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## The Picturesque Mosque of Eyüp Sultan

In the creek of the Golden Horn, the Gulf in the Bosphorus, there lies the township of Eyup, famous for its homonymous and historic Mosque, shadowed by century old grandiose oak trees.

This mosque, known in Turkish as Eyup Camii, bears an exceptional sublimity in the conscience of the Muslem World; it is considered as a source of comfort and relief to those with sufferings.

It has been constructed by the Conqueror Sultan Mehmet in veneration of Ebu Eyup Sultan, contemporary of Prophet Mohammed.

Ebu Eyup's original name was Halid. His father was called Zeyd. His native town being Medina, he was a relative of Mohammed, the Prophet, and one of the closest friends of Ali. It was in the year of 671 A. D. when Khalif Muaviye proclaimed war against the Byzantines to conquer Istanbul. Despite his old age of eighty years, Ebu Eyup too joined Muaviye's army which proceeded to siege Istanbul, but unfortunately having fallen before the ramparts of the city, at Eğri-kapu, he was according to his last desire, buried not far from that vicinity.

When Mohammed moved from Mecca to Medina all the dwellers there expressed an ardent willingness to receive him in their homes. The women and girls having mounted on the roofs of their houses, were inviting them most cordially to stay at theirs. As to the men, grasping the halter of his camel were trying to divert his way to their homes. The Prophet, not desiring to displease anyone, asked that his camel be left free to move; thus when they stopped at a certain spot, they all asked where the nearest house was. It was then Ebu Eyup who sprang out of the crowd shouting: "Oh my Prophet my house is the nearest of all the others"; thus gaining the Prophet to his house. Immediately Ebu Eyup and his wife started carrying on their shoulders the personal effects of the Prophet.

The Prophet stayed for a month in the upper floor of the house of Eyup. The Ensaris, that's to say the inhabitants of Medina, were by turn bringing food to the Prophet.

Sultan Mehmet, who decided to conquer Istanbul, invited a wise person from Ankara, Hacı Bayram Veli to join his army so as to get advantage of his spiritual and intellectual assets. However, due to his old age, Hacı Bayram could not reciprocate to this invitation but sent to the army his two disciples Akşemsettin and Akbıyık.

Sultan Mehmet had commissioned Akşemsettin to locate the place of the tomb of Ebu Eyup, the traces of which had already been lost through the ages.



Eyüp Camii

Akşemsettin retired to his tent and after a period consumed for prayer and meditation succeeded to locate Eyup's tomb. He showed a certain spot, on which, after they dug about two and a half meters deep, they found a tomb-stone of about two and a half meters bearing the inscription on kufi arabic writing of «Hâzâ Kabri Ebu Eyup».

The young Sultan and his suit were astonished at the divine ability of Akşemsettin.

Historian Evliya Çelebi mentions that, after taking off the tomb-stone, they found the body of Ebu Eyup rolled up in a yellow shroud, while in his right hand he was bearing a bronze seal.

The Arabs were really bearing seals in form of rings.

Sultan Mehmet replaced the tomb-stone to its place where he constructed the mausoleum and the mosque still existing at Eyup.

Sultan Eyup has been considered the spiritual patron of Istanbul. It is because of this reason that every Sultan right after his enthronement was going to Eyup to pay tribute to Ebu Eyup.

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