous and brilliant, it could be all reflective: reflective of the light of God, reflective of the will of the hearts of other people asking to make a choice. My personal experience in this regard is that every time I am undecided about something and ask a friend under normal circumstances for instance to eat at either Restaurant A or B, he or she would only return my indecision instead of making a choice. In other words, my friends would only reflect my indecision and it has everything to do with the Sufi interpretation of the mirror metaphor (Rûmî, 2001).

As for the aspect of intimacy and ambiguousness of conduct and manners, the best accounts were given by psychologist and cultural critic Doğan Cüceloğlu. For instance, he describes the reaction of his American mother-in-law when he first called her simply as mother in the following words: “She looked at me in astonishment and got burst into tears. She was very happy” (Cüceloğlu, 2005: 447).

According to Cüceloğlu, verbal communication as opposed to emotional one among Turks is not as dominant as it is generally witnessed in Western societies. The best example of this non-verbal communication is that Turks say ‘I am full’ (meaning ‘I am not hungry’) when they are invited to, say, dinner table as guests. They usually say so even though if they are hungry. Any Turk knows about saying ‘I am full’ or even ‘I am not hungry’ (and probably sometimes ‘I am not that hungry’) when invited as a guest to having food that is already prepared or served. Turning into a rule of etiquette, it is almost always a shame for Turks not to say ‘I am full’ or simply ‘I am not hungry’ when invited to have food or even asked if they are hungry.¹⁵ One interesting account given by

14) The 34th sultan of the Ottoman Empire, Abdülhamid II, considers the political divide in the Ottoman military as the main reason why these two wars were lost (Abdülhamid II, 2005: 96, 100).

15) This rule of etiquette can also be described generally as Eastern because one can find that the Russian novelist Ivan Goncharov refers to it in his great novel *Oblomov* (2004: 166).

Cüceloğlu can aptly illustrate the point. He talks about a visit that he made to his wife's family together with his wife and a close friend:

“That afternoon we were on our way. In Illinois, there are vast cornfields, so vast as far as the eye can reach... A big and completely flat plateau... We were driving through the cornfields. We did not see any village along the way. We got very hungry. My friend Sitki and I were constantly talking about how hungry we were. My wife Emily simply said “I’m not hungry.” On the other hand, we were almost crying out loud saying “we’re hungry like elephants.” We finally came to my mother-in-law’s house. She and my father-in-law were out. In the house there was their daughter who was around the age of a high school student. We knocked the door and the girl opened it wide open. “I was expecting you, come on in” said she, “make yourself at home, my parents will come in about an hour...” And the young girl asked: “Are you hungry? Are you thirsty? Can I bring you something?” My friend Sitki and I immediately replied: “No, thank you.” Emily’s eyes got bigger looking at us. It was hilarious that my friend and I were talking about how hungry we were along the way and now saying “no, we don’t need anything!” My wife kept quiet. She was beginning to learn about my culture. We were newly-wed at that time. We got quiet for a while. Eventually, after an hour or so, her parents came in. After welcoming and all that, they said “in about an hour the dinner will be ready, but what would you like to have before dinner?” They brought fruit juice, beer, coke, nuts, crackers, potato chips and things like that. Then we began to eat them like crazy. You should have seen us eating. At first, we didn’t even realize how we were eating. We were really hungry. My father-in-law looked at us eating and turned to his daughter: “Did you ask them if they were hungry?” Because he became all aware how hungry we were! We jumped in: “Yes, she asked us, and we said we were not hungry.” His only response was something like, “huh?” Emily looked at us again with eyes demanding an explanation” (Cüceloğlu, 2005: 511-2).

The Third aspect of Turkish identity would not only point out the Sufism-oriented tendencies in Turkish culture it would also constitute the main direction to which the abuse of the religion of Islam might lead. The abuse of the religion of Islam stemming from being either against Sufism might lead to the abuse of the idea of nationality even sometimes putting it in the place of religion. Furthermore, inasmuch as analytically-oriented verbal communication as opposed to metaphorically-oriented non-verbal communication was given priority by the religion of Islam, westernization in the case of Turkish society over centuries has an intrinsic value that goes right along with the spirit of Islam. Moreover, in this context, one should keep in mind that the basic values of the western world are not incompatible if not totally in the same line with the religion of Islam.

The religion of Islam without its mystical part, i.e., Sufism, might amount to a positivistic religion (Topçu, 1999a: 82). Consequently, westernization is not an orientation to which even conservative Muslims in Turkey ought to be opposed; moreover, Western values provide full enjoyment of religion and of its social implications. And recently in Turkey, there is more and more consciousness developed gradually in time in favor of the idea of true westernization (Demirci, 1998).

Turkish people were mainly Buddhist before they came to Islam. Two accounts of two important figures of Turkish intellectual circles assert that Turkish people were Buddhist before adhering Islam. Cemil Meriç simply says that “our ancestors were Buddhist before they accepted Islam” (Meriç, 1997: 150). On the other hand, Mehmet Kaplan, an eminent professor of Turkish literary history whose excessive writings constituted a major yet hidden influence on Fethullah Gülen movement (Coşkun, 2007),¹⁶ asserts that “the religion of Islam took the place of Buddhism in the case of Turkish people and raised them from a nomadic life style to a state of civilization” (Kaplan, 1998: 158).¹⁷ Interestingly enough, between the advent of the Republic of Turkey and the first free elections with multiple political parties in 1950, Turkishness was much emphasized in both social and political spheres; however, Buddhism as the old religion of Turks was never accordingly called into account by state policies. This says a lot about Turkishness being intermingled with the religion of Islam.

It does not seem rewarding at this point to focus on the motives of Turkish nationalist elites that led them to abolish the caliphate in 1924, to limit religiously-oriented education and further to turn the Arabic *adhan*, the Islamic call to prayer chanted five times a day from the minarets of mosques, into a Turkish version in 1932. Although they were mostly carbon copying the western experience of Reformation in the types of revolutionary changes they espoused in the religious realm, it is certain that they did what they really believed should have been done. However, Turkish people especially those living in rural areas did never like what was going on in terms of their religion being placed by nationalism.

In the years leading to World War II, religion was ignored and oppressed for that matter. Instead, Turkishness was praised perhaps in accordance or under the effect of what was going on in Europe at the time.¹⁸ One of the most important warnings against

16) It should also be noted here that a Turkish philosopher, Nurettin Topçu, deeply influenced Fethullah Gülen. I have found out that Fethullah Gülen not only read but also studied Topçu's *Yarınki Türkiye* (1999b).

17) According to a notable Turkish poet and literary theorist, Özdemir İnce, “Turks have changed both their alphabet and religion a number of times throughout history. [Now] there are Shamanist, Buddhist, Manichaeist, Christian, Jewish, and Muslim Turks” (2003: 207).

18) Perhaps as a residue effect of the rising nationalism in Germany, in the early years of World War II, there was some tendency in Turkish consciousness towards espousing some type of aggressive nationalism. The eminent Turkish novelist Attilâ İlhan gives a concise account on this tendency (2002: 117-8). One may not rule out in this regard another novel of the same author, *O Karanlıkta Biz: Aynanın İçindekiler* (1996), which extensively focuses on Istanbul during the years of World War II.

this euphoria came from Said-i Nursî, an Ottoman-Kurdish scholar of religion whose most notable follower has been Fethullah Gülen, another eminent scholar of religion who is not only renowned in Turkey but also in the international sphere. Said-i Nursî, who spent most of his life under state scrutiny in various Western Anatolian cities, put forth a classification as positive and negative nationalism. According to him, if nationalism is being put in place of religion it would only lead to devastating consequences. On the other hand, when nationalism is at the service of religion, i.e., when it does not go against the universality of religion, it could be perfectly defined as positive nationalism (Nursî, 1986: 2-99). Apparently, he was only able to come up with such classification as the above-mentioned one in order to warn against the nationalist euphoria. Additionally, the fact that the same classification was recently referred to with a relatively non-religious content by Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan can be considered as indicative of the fact that nationalist tendencies in Turkey have always been strong since the establishment of the Republic. Turkish people still feel strongly about their religious, ethnic, and national identities.

At this point, some accounts should be laid down concerning Fethullah Gülen and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, both of whom have been strikingly notable in Turkey for the last two decades.

Not only has Fethullah Gülen been a follower of Said-i Nursî, he has also been a great preacher boasted with his deep knowledge in classical Arabic and his ability to recite the whole Quran. His community consisting of his followers and sympathizers loves and supports him in his dedication to spread the network of formal education at all levels both in Turkey and around the world. So does the bulk of Turkish Society. To me, he has been a great ‘psychologist’ in the sense of the word that was given rise to by Stephen Zweig. And this should explain a lot about him being followed and liked by a considerable amount of people and success-promising youth. His community is not necessarily of a certain Sufi lineage but there is no doubt that his teachings and thus his community have a strong Sufi flavor. They even called themselves a community of Jesus-like orientation as manifested in the poetry of Yunus Emre, a thirteenth century Turkish poet and a Sufi that has a place next to Rumi in the hearts and minds of Turkish people: “Act as if you do not have hands when you get punched; act as if you do not have a tongue when you get mocked” (“Dövene elsiz gerek; sövene dilsiz gerek”) (Yunus Emre, 1998: 116).

As for Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, it should be mentioned that his organizational skills are phenomenal and that he has been a great practitioner: he learns while working. To put it differently, he quickly turns his experience into knowledge and wisdom for that matter, not to mention that he normally acts with prudent tardiness and makes statements only after digesting the whole scene of the ‘play’.

But there is still something annoying about him: how he emerged as a wise guy is still a matter of question. All the qualities he has aside, I think it was what he had to go through that changed him into almost a new person or just made the hidden wisdom

inside him all manifest. Around the beginning of the so-called ‘28 February Process’ that began in 1997, the last major military intervention in Turkey’s politics, the whole political career of Erdoğan, then the mayor of Istanbul, was nearly destroyed: the second year of the Process, he had to leave his post and go to jail because of a poem he read in a public convention. In fact, it was partly his temper and partly the ‘wind’ of the military intervention that made him end up in jail but the exact proportionality of these two factors can never be determined. Moreover, having served jail time for three months, he was not even welcomed by Welfare Party, that he had been a member of since its establishment. In short, it was the ‘civic brutality’ which was imposed upon him that made him come alive and stronger out of his own ashes as a great political leader. His outstanding leadership was actually imminent. So the variously irritating attempts to preclude his emerging as a great figure of political leadership gradually rising to power including even the ones made by his own political party at the time, Refah Partisi (Welfare Party) of which he represented the innovative-modernist side, only added to his momentum. Eventually, his newly-established party, Justice and Development Party (AKP) won the general elections in 2002.

The 28 February Process, which was also called as a post-modern military coup, was seemingly against Welfare Party of Islamist orientation. Along the ‘Process’, Turkishness was emphasized in the public sphere so much so that the presumed balance between nationality and religion was almost severely broken and the bulk of Turkish society, which holds religious identity as much high as the national one, felt miserably alienated. The era was tragic for the majority of Turkish people, if not all. One can contend that the psychological aspect of the tragic pain felt by Turkish people during the ‘Process’ was drastically manifested by the highly-valued poet İsmet Özel in his book *Of Not Being A Jew* as the following:

“If I turn to the song, the sad song

Everyone shall know then

What the Holocaust was” (2005: 22).

The 28 February Process supposedly ended in 2002, the year Erdoğan’s newly-established AKP formed the government, but seemingly a crazy residue, as it were, somehow secretly proceeded to actualize its illegal agenda. Erdoğan survived all of this mainly because of the tragic turmoil and severe economic breakdown experienced by Turkish people during the 28 February Process, not to mention that the remainder of the odds was on his side.¹⁹

Fortunately, the ostensibly secularist –but at times seemingly ultra-nationalist elites, both military and non-military– basically made three mistakes: 1) They did not

19) An old man from Northern Anatolia, a region in Turkey whose people known for their rigor and love of making jokes, made a ‘remark’ about Erdoğan as the following: ‘He flips a coin up in the air lamely and God just makes it straight right above’ (thanks to a friend of mine named Ahmet Kurtulmuş).

fully appreciate the economic crisis that escalated over the political mess. A general's intervening in political affairs or simply making political statements might resonate in financial markets of the modern-day Turkey now. Turkey has integrated into the global economic community in the last three decades much more than the rest of its history. The insight formulated by Stephen Zweig as "the stock market has incentives" (1999: 131), meaning that it can sense anything good or bad for its health, can turn in the case of Turkey into the following: 'The whole economic life in Turkey has incentives and it can easily have a breakdown by a butterfly effect, butterfly being on the top levels of the Republic of Turkey. In short, if only one thing was etched in the minds of Turkish people, it was that they absolutely needed a one-party government for political and thus economic stability. 2) They did not fully understand or call into account the spiritual aspect of the headscarf that a considerable amount of young women in Turkey prefer to wear. All the political ramifications aside, just imagine the following: the effort to try to 'tame' young women wearing headscarf or –as the mainstream media in Turkey tends to call it– turban might very well resemble the effort to try to 'tame' the nuns in the middle of Europe. 3) They did not properly measure up the kind of pain they inflicted upon Tayyip Erdoğan and his ensemble which only made them wise and stronger. The old Erdoğan used to say 'democracy is only a means' and that's it. The new Erdoğan would just finish the thought wisely: 'Democracy is a means for the betterment of the conditions necessitated for the good life of people'. Democracy and liberal ideas, regardless of their being compatible with the heavily conservative interpretations of the religion of Islam were the only means for Erdoğan to survive the Process. In other words, Erdoğan came to realize that democracy and liberal ideas are not incompatible with the core values of Islam, given that Islam is in fact all about the rights and liberties of people. Moreover, when Erdoğan first formed his government in 2002 he declared that his government had three red lines as the following: regional nationalism, ethnic nationalism, and religious nationalism.

The Process, also bolstered with the capture of Abdullah Öcalan, the head of the Kurdish separatist organization, in 1998 only caused political chaos, alienation, and widespread suspicion with the essential principle of the rule of law. Turkish people as a consequence embarked upon a new search for a new social ethics inclusive of and very well in accordance with the long history of Turkish statehood and Turkish peoplehood.

This new search will not be indifferent to both Turkishness and Islam but it will absolutely raise higher the idea of peoplehood, irrespective of religion, race and ethnicity. A conservative friend of mine asked me recently: 'Why don't we have a non-Muslim general? Why don't we have a non-Muslim governor?' And one bearded old man of my neighborhood cried out: 'I don't care whether the government of the city I live in is Muslim or not, but I would definitely want him to be just'. More interestingly, in retrospect, a very religiously-oriented young man approached me in the coffee house I used to attend and posed a question about the killing of Hrant Dink, an Armenian journalist and activist who was killed in 2007 seemingly by an ultra-nationalist-led troubled young man. That was when I first heard about Hrant having been killed. It is hard to imagine but the question

was about his whereabouts in the afterworld: if he was going to go to paradise? I was mystified in the face of the tragic news and simply surprised in the face of the religious question but I can still recall that the guy would beg me not to say anything negative concerning Hrant's afterlife, even though he was partly confident that I would not.

In the last two decades, Turkish people have become more conscious than ever before to celebrate and enjoy the differences and preclude any possibility of their society turning into a closed one.

The last two decades have been extremely tragic for Turkish people in a Shakespearean sense and this tragic experience, that culminated during the Process and only escalated through the Machiavellian attempts of such a terrorist organization as Ergenekon possibly to create political chaos, was similar in many ways to the one experienced during the four years right before the establishment of the Republic in 1923.

The tragic experience speeded up the search for a new social ethics seemingly and hopefully leading Turkish people to espouse a new paradigm of peoplehood not just written in official texts but also practiced fully in every branch of social life. Help from European Union in this regard would be second in importance to no other, not even to the one stemming from Turkey's traditional alliance with America and to its newly-developing relations with Arabic states in recent years.

Turkey's eagerness and attempt to enter the European Union started with a panicky impetus: according to an unwritten doctrine of foreign policy, very well known among the people of Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the 1960's (Birand, 1978), if Greece was to jump into a sea full of snakes Turkey was supposed to do the same. Turkey's request to enter the EU was very welcomed by the existing members at the time. The relationship, which was at the beginning linked to a long road map, was severely damaged upon Turkey's so-called peace operation in Northern Cyprus to secure the life of Turkish Cypriots in 1974 (Birand, 1979). The road map along with Turkish insistence to enter the EU had been used as a pretext in the 1980s by then Prime Minister Turgut Özal to open up Turkey's economy to international enterprise and to fully democratize its institutions (Akşin, 2009). No one can hardly be sure whether Özal really believed that Turkey would finally become an EU member, considering that he was not all that euphoric about the EU when he was the head of Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı (State Department of Planning) in the 1960s (Birand, 1978). But, it can be contended that if he lived to see the whole range of the 1990s, in which even some Eastern European countries became members of the EU, he would have taken refuge in the same stance as that of Tayyip Erdoğan: all the regulations demanded by the road map should be put into action not for the sake of the EU membership but also for the sake of democracy and good life of Turkish people even if the membership would by no means be in sight.

Whether Eastern European countries will survive inside EU including Greece is hardly a fierce topic of debate now in Turkey. But who knows, the topic might someday swoop in the hot table of debate: those countries may not rule out the possibility of a new coalition

with Turkey, with its crest jewel city Istanbul on the lead, which the confluence of money has come in and out for centuries.²⁰

In conclusion, for the last two decades, Turkish people have gone through a lot of painful experiences which made the bulk of them feel alienated perhaps for the first time in the whole history of the Republic. Turkish people, as a result, have never been more truly conscious of democracy, secularity, and freedom of speech than before and thus begun search for a new social ethics.

The search is prudently sensitive about avoiding the ethnic connotation of the concept Turkishness and avoiding religious nationalism as well. Quality of all kind, good work, self-reliance, consciousness of freedom, and celebration of differences possibly turning into a new paradigm of peoplehood mark the main points of this new search, which renders a lot of promises possible –if not imminent– to be realized. And those promises constitute the new ‘red apple’ for Turkey.

The major aspects of Turkish identity as integration, empathy, and Sufism-related manners can still be located anywhere just a few Turkish people reside. Besides, without them, one cannot explain the Ottoman Empire that lasted over 600 years. The notion of secularity, on the other hand, which can easily be construed as an extension of those aspects (Akyol, 1999), is actually deeply-rooted in Turkish society (Karpas, 2009): without having the chance to commit a sin, one’s doing good may not have a religious merit. Just ask Rumi.

Finally, the notion ‘both this and that’, which in the case of Turkish identity manifests itself as ‘both East and West, both secularism and Islam, both rationality and mysticism, etc.’, seems to work perfectly well and it is most probably the only safe way that works for Turkish people. I know that from this: when Galatasaray and Trabzonspor play each other, the exceptional enjoyment I get out of watching football and the Unamuno-like sense that makes me side with the neediest team of support aside, my rigor of objectivity as a self-appointed umpire then resembles no other.

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20) The idea is not far-fetched and eccentric at all. A Romanian-born Turkish philosopher, İsmail Tunali, recalls the following: “There was a famous historian in Romania named Obresku. He once invited me to his house. While talking together he said these words: ‘We like Turks very much. Yet we did not appreciate them; we did not understand them properly. When they started to leave, Romania became smaller and scattered. Indeed, we were standing together’” (Tunali, 2006: 13).

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