



A Study of The Perception of The Prophet and The Sunnah in Novels with Religious Content*

Zeynep Kevser Şerefoğlu Danış**

Özet

Peygamber'i anmak ve anlamaya çalışmak yönünde son zamanlarda artan çabalar, bu konuda önemli boşlukları doldurmakla birlikte, bu çabaların sanatın farklı imkânları ile sarf edilip edilemeyeceği meselesi önemli tartışma konularından birisi haline gelmiştir. Dikkat edilmezse, Peygamber'i tanımak, sünnetleri yaymak yolunda atılan adımlar, konunun ciddiyetine, hassasiyetine denk düşmeyecek sonuçlara da evrilebilmektedir. Örneğin, edebî bir tür olarak romanlar eliyle Peygamber'in anlaşılabilmesi ve roman içinde Peygamber'in örnek gösterilebileceğine dair kanıya binaen yazılmış eserlerin her biri, bu çerçevede dikkatle incelenmelidir. Çalışmada, konusu güncel olan ve günümüzde geçen olaylar zinciri içinde yeri geldiğinde eskiye dönen, kahramanların tıklandıkları noktada Peygamber'i örnek göstererek bugünün sorunlarına çareler üretmeye çalışan bir roman, bu çerçevede incelenecektir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Dinî roman, peygamber, siyer, roman, sünnet.

Peygamber ve Sünnet Algısının Dinî Muhtevalı Romanlardaki İzdüşümü Üzerine Bir İnceleme

Abstract

The increasing efforts to mention and try to understand the Prophet have become one of the important topics of discussion as to whether these efforts can be made through different means of art even though they fill significant gaps in this area. If attention is not paid, the steps taken to get to know the Prophet and to spread the sunan can evolve into consequences that do not correspond to the seriousness and sensitivity of the subject. For example, each of the works written based on the belief that the Prophet can be understood through novels and that the Prophet can be shown as an example in a novel must be examined within this framework. In this study, a novel that takes place in current time and occasionally returns to the past within a chain of events and attempts to produce solutions for the problems of today by referring the Prophet as an example at the point where the heroes are stuck will be examined within this framework.

Key words: Religious novel, the Prophet, sira, novel, sunnah.

* This article is an expanded version of paper entitled "The Perception of the Prophet and the Sunnah in Religious Novels" presented at the international symposium organised in Istanbul by Meridyen Association under the title of "Sirat Studies in Turkey in All Their Aspects" between the dates of 9-12 April 2015.

**Asst. Prof., Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakıf University, Faculty of Literature, Department of Turkish Language and Literature, zkserefoглу@fsm.edu.tr.

Introduction

The genre of the novel, which entered the Turkish literature as a Western form, started its adventure as a “mirror turned towards the road” and continued on its route reflecting all kinds of projections of life on pages, found a place for itself in novels of almost all kinds in the Turkish literature so far. Although at first religious content did not knock on the door of the novel since it was a Western form and it was not thought of as a convenient genre for those who wanted to speak with religious content, in time it started to be seen as a means after the genre developed and became popular. Therefore, spiritual leaders, historical heroes and prophets were also made subjects of novels and thus, the novel continued on its way by taking on attributes such as “national”, “domestic”, “historical” and religious”.

When we look at the Turkish Literature in general, it is seen that religion, which has been as a strong influence in literary works for many years, went side by side with the love of the Prophet. After the texts of the early periods such as *Kutadgu Bilig*, which were written after the acceptance of Islam by the Turks, there are many lines that ask to be gathered under the flag of the Prophet in the Day of Judgment and ask for the intercession of the Prophet, sections that were devoted to the Prophet in many literary genres, which were collected in *diwans*, sections that send him prayers and salaams [greetings], in the tradition of the Prophet of the Turkish Literature, in which one can come across *sīras*, *mawlıds*, “*mu’jizāt al-nabī*”s, “*awsāf al-nabī*”s, *shamāils*, *mi’rajiyyas*, *raghāibiyyas*, *ghazāwatnāmas*, *hijratnāmas*, forty *hadīth* books and *shafā’atnāmas*.

The understanding of religion in the period after the declaration of *Tanzimat* (the Imperial Edict of *Gulhana*) started to take on different traumatic images within the new literary genres that were formed with the influence of the Western Literature and then it started to become less prominent. “Religion”, which had to defend itself at first among the new trends and ideas and which mostly sought to explain what it was not, hid within its shell increasingly, and it withdrew from many literary works in this environment in which covert and overt convictions as to the need for religion to separate from the other disciplines and art were dominant. The mainstream and visible literary works were the first ones to realise this withdrawal. They did not have the Prophet any longer.

Just as a *mathnawī* contains sections such as *na’t*, *mi’rajiyya* and *mu’jizāt* and it does not start on the main topic before greeting its faith regarding the foundations of its existence beginning with *tawhid*, and it does not deal with other subjects before fixing a leg of the compass at a certain spot, genres that are newly encountered carry the forms of perception and terms of the beliefs of the society in which they were born into literature and chaos emerges at exactly

this point.

In the case of the Turkish Literature, people of literature were to have a very big contribution to the return of religion, which had withdrawn from social life and literary works gradually, to social life. It must be said that this is a big plus that was written for the people of literature in the country. The lines of Akif, Necip Fazıl and Sezai Karakoç have the function of the lines of Yesevî and Yûnus of earlier times in terms of the conditions of the period. Resurrecting with this genre was not difficult for a nation, which supported poetry since Central Asia, which lived life with poetry and which kneeled in front of its Creator and the Prophet. However, the main issue, as mentioned above, is the genres that were encountered recently, the issue lies with them.

Among these, novel is the genre that leads to the word “chaos” most frequently. It is not a simple matter to create fiction that is compatible with belief within a novel, which requires the disclosure of privacy in a narrative, which we are not used to, with the revealing of sins. It is necessary to find a role for the Prophet within the possibilities of that genre, which is a problematic situation to begin with. In this sense, the following questions were asked and reservations regarding them were expressed at the Sira-Literature workshop in 2010: that the life of the Prophet could not be a subject of a novel, that each novelist could not form his/her own imagined Prophet, that it is clear that the Prophet could not be attributed a new character through new sentences and new words, the issue of where a novel that includes the Prophet as a hero who only exists through his hadîth would be within the genre of the novel, and how issues such as ambition, greed, love, treason, hostility and disappointments, which are expected from a novel, would be fictionalised.¹

1. The Issue of Whether the Life of the Prophet Could be an Example for a Novel

The reservations may be seen as right and at the end of the debates one can agree with the opinion that the life of the Prophet cannot be the subject of a novel. However, a separate topic that appears on the agenda is that whether the Prophet, which is mentioned as “uswan-i hasana” in the 21st verse of the chapter Ahzâb of the Qur’ân and which is described as “there has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent pattern (of conduct) for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Last Day and who remembers Allah often”, could emerge in a novel as a role model with his behaviour and words when the heroes get confused, when their paths get mixed up.

1 M. Fatih Andı, “Modern Edebiyatta Hazret-i Peygamber’i Anlatmak”, *Siyer Edebiyat İlişkisi*, Meridyen Derneği, 2010.

It may be thought that the path of the Prophet being an example within a literary genre, which is the reflection of life, may not be blocked when we think of the following:

The expression of “Allah did confer a great favour on the believers when He sent among them a messenger from among themselves, rehearsing unto them the Signs of Allah, sanctifying them, and instructing them in Scripture and Wisdom, while, before that, they had been in manifest error” in chapter Al-i Imran², or the expression “Whoever obeys the Messenger will have obeyed Allah”³, a very clear verse stating that ““Those who follow the messenger, the unlettered Prophet, whom they find mentioned in their own [scriptures],- in the law and the Gospel;- for he commands them what is just and forbids them what is evil; he allows them as lawful what is good [and pure] and prohibits them from what is bad [and impure]; He releases them from their heavy burdens and from the yokes that are upon them. So it is those who believe in him, honour him, help him, and follow the light which is sent down with him,- it is they who will prosper”⁴ and finally “So take what the Messenger assigns to you, and deny yourselves that which he withholds from you”⁵.

The idea that the Prophet, for whom it was revealed that “[We sent them] with Clear Signs and Books of dark prophecies; and We have sent down unto thee [also] the Message; that thou mayest explain clearly to men what is sent for them, and that they may give thought”⁶, his sunnahs, which serve the functions of interpretation and legislation, could appear in a channel that is popular for people from many sections and ages in order to reach the confused people of the modern age is not very unusual. The idea that the relationship of people and the Prophet, which is “a relationship of admiration and having high expectations” before communicating the message and at the beginning of it, “a relationship of hostility, mocking and resorting to denial” in the following stages of communicating the message, and which evolves into “transforming into a relationship of friendship, identification and taking him as an example” after the communicating of the message succeeds and which “becomes difficult to such an extent that it leads to the overlooking of the prophethood of the Prophet, him being a messenger and his duty without being conscious of it” with attention and admiration and exaltation in the period after the Prophet⁷, could turn into a relationship that can be revived thanks to

2 Throughout the article verses will be given as translated by Abdullah Yusuf Ali in *The Qur’ān: Translation*, New York, 1999.

3 Nisa, 80. Ibid.

4 Araf, 157. Ibid.

5 Hashr, 7. Ibid.

6 Nahl, 44. Ibid.

7 Kadir Canatan, “Gelenekte Kutsal-Peygamber Anlatıları”, *Siyer Edebiyat İlişkisi*, Meridyen Derneği, 2010.

the small examples in novels is a perspective that many people of literature think as possible.

If the example of the Prophet holds the hand of the readers in a novel, why should the following not be included in a novel? What a wealthy person could learn from the thankfulness and modesty of the Prophet, what a weak person could learn from the Prophet, who lived under the rule of the oppressor and thieving infidels, what a teacher could learn from the Prophet, who instructed the Companions of Suffa at the mosque on the divine commandments by conveying the knowledge of his compassionate and sensitive heart, what a student could learn from the Prophet, who sat in front of Archangel Gabriel, who brought the revelation to him.

People can learn from the clean character of the Prophet, who was the husband of Khadija (r.a.) and Aisha (r.a.), his deep sensitivity and compassion, the finesse in the behaviour of this person, who was the father of Fatimah al-Zahra and the grandfather of Hasan (r.a.) and Hussein (r.a.), towards them⁸ and such examples can be beneficial for a tired society.

However, the novel is not inclined towards the sacred in terms of the society in which it was born and its nature, and the fact that it appeared with a religious shade in the 1960s does not mean we have witnessed a practice as mentioned above. This type of novel, which has been called “Islamic novel”, “religious novel”, but on which there is no agreement in terms of naming, “have the prominent characteristics of fighting the negative Islamic images that were produced in what is called the Westernist texts of the Republican period as texts which criticised the Westernist modernisation narrative, which caused the exclusion of Muslims and social degeneration, through literature and fictionalising a new Islamic identity, social relations, gender roles and a repertoire of emotions”⁹ and which are seen to be trying to respond to some people or being on guard against some people, have mostly been called “*hidayah* novels”, because they mostly end up with *hidayah* [i.e. finding the straight path of Islam].

These novels, which have the appearance of “a totality of messages”, “whose purpose of propaganda is prominent”, “which have undertaken the function of educating the public and presenting them with *hidayah*”, have been deemed similar to the “duel scenes” that have been constructed with the environment of a war of ideas that makes one say “I wonder who will win?”, and they have been criticised because *hidayah* is always in the hands of power and the “poor” woman

8 Osman Nuri Topbaş, “Rasûlullah’ın Örnek Sîreti”, *Altınoluk*, 1997 - June, Issue:136, page:16.

9 Kenan Çayır, *Türkiye’de İslâmcılık ve İslâmi Edebiyat -Toplu Hidayet Söyleminden Yeni Birysel Müslümanlıklara-*, Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, İstanbul, 2008.

heroines, whose previous lives are a mess, reach hidayah through a man.¹⁰ In these novels knowledge, which is obligatory for both Muslim men and women, is only executed by men, enlightenment is generally limited to headscarf, and the Prophet is not seen as an example with the form and consistency that we have mentioned. The examples are given on the basis of men, who are generally depicted as people who embody religion and religious life automatically, and as soldiers [of a cause] who do not err or make mistakes.

The hidayah novels also have not become that much popular because they have not appealed to the real literature readers, like many novels with special themes, whose literary concerns are not prominent, and readers have not been satisfied with these novels, whether they are practicing Muslims or not. Therefore, the readers of real literature have not been satisfied with these novels as novels independent of whether they are religious or not. Moreover, an opinion stating that those sections that define themselves as “Islamist” could not produce quality literary products has been formed in literary circles because of these novels. This belief was added easily to the long existing prejudices in Turkey with regards to the practicing Muslims and this has caused the problem of those people with religious sensitivities experiencing a problem in being accepted as a novelist regardless of the content of their writing.¹¹

However, this type of novels, which became popular after a while, were added to the category of popular novels that are described as “mass- produced, that are based on certain formulae, cliché heroes and events, that accept the world as it is instead of questioning it when looked superficially, that describe the world as a simple structure that is divided between good and evil, black and white, that simplify the worldly problems and that direct the reader to do the same”¹² and this addition has rendered the issue of religious novels more intractable.

In time, the period of the Westerniser modernist narrative, which caused the exclusion of Muslims and social degeneration, passed and within the changing social structure individuals turned inwards because of more complex problems, they fought with big dilemmas within their small worlds and novels with a religious content went through a transformation in this phase. The society could not produce solutions for its problems based on other philosophies, ideas and sources and could not be satisfied sufficiently. Therefore, it updated its position vis-à-vis religion with a manoeuvre of “we have the answers to all questions”. This new position of religion in novels, which embraces all beliefs with a philosophy

10 For details see Ahmet Sait Akçay, *Bellekteki Hüriler*, Selis Kitaplar, İstanbul, 2006.

11 Nihan Kaya, *Artık Hidayet Romanı Yazılmayacak Mı?*, <https://anchebout.wordpress.com/2011/12/06/artik-hidayet-romani-yazilmayacak-mi/>

12 Veli Uğur, *1980 Sonrası Türkiye’de Popüler Roman*, Koç Üniversitesi Yayınları, İstanbul, 2013.

that takes its essence from Rumi in contrast to the position of Islam according to the Western world, which is coded with violence, sparked many disputes. This situation, with which we are familiar thanks to the fictionalisation of Grandfather Vehbi as a character who sees everything in a positive light, who does not consider sins as sins and who is like a semi-God in the English version of the *Sinekli Bakkal* novel of Halide Edip, who was introduced to the West much earlier and whose concern to show the religion of Islam as “other” we understood better much later, was to become the disputed position of most of the novels that have a religious content.

2. Rumi as a New Preference for an Example in Novels

The Prophet, whom we cannot see as an example in hidayah novels, does not exist in those novels which are concerned with showing religion, which we described above, as “not what you know, something else” and which are within the category of “tasawwuf” or “sufi” novels, either. However one mostly sees the example of Rumi in these novels.

The entry of tasawwuf into literature of course took place long ago. Tasawwuf, which has features such as avoiding hypocrisy as much as possible, hiding one’s worship, not disclosing secrets, and which enhanced many data and literary genres in the Classical Period of the Turkish Literature in this state, has been turned into “something else” that omits the Shariah, worship and the Prophet by deforming these important characteristics, it has almost been adapted to the new novels.

There is nothing to object to in showing Rumi as an example in a novel. “In addition to the fact that Rumi had a historical personality and that he was the sheikh of a big tariqah [sufi order] such as the Mawlawi tariqah, which has had a large impact, has caused the emergence of stories about him based on karamas [non-Prophetic miracles] as a result of the love and admiration of his mureeds has definitely made it easy to turn him into a hero of a novel. Not only Rumi, but all the religious legend literature is the most suitable material for the genre of the novel. This is because both the fictional style of narration and the extraordinary events, which may take the reader to the world of imagination in relation to them, and the codes of our culture and civilisation are certainly present in these works. Furthermore, the interest that novels such as the Harry Potter series, Lord of the Rings, which express the desire of the today’s reader to escape from the rational world to imagined worlds, attracted from the readers and the fact that television series such as “Lost”, which became a phenomenon, broke the rating records using themes such as “metaphysics”, “mysticism”, “similar to a tale”, “like a legend”, indicate the desire of the today’s people to fill the spiritual gap left by the Enlightenment thought. Today, the novel turns into a tale at the

level of narration and it pursues a fantastic realism”.¹³ However, what attracts the attention in these novels is that the psychology of avoiding worship, practice and action is dominant and the risk of fabricating a perception that is supra-religious and beyond religion through several habits and behaviour that are developed as human virtues and by almost running away from religious texts and sunnahs.

3. A Novel Example in Which There is the Prophet: “Aşkın 7 Hali, Bişnev (7 States of Love, Bishnev)”

In the section below, we will try to examine the possibilities of giving the Prophet as an example in a novel using the work “Aşkın 7 Hali, Bişnev” (7 States of Love, Bishnev)¹⁴.

The author prefers to use the word “hal” (state) for the chapters of the book, which has seven chapters. The author may have wanted to emphasise the process of learning through experience by his heroes.

In Chapter 1 we get to know Aylin and Cengiz but they do not know each other. Aylin’s boyfriend Ergin has cheated on her. She tries to commit suicide. Cengiz is a rich businessman who lives elsewhere in the city and leaves Shevval when he finds out that she is pregnant. He leaves Shevval and then Shevval dies after being run over by a car. Both Cengiz and Aylin question themselves, their relationships and life.

Chapter 2 consists of Rumi and Shams. Cengiz and Aylin find themselves in Konya without knowing about each other. They meet each other and someone called Hace.

Chapter 3, Hace and Hulya: Hace has a complex story that is full of the tragedies of the modern world and that includes cheating and rape. He has been slandered and he has found herself at the tomb of Rumi in Konya first and then at the tomb of Safwan in Adiyaman. He recommends Cengiz to go there as well.

Chapter 4, Ashab-i Nur Safwan and Aisha: It is possible that the author sent Hace near Safwan bin Muattal, who was the hero of the ifk incident, by being inspired by the slander experienced by Hace. Cengiz is there too. The heroes of the novel, who are in conversations that are full of lines with which we are familiar from the classical Turkish films and current T.V. series, are now called “Safwan”, “Aisha” and “Muhammad”.

Chapter 5, Ferhat and Shirin: Hace sends Cengiz to the tomb of Safwan and she sends Aylin to Amasya and she makes Aylin listen the story of Ferhat and

13 For details see Şecaattin Tural, *Türk Romanında Mevlâna*, Ötüken Yayınları, İstanbul, 2011.

14 Sinan Yağmur, *Aşkın 7 Hali, Bişnev*, Kapı Yayınları, İstanbul, 2014.

Shirin from an old man.

Chapter 6, Leila and Majnoun: The author places Cengiz in isolation, he turns him into Majnoun and makes him fall in love with Aylin. Both heroes return from the place they went and they listen to the story of Leila and Majnoun in front of Hace. Now they are in love. However it is time to go. Both of them return to Istanbul “as new people now” according to the claim of the author.

Chapter 7, Love at the Ka’ba: Cengiz goes to umrah with his conservative mother and Aylin goes to umrah with her older brother, who had set off on his inner journey long before and they meet at the Ka’ba as a coincidence –again. However, Aylin does not give a positive response to Cengiz, in a style similar to the attitude of Leila in the last scene of the Leila and Majnoun story as told by Fuzuli. The novel ends as Aylin walks “knowing where she is going but not thinking where she is coming from”.

Apart from the technical weak points of the book, such as its fictional environment, which is not entirely new, its line of events, which includes many coincidences, the title he uses in the 4th chapter needs to be explained. Giving the names “Ashab-i Nur Safwan and Aisha” among the names such as “Aylin and Cengiz”, “Hace and Hulya”, “Ferhat and Shirin”, “Leila and Majnoun”, which all meet on a line of love even though from different aspects, and thinking that this title can be perceived apart from the associations in all the other titles does not seem very reasonable or innocent.

The incidents develop as follows under this title, which is quite problematic: Safwan goes to Mecca to buy new idols together with his father. While his father is looking for idols, he sees that children of his age are filling animal feces in straw bags and hurling them at a man from the roofs of their houses, insulting him and swearing at him using heavy swear words. Safwan hears that women and children yell at him saying “Majnoun! Crazy man!” and thinks that this man, who does not even lift his head and react to all this, is “a lunatic or a dangerous patient”. However he nevertheless he cannot help asking this man “whose clothes are wet with feces, whose hair and beard are wet with urine” and who disappears at the end of the street, asking all of this and the following dialogue takes place after he starts to clean the animal feces that he finds in the hair of the man while sitting at the bottom of a tree and after starting to clean the waste water on him:

“ ‘Uncle, what do these people want from you? What have you done to them so that they bear such a grudge against you? It seems that you are not wanted in this town. I guess it’s because you are a stranger who came to this town by force....’

‘No, son,’ said the man. ‘Most of them are my relatives.’

'Your relatives? How come? I don't get it. You did not get angry at them or lift your head and respond to them. Why not?'

'They don't know. I cannot respond to them with what they have done.'

'OK uncle, isn't there anybody who can protect you?'

'Allah, who is the friend of those who are alone, protects me. Allah takes care of me.'

'Allah? Is what you call "Allah" the name of the leader of your tribe?'

'No, he is the owner of the universe...'

'Uncle, what is your name?'

'Muhammad.'

'What do you do?'

'I am a shepherd.'

'Uncle, if you are disturbed in this town and disturbed with its people, then come to our village. I can tell my dad to give you a job.'

'Thank you dear. I have to be among these people until my Lord allows me to leave.'"¹⁵

This conversation ends when Safwan's father looks for Safwan. Eight years after this conversation, when Safwan finds out that his tribe intends to wage war against Muhammad, he opposes this. He declares that he will not fight against Muhammad saying that this man, who suffered from torture at the hands of his own tribe, does not harm anyone. He gets accused of running away from war. He cannot get rid of the image of the conversation he had had with Muhammad eight years ago and he sets off on his way. His destination is Medina. On his way, he ends up drinking too much because of thirst. He is drunk by the time he finds the mosque. The smell of alcohol that comes from his mouth causes a negative reaction on the part of the people at the mosque. However the Prophet "is waiting for him smiling and with joy while standing".

"The Prophet started to walk towards Safwan, he opened his arms and said:
'Welcome my brother. Welcome!'

Safwan was pleased with this polite welcome and he approached the Prophet. The Prophet embraced Safwan. He took off his thawb [ankle length long sleeve item of clothing], placed it on the straw mat and invited him. Safwan asked:

15 Yağmur, p. 158.

'Have you recognised me?'

'Of course I recognised you Safwan. How can one forget such a beautiful face? Years ago you took out your handkerchief and cleaned my hair and beard.'

'I have come to believe you and what you have brought. I was about to become a leader in my tribe, but I have come to be honoured by smelling the dust of your feet. My lips are wet with a drink but my heart is dry. Enrich me, put out the fires in me.'

The Prophet (Peace be upon him) recited the shahādah clearly. Safwan repeated it slowly. They hugged again and then the Prophet turned towards the mosque, towards his companions, who wondered what was happening, and said:

'The youth you see here is one of those young people who will find coolness in the shade of the 'arsh. After the favour he did for me years ago, I prayed to Allah for him to find the right path. Thank God this became reality. Safwan is a brother of yours now. I will call him Yusuf the Second from now on because both his face and his heart are beautiful like Prophet Yusuf.'¹⁶

In the hadīth books there is no record of the Prophet stating any of the expressions in the dialogue above. It needs to be explained whether the author has the right to write these dialogues in order to save the heroes Cengiz and Aylin from their situation and to lead them to the light when these dialogues had not taken place and when there is no information about these scenes.

In the sources it is stated that Safwan b. Muattal was a clean youth from the Bani Sulaim tribe who came to Medina at a young age and on his own will. While he was a person who had a low profile from his acceptance of Islam until the slander of "ifk", which was a plot by the hypocrites during the return from the Battle of Bani Mustalik (Muraisi), and who used to live in the close circle of the Messenger of Allah, it seems that he was mentioned as a companion who always undertook effective duties from the slander of Ifk until his martyrdom in Samsat.¹⁷

When people complained of the harsh character of Safwan (r.a), who had grown up as someone with a harsh character, free spirit, reliable character, big heart, someone with a brave and valiant personality because of the harsh nature of the Serat Mountain Range where he was born and raised to the Prophet (p.b.u.h.), the Prophet said "Even if Safwan makes you sad with his tongue, his heart is very beautiful. Don't touch him! He loves Allah and his Messenger a lot"

16 Yağmur, p.163.

17 For details Candemir Doğan, Resulullah (sav)'ın Komşusu Hz. Safvan B. Muattal (ra) Şimdi Bizim Komşumuz", *Uluslararası Adıyaman Safvan Bin Muattal ve Ahlak Sempozyumu Bildiriler Kitabı*, Adıyaman, 2013.

(Buhārī, “Megāzī”, 38)¹⁸

In another narration, Safwan (r.a.) became hungry and tired during a campaign. He wanted dates from the person in charge of food in the army. He said that he could not give them until the Messenger of Allah and his companions arrived, but Safwan (r.a.) did not want to wait. When he insisted for him to give a small amount to suppress his hunger, an argument started. When the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) was informed of this, he gave permission to Safwan to return without attending the campaign if he wanted. However Safwan wanted to join the campaign strongly instead of returning and he kept wandering around the convoy during the night in order to be accepted in the campaign. Ali (r.a.) could not keep silent anymore and he conveyed the sadness of Safwan to the Prophet. The Prophet did not want this delicate companion to be sad and he allowed him to remain with them and to attend the campaign for war.¹⁹

It is also mentioned in the sources that Safwan b. Muattal was assigned to announce to the public what constituted a drink and what was haram (unlawful) and what did not constitute a drink and was not unlawful after the revelation of the verse that prohibited drinking alcoholic drinks. Safwan b. Muattal walked on the streets of Medina as required by this job and announced to the people that “it was unlawful for them to make and drink the drink named “nabiz”, which was made by fermenting in a clay pitcher” and that is had been forbidden”. (Hākim, 3/594; *Musnad*, 2/292; Ibn Hajar, 6/306)²⁰

It is also known that Safwan b. Muattal narrated hadīth on the times when obligatory prayer is makrouh (disliked), the issue of a woman fasting a nafila (extra, non-obligatory) fast without the permission of her husband and the night prayer. The fact that the Prophet describing him as “I only know good about him” (Ibn Hibbān, 10/13) shows his degree of closeness to the Prophet.

It is seen that what is more and beyond this information is the imagination and fiction of the author. In this case the lives of the companions are used as material like the main heroes of a story rather than an example and both he and the Prophet are made to utter sentences they did not utter in real life. In this picture, the Prophet himself, or his companions or his life is like a material for the fiction in the mind of the author rather than an example. Otherwise, he would have had to refrain from using the names of the parties who experienced the incident of “Ifk”, which was denied with a verse, among the names he used for the sections he described as a “state”.

18 Doğan, op cit.

19 Doğan, Ibid.

20 Doğan, Ibid.

Conclusion

It is unacceptable to show the Prophet as an example by making him say something that is not included in hadīth sources, or by fictionalising a behaviour that is not part of hadīth or sunnah in the novels with a religious content and religious concerns, whether they are called “hidayah”, “religious” or “Islamic” novels. This is because the words of the Prophet are not any words and his behaviours is not any behaviour.

The structure of the Sunnah, which means “the interpretation of Islam by living of the Prophet through his words, actions and tacit approvals” and which “undertakes a first degree task together with the Qur’ān with regards to the subject of shaping life in line with the Divine will”²¹; transmitted by a chain of narrators, and its important and saving role should be taken into consideration. One should be aware of what would be the result of making the Prophet say what he did not say and make him do what he did not do –even if within a literary work- and one should be able to estimate what kind of risk of falsification it contains.

Just as those sīra works apart from the literary examples have both good quality and bad quality ones, and one can sometimes come across texts that leave the door ajar for legendary descriptions of the Prophet in sīra works, just as we have had sīra that were compared to -and even presented in competition with - the prophets of other religions in those times of competition when people met different cultures and religions, just as some texts may be mixed up with mythological elements, just as the love for Allah may go overboard and be scattered around²²; some genres of literature also may not be suitable for narrating the life of the Prophet due to their possibilities and conditions.

The sacred is sacred and non-negotiable. If fiction enters the sacred –even if with good will- unwanted and unforeseen consequences may appear. The sacred is a source itself with its finality and precision. Literature is a means to convey the dimension of feeling of “I”, which is at the state of admiration vis-à-vis the sacred. On the other hand, a successful line, text or interpretation cannot claim to have added something to the value of the sacred and an unsuccessful and shabby example on this subject would not trigger any negative thought regarding the value of the sacred.

However, respecting the sacred should not incite fear and lead to moving away from the sacred itself. The means of art and literature should be concentrated on the big artist on the path that goes to the heart of people by preserving and

21 Imam Nevevī, *Riyāzū’s Sālihīn*, tr. Yaşar Kandemir, İsmail Lütfi Çakan, Raşit Küçük, Erkam Yayınları, İstanbul, 2001, pp.9-43.

22 For detailed information see *Siyer Edebiyat İlişkisi*, Meridyen Derneği, 2010.

testing the responsibilities, expressing and discussing the wrong matters and the example of the Prophet should not be left outside of life.

The warmth of the lines of Sheikh Gālib, who said “You are Ahmad u Mahmud u Muhammad my master/You are the confirmed Sultan from the Truth [i.e. Allah] to us my master” and the emotional atmosphere, which one enters with the spiritual climate that Arif Nihat Asya takes us with the lines “May Galip write your praise/May Suleimans write your mawlid!/May the Sinans come back/with their columns, arches and domes/May those who lead the funeral prayer in the wake of truth/be paralysed!/Come, o Muhammad, it is the spring.../We have amens that are hidden/beyond the lips.../Come as if you are returning from Hajj/Come as if you are returning from Mi'raj/We have been waiting for years!”, which he wrote after being influenced by the lines of Gālib, cannot be overlooked. One cannot possibly ignore the sound of Cahit Zarifoğlu, who said “Even the thought of the mountains you looked at makes me cry/I would be free if I was equipped with your commandments, my Sultan”, or the sadness in the line “O beloved one, how could a stone break your sacred tooth?”, which Osman Sari wrote to express his sadness regarding the broken tooth of the Prophet in the Uhud War. Poetry has covered long distances on this path, which can be the subject of another article. On the other hand, the small touches of a story may contain many markings, which can be appropriate and suitable and which can make people rise to the sacred. Beyond this, new possibilities of narration that are sensitive to the relationship of the sacred and fiction may emerge. The issue is not to be deprived of these possibilities but to be able to preserve the attention and compassion that are unique for the sacred.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- AKÇAY**, Ahmet Sait, *Bellekteki Hüriler*, Selis Kitaplar, İstanbul, 2006.
- ANDI**, M. Fatih, “Modern Edebiyatta Hazret-i Peygamber’i Anlatmak”, *Siyer Edebiyat İlişkisi*, Meridyen Derneği, 2010.
- CANATAN**, Kadir, “Gelenekte Kutsal-Peygamber Anlatıları”, *Siyer Edebiyat İlişkisi*, Meridyen Derneği, 2010.
- ÇAYIR**, Kenan, *Türkiye’de İslâmcılık ve İslâmî Edebiyat -Toplu Hidayet Söyleminden Yeni Bireysel Müslümanlıklara-*, Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, İstanbul, 2008.
- DOĞAN**, Candemir, “Resulullah (sav)’ın Komşusu Hz. Safvan B. Muattal (ra) Şimdi Bizim Komşumuz”, *Uluslararası Adıyaman Safvan Bin Muattal ve Ahlak Sempozyumu Bildiriler Kitabı*, Adıyaman, 2013.
- NEVEVÎ**, *Riyâzü’s Sâlihîn*, tr. Yaşar Kandemir, İsmail Lütü Çakan, Raşit Küçük, Erkam Yayınları, İstanbul, 2001.
- KAYA**, Nihan, *Artık Hidayet Romanı Yazılmayacak Mı?*, <https://anchebout.wordpress.com/2011/12/06/artik-hidayet-romani-yazilmayacak-mi/>
- TOPBAŞ**, Osman Nuri, “Rasûlullah’ın Örnek Sireti”, *Altınoluk*, 1997 - Haziran, Sayı: 136.
- TURAL**, Şecaattin, *Türk Romanında Mevlâna*, Ötüken Yayınları, İstanbul, 2011.
- UĞUR**, Veli, *1980 Sonrası Türkiye’de Popüler Roman*, Koç Üniversitesi Yayınları, İstanbul, 2013.
- YAĞMUR**, Sinan, *Aşkın 7 Hali*, Bişnev, Kapı Yayınları, İstanbul, 2014.