İzmirli İsmail Hakkı (1868–1946)

Life

İzmirli İsmail Hakkı was born in Izmir in 1868. His father, Hasan Efendi, was a captain in the Ottoman army, and his mother, Hafıze Hanım, belonged to a Cretan family. The young İsmail received his early education in Izmir and graduated from the local Rüşdiye, while also attending the madrasa, where he memorized the Quran. During this time he also became a member of the Shaziliyya Sufi order. He later taught the Persian language in his home town and studied Sufism from a master, Ahmed Asım Bey. After arriving in Izmir he entered the newly established Dar-ul Muallimin-i Aliye (Faculty of Education) and also attended the hadith courses of Şakir Efendi at the madrasa attached to the Yavuz Selim Mosque. In 1894 he graduated with distinction from the Faculty of Education. The Minister of Education, Rüşdü Pasha, kept İsmail Hakkı in Istanbul, not only appointing him to the idadi (high school) of Mer can as professor of history, religion and ethics but also hiring him as a private tutor for his children. In 1895 İsmail Hakkı married Nuriye Hanım, the daughter of the kadi of Lüleburgaz and a Naqshbandi sheikh. In 1908, following the death of his wife, he married a second time, this time to Kadiye Hanım, the daughter of a prominent scholar, Mutevelli Aziz Efendi. The same year İzmirli İsmail Hakkı joined the Islamist journal Sırat-i Müstakim and began publishing his writings there. Hakkı also taught in many educational institutions; he became a professor of Islamic history, Arabic, the Mecelle civil code, and the methodology of Islamic law (usul-al-fiqh) at the Mülkiye (School of Public Administration). He taught similar subjects in Islamic studies courses in various schools or madrasas in Istanbul.

As well as his academic career, Hakkı also worked as an administrator in many educational institutions, such as Dar-ul Muallimin, Dar ul Şafaka, the faculties of theology and literature, and the Institute of Islamic Studies, and in 1932 and 1937 he participated in the congresses of the Turkish Historical Society. In 1939 İsmail Hakkı retired, following which he devoted most of his time to writing articles and editing for the Turkish Islamic Encyclopedia (İslam Türk Ansiklopedisi). İzmirli İsmail Hakkı died on 31 January 1946.1

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Ideas

*The Islamic Caliphate*

The Islamic caliphate is a religious leadership and a world political power, and it is the best form of civilized government. It was institutionalized by justice and piety and was equally bound by religious laws. The caliph governs within the boundary of the divine rules and laws in force. In times of war he is the ruler of the people and the commander in chief. The instauration of a caliph is incumbent upon the community by the consensus of the *ulema* [Islamic scholars]. Nevertheless some Kharijites and other Muslim sects argue that there would be no need to appoint a caliph if the Muslim community [*ummah*] complied with the Quran and the *sunnah* of the Prophet by themselves. Since the caliph has the sacred duties of enforcing the rules of the *sharia*, protecting the religion, taking the necessary measures to ensure the people's affairs and waging war against enemies, he must have the required qualifications, particularly in terms of knowledge and property. The ignorant would not be able to execute the statutes and provisions of the *sharia*; the weak and incapable cannot protect the religion. They are afraid of *jihad* [holy war], neglect the laws of the *sharia* and also abandon the affairs of the Muslim community. The ignorant and incapable, who are unable to execute the laws and regulations and to protect the religion, fear war even when it is required, and cause the suspension of the provisions of the *sharia* and the abandonment of the affairs of the people; they are not eligible to have spiritual happiness and worldly/temporal authority. Secondly, since the holy verse that says “Be just” (*Ma'idah* 5/8) is an obligation for every act and deed to conform to justice, it is essential that the caliphate be based on justice. An unjust person cannot be a caliph. The oppressor is cursed by the *sharia*. Almighty God would never help an unjust and oppressive government. Such a ruler or government would be punished by divine wrath. In general, Muslims agree on most of the requirements of eligibility for the caliphate, which are being knowledgeable in the sacred law of Islam [*sharia*], being just, being capable and having complete soundness of the senses. The only condition on which they disagree is the idea that the caliph should belong to the tribe of Quraysh.

At the beginning of Islam the Qurayshi condition was accepted in order to prevent discord and conflict. At that time the Quraysh had preeminence and prestige over other tribes and peoples. The Qurayshis were able to rule and maintain authority through their tribal solidarity [*asabiyet*]. If the caliphate were to be assumed by another group, it was evident that this would never be accepted by the Quraysh. The Muslim community would therefore be divided, giving rise to political strife, which is contrary to the Quranic verse (*Shura*...