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The Enlightenment and Şanlı-Urfa (Edessa): A Different Ground for Social Coherence and Solidarity¹

Abstract: The core aim of this study is to show the clues of harmonious life in the project of the Enlightenment and in Urfa's example. There are not comparable which each other totally but in only one point they have interesting similarities. It might be a harmonious life in which everybody respects the differences of each other, but not only in the way that the Enlightenment project claimed. In order to reach this aim, the study can be divided into two levels. The first level is a comparatively abstract and philosophical level. This level tries to show key concepts and milestones of the Enlightenment. It gives, at the end of this level, some deficiencies or the differences between the ideals and historical facts of the Enlightenment era. The second level is more concrete and detailed because of focusing on Urfa's example. It introduces a new perspective analyzing historico-sociological features of Urfa. After that it lists some of the key points of Urfa's uniqueness. This study concludes with the debate about the special features of Urfa.

Keywords: The Enlightenment, Urfa (Edessa), Solidarity, Social Coherence, Cultural Mound, Democracy, Natural Rights, Natural Law.

Aydınlanma ve Şanlı-Urfa (Edessa): Toplumsal Uyum ve Dayanışma için Farklı Bir Zemin

Öz: Bu çalışmanın temel amacı, Aydınlanma projesinde ve Urfa örneğinde uyumlu yaşamın ipuçlarını ortaya koymaktır. Aydınlanma ve Urfa örneği arasındaki ilişki tamamen aynı olmamakla birlikte ilginç benzerlikleri de içerisinde barındırmaktadır. Urfa, Aydınlanma projesinin iddiasına karşın, herkesin birbirinin farklılıklarına saygı duyduğu uyumlu bir yaşam olabilir. Bu amaca ulaşmak için çalışma iki bölüme ayrılabilir. Birinci bölüm, nispeten soyut ve felsefidir. Aydınlanma'nın temel kavramlarını ve kilometre taşlarını göstermeye çalışır. Bölümün sonunda, Aydınlanma döneminin idealleri ve tarihsel gerçekleri arasındaki bazı eksiklikleri veya farklılıkları

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ortaya koyar. İkinci bölüm ise Urfa örneğine odaklanıldığından daha somut ve ayrıntılıdır. Urfa'nın tarihi-sosyolojik özelliklerini inceleyen yeni bir bakış açısı sunar. Ardından Urfa'nın benzersizliğine dair bazı önemli noktalar sayılır. Bu çalışma, Urfa'nın kendine has özellikleri hakkında yapılan tartışma ile sona ermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Aydınlanma, Urfa, Dayanışma, Toplumsal Uyum, Kültürel Höyük, Demokrasi, Doğal Haklar, Doğal Hukuk.

A Prelude to the Article

Çiğ Köfte² (Chee Kohfte) is an iconic symbol of Urfa. It is not only a delicious traditional sociological uniqueness of Urfa. The myth about the origin of Çiğ köfte is directly connected with the story of the Prophet Abraham who is the holy ancestor of three main religious systems (in historical sequence Judaism, Christianity and Islam). He is not only a prophet but also a revolutionist and a symbol of unity. There are different versions of the myth but to choose a typical one, in a nutshell, the Prophet Abraham used to invite people to believe in the existence of only one God. He tried to demolish the polytheistic religion of his people. The tyrant Nimrod, the king of the region, was deeply angry with the Prophet because the Prophet challenged his authority by daring to demolish the polytheistic religion. The local polytheistic religion, which had the authority and the power mostly would be eliminated by the prophet.

Nimrod thought that it was a presumption and an unforgivable crime. He ordered a public execution to take his revenge and to make an extreme example of him for the people. He wanted to burn the Prophet in an enormous fire for this reason he banned the lighting of fires even in order to cook. He thought that He

² Çiğ Köfte: A paste made from cracked bulgur wheat, pounded uncooked beef with hot peppers and spices, hand-formed into small patties and served on a bed of iceberg lettuce with a lemon wedge. All myths and historical stories about Urfa are not certain historically. According to one possibility everything which was told in this article happened in the Sumerian capital city of Ur, in southern Mesopotamia (today Iraq) but *beyond historical facts Urfa lives the history, whether this history is real or mythic*. Stories in this article compiled by narratives of local people and these sources: Akpınar 2010; Ekinçi & Paydaş 2008; Karakaş 2009; Kurtoğlu 2008; Kürkçüoğlu 2013; Kürkçüoğlu 1995; Yazar 1985.

would get as wood as possible for the fire so this ban also included the fire used in kitchens. During those days, a hunter who did not know about the ban, killed a gazelle and wanted his wife to cook the meat. There was not any firewood for cooking in the region because of the ban, so the wife found a solution. She mashed the meat and mixed it with various spices. The meat became edible and thus Cig Kofte become intertwined with the Prophet Abraham's (Arabic İbrahim) story.

The Main Point

The article seeks to explore in Urfa's example some elements of the roots of social harmony. A place where different peoples live together respectfully with each other's differences. They live in peace in spite of the fact that their religions, sects, ethnicities and their moral outlooks are certainly different, if not completely opposed to each other. It is a historico-sociological fact in Urfa, not a wish or dream.

Perhaps, it is a dream in a different aspect! Actually, the picture is familiar to us; it is the Enlightenment's dream: when people get rid of their superstitions, when they can truly understand their place in the Universe, in the World and in society, because of being enlightened with rational philosophy based on science, at the same time they can overcome their sensuality and brutish passions. So the last two hundred centuries have endeavored to enlighten people, and with the support of enormous development in the sciences and in practical philosophy, especially ethic-based human rights, has tried to reach this target. But can't it be another way, not from the top to the bottom but from the bottom to the top, not from the theoretical level to the social reality but from the social reality to a theory which is shaped by this reality?

Example of Urfa and the Enlightenment are surely not comparable with each other and the two paragraphs above certainly do not mean that using Urfa as an example covers all the principles and strategic targets of the Enlightenment; the

two do not ever share the same ground! This article merely tries to follow the traces of only one aim of the Enlightenment –namely a harmonious social life, which is not a theoretical idea but is a fact of everyday life in Urfa. The tacit reasons and patterns of social structure in Urfa can give clues how to reproduce a harmonious social life.

The Methodological Consideration

In order to reach the aforementioned aim, it seems that there are two possible ways. To find the conditions and reasons of social solidarity and harmony, that is to say, the social life that provides conditions in which people can live a harmonious life despite their differences and accepts the fact that their fellow citizens are at least as human as they are. You either follow the ideals of the Enlightenment or adhere to *some traditional social structures that enable this kind of life*.

The Enlightenment manifests those human beings are equal without any reference to specific historical or geographical points. It accepts the Universalist philosophy, namely the theory of rationalist natural law, and accepts that human beings are born free, equal and have some innate rights. The second way goes to find products of specific historical and social conditions, of the experiences over the course of time, of local culture, of conditions which are supported by everyday life routines and genuine faith. The first way is the conception which was spread out to the world with the Industrial Revolution and has become the philosophical base of human rights law. The second way, endemic in some parts of Anatolia, especially Urfa and ancient Konya, is a form of ‘living together’ which has been distilled from history. Consequently, this article endeavors to compare these two different ways. Therefore, seems good to firstly show some milestones, and some positive and negative outcomes of the Enlightenment with Industrial Revolution, secondly to focus on Urfa’s unique historical and social conditions and lastly to identify the sociological bases of solidarity and harmonious social life. For this last

point, this article introduces a special method of approach. *It might be too assertive to call it a new theory in social sciences but it might be considered a unique perspective in the analysis in social theory.* As a practice and an example of this approach, the concept of barrow is used in an abstract and *new sense* in this article but is actually not far from its original, archeological meaning. *It is hoped that this kind of analysis could illustrate Urfa's unique historico-sociological structure.*

'Being an Adult', the Enlightenment Project or the Dream

The Enlightenment is a milestone of world history. Together with the Industrial Revolution, it enormously changed the world and our way of life. It is certain that the major determinant of modern life is the Industrial Revolution and the Enlightenment that facilitated it. From our mode of dressing to transportation and communication, everything in daily life is a product of these. Additionally, the Enlightenment itself is a product of specific historical developments. As Weber has said, it is a local phenomenon and it belongs to European history (Weber 1992:17). The development of European history has created today some milestones in thought that can easily be seen at first glance. These listed as follows:

- The Renaissance which is the birthplace not only of the scientific research method but also humanistic thinking. In spite of being mixed with magic and animistic thoughts it rediscovered nature and the ancient Greek philosophies which were able to freely think about this nature. The Renaissance's uniqueness might be found in its childlike curiosity about nature, history, human beings, and the universe.
- The Reformation, without doubt, led to radically changed religious thoughts. It not only undermined the Church's authority but also put it another place from the Vatican. Just as Protestantism declared its principles and gained supporters and enemies, one of the longest periods of war in European history took place. These series of important events entailed building a direct relationship with God (its motto was that everybody is his own priest) and started a new and seminal debate about the place of human beings in life and society.
- The Age of Discovery should not be forgotten in spite of seeming at first an obstacle to be preventing European countries from obtaining the necessary

and exotic goods of the Far Eastern countries. It became an opportunity in time to explore new travel routes, new continents and new peoples dramatically different in every aspect from Europeans. So, European people were able to gain a new world image and see themselves differently.

- Scholastic philosophy in time became more sublime and focused on reconciling some of the contradictions and inconsistencies inherent in the metaphysical points of religious thinking. After this, an isolated Scholastic philosophy lost its enthusiasm and could not resist attacks from the inside (William of Ockham) or the outside (Rene Descartes).
- New Philosophy (Cartesian Philosophy) was only a manifestation of new conditions of Europe. What did 'Cogito ergo sum' (I think, therefore I am) really mean? Was it as important as its philosophical and historical effects and outcomes? Is Descartes, as currently debated, the founder of New Philosophy or the last representative of Scholastic Philosophy? These questions seem to need detailed speculative philosophical answers but in this context, stressing only one point is enough: *Descartes, with his formula Cogito, led to individualism*. The Individual (sub. capital letter) become a base and a criterion for everything, from the root of society and legitimization of the modern state to the subject of any legal system.

If social conditions are not suitable, any philosophy or any thought, however revolutionary it is, cannot survive and New Philosophy was not an exception. But the cultural climate was very suitable for it. A lot of scientific discoveries and developments, especially in astronomy, took place at that time. One of the most important was the telescope, which developed by Galileo. Completely different from other scientific discoveries, the telescope enabled ordinary men or women to see the real structure of what known mystically throughout the Middle Ages as 'heavenly bodies'. It permanently demolished some beliefs about the moon and the other planets of the solar system. Even the discovery of the solar system was a revolution itself because it represented a turning from geocentrism (the Ptolemaic system) and with its natural outcome of anthropocentrism, to heliocentrism.

All of these created a different world which had never been before and a new society and new men and women. The success of the Enlightenment was not in its scientific development as generally and superficially thought but in its new view of life. It was able to create a new understanding of the universe, the world, society

and human beings. The famous philosopher Immanuel Kant called it “Sapere aude! (Dare to know!)” There has been a lot of explanation of Sapere Aude but Kant only tried to give an answer to the question of the Enlightenment. The spirit of the Enlightenment is a redefinition of the meaning of life. It changed the explanation of human beings themselves and their place in the universe.

This spirit was not limited to only to philosophical debate because being an adult had some crucial consequences: an adult has freedom, rights and responsibilities, he or she is a subject of a legal system, has legal responsibilities and can therefore complete legally valid transactions. The Enlightenment gave all of these in theory to human beings but actually confined to white European men who were able to bring about this unequalled revolution. These Europeans felt that they were responsible for the rest of the world that could not reach this higher level, not only in the sciences but also in the social sphere. The Enlightenment project had a social part which was directly the outcome of the scientific part. The enlightened human beings could overcome some deficiencies of human nature, namely antisocial or wild characteristics, passions which had, from ancient times to the Enlightenment, led to pain, misery and wars etc.

Ideally, enlightened people could manage to control their drives by clarifying their causes and replacing them with rational and functional ones. For example, Montesquieu talks about a tribe who, when they want to eat a banana, cut down the banana tree and pick the bananas up to eat! Is it rational? Completely unbelievable, because of being blind about the long-term consequences of their action. They destroy the nature which actually is the source and the necessary condition of their lives (Montesquieu chose his example of uncivilized tribesmen to illustrate an uncivilized, unenlightened way of thinking).

Enlightened human beings, for the first time in history, hoped to overcome these deficiencies not only on a psychological level but also on a sociological level. They not only could fight against their superstitions and reflexive, instinctual

defense mechanisms which were useless and dangerous for civilized men and women, but also social misunderstandings, prejudices hatreds etc. Consequently, enlightened people illuminated both thinking and social processes. Not only philosophers like Kant (who wrote *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch*) but also founders of sociology like St. Simon and Comte tried to reorganize society and state according to rational principles and scientific manners in order to realize or reach the harmonized life. This harmonized life would be free from irrational conflict or war or wanton cruelty and outrages evidenced by the aforementioned deficiencies of human nature.

This ideal of the Enlightenment casted a shadow over politics and law. Therefore, from this shadow came dramatically different political and legal thoughts. These thoughts can be expressed in one famous theory: Rationalist Natural Law. In the natural law tradition, Rationalist Natural Law (RNL) is an important version, not only because of its pervasive effects upon every aspect of life and history but also because of being severely criticized. In politics, this version of natural law means a secular, social contract, which puts sovereignty in the will of the people and, in law, introduces the concept of natural rights that accept that human beings have some innate rights such as the right to life, freedom and equality and the pursuit of happiness etc.

The fundamental basis of RNL is the invention of the Individual. It was an invention because there had not been in history any abstract individual completely free from historical, geographical or cultural ties and determinants. The Individual is (like geometrical shapes) an abstraction which has reason and free will, can choose what he or she wishes and because of having that capacity has innate and inalienable rights.³ These kinds of rights are different and fundamental because they do not depend on any legal system, any legislature or any state. They are not

³ A geometrical shape, for instance a circle, is an abstraction because it only represents a matter in nature similar to a circle as a theory; there can't be a perfect, exact circle in reality. So, it is not a coincidence that the Archimedean point of Plato's theory is that of ideal forms.

rights which a state proclaims, gives and guarantees. On the contrary individuals apply these rights when a state tries to violate them, therefore the sole responsibility of a state is to not infringe on them. The source of these rights is not a state but the Individual, who has these rights because of his unique capability (reason and free will) which is able to reach a decision out of causality –the natural chain of causes and effects (Kant’s Groundwork). In conclusion Rationalist Natural Law theory presented to the world a new system of law which promised to all people a new free and equal life with having rights protected even against the state’s violation, but its promise was too pretentious, it promised the moon!

The Limits and Problems of the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution⁴

Everybody knows that dreams, whether noble or not, sometimes come true; however, some unanticipated negative outcome often emerge and they generally don’t come true as hoped for. Some dreams of the Enlightenment might not be an exception.

The dreams of Enlightenment alone would not have been able to come true, had it not been for the Industrial Revolution because they were limited only to a trust in or a faith in humanity is talents and capacities and they covered philosophical, generally scientific theoretical developments. In time, when inventions and discoveries came out of this theoretical development, another unique period of history started which was called the Industrial Revolution. This series of inventions in a comparatively short time, only two centuries (from 18th to 20th century), changed the world more than the previous ten millennia (Lerner et al. 1998: Chaps 18, 20, 21.)

- Theoretically the Enlightenment is Universalist, based on abstracts – mathematical reason, namely mathematization of physics and social sciences. For example, the famous motto of the French Revolution, “Liberty,

⁴ Lerner et al. 1998: Chaps 18, 20, 21.

Equality and Fraternity” is the outcome of rationalist natural law which was an emulation of the universal formula of mathematized physics. Although theoretical universal thinking is the foundation of the Enlightenment, in practice. It was dramatically different and far from universal. A lot of the practices of Enlightenment thinking did not hold people universally equal but treated people dramatically different even the practices themselves were discriminatory. For example, after the French Revolution, there was a law that set certain conditions (the minimum tax requirement) in order to be a citizen.

- Another problem of the Enlightenment was that it was the outcome of unique European historical conditions, as briefly mentioned before. So, it belongs to European culture. However, it is a highly debatable matter whether there even is “a Europa and a European Culture” or not, for even its name came from Asia! Everywhere and all peoples in the world somehow had to confront the outcomes of the process. They had to change not only their lifestyles but also their values to comply with enlightened thinking in the long term, while at the same time benefitting from it.
- Most importantly: The Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution increased the ability of human beings but was not able to give them the means to control the uses of this new ability or capacities. Unfortunately, these abilities were mostly used not to reach the Enlightenment’s universal humanistic targets but conversely made unreasonable demands on instinctive human nature, only empowering people to commit the old sins of human beings, exacerbating the deficiencies of human nature.

All these developments have given us the current conditions of the human world. It seems that there are two possible ways to rise above these gloomy conditions and solve the current humanitarian problems. The first way might be to try to refresh the methods of Enlightenment and processes to help reach more humanistic targets and the second way might be to find and to recreate some alternative processes to reach similar humanistic targets.

Urfa as a Cultural Mound (Barrow)⁵

As mentioned above (in the section titled “The Methodological Consideration”) this article introduces a special method of theoretical approach in

⁵ Cultural Mound (Barrow) is my concept, which I gave a brief explanation of it in the text. I think this kind of conceptual analysis with historical background could illuminate cultural and sociological structures.

social theory. As a practice and an example of this approach, the concept of barrow is used in an abstract and *new sense* in this article but is actually not far from its original, archeological meaning. Firstly, as an archeological concept, a mound or a tumulus is a pile or a hill which is gradually composed of ancient civilizations' ruins, mostly graves but also including all artifacts from tools and cooking implements to trinkets and jewelry, and within the past five millennia, writings and parchments etc. Every level of a barrow, from the top to the bottom, shows the time sequence of peoples who lived on the land from recent past to the ancient times.

Secondly, some cultural pieces of art, often anonymous⁶ have the same quality or character as a barrow, namely these include or are composed of certain historical-cultural elements be identified within every stratum, like the layers of an onion. Therefore, *via analysis of these cultural elements, historical facts of the land can be found in the same way that facts about the everyday life of ancient civilizations can be understood based on historical artifacts that are found in a barrow.*

If a region, a city or a village has lots of cultural arts, for instance myths, sagas, epic poems, folk songs etc., it will leave materials from which to learn its history and sociological structure, its social mentality, manner and habits. Analysis of a piece of art may not only give us a clue to understanding people's views of a certain aspect of life, which produced that art in the course of its history but also *a very coherent picture of the life of that people.* In order to perform this kind of analysis, two things are needed: (1) Lots of cultural pieces of art belonging to the same region and (2) a relatively, culturally stable region, namely that it continually produced the same kinds of cultural pieces of art.

⁶ I used "anonymous" is a special meaning in this article. If a cultural production is anonymous, I meant, it must be an outcome of sociological process and has a large social support, so it represents age's anima.

In conclusion, in a region that has both, the approach mentioned above could give rich information about the social fabric and some balances among persons and groups in this region. Urfa is and has been from ancient times a representative example of this kind of region. *Aziz Gecesi* or *Azizler Gecesi* (Saint's Night or Saints' Night) might be a representative example: In Islam there are some holy nights called "Kandil" (Candle – oil lamp), but in Urfa these nights are called *Aziz Gecesi* (Saint's Night) and have a special local food which is prepared for distribution to the poor. The most popular special local food is called *Aya Köftesi*⁷ (Kofthe of İy'i) and Urfa's people think that its name comes from the part of one's hands which is used to form the meat ball (Aya –palm). Indeed it might be, but there is one more logical possibility that the name "Aya" is the pronunciation of Romaic (Greek) counterpart of the word "Saint", Hagia. Therefore the meat ball's name which is special for Saint's Night, Saint's Meatball, *Aya Koftesi* or *Hagia Meatball*. So everything in Urfa's culture might be a symbol or could give a clue, an opportunity to understand not only one of the richest histories in the World but also the mechanism which continually creates and recreates the culture, in which has shaped the residents who were raised there.

The study of *the cultural tumulus* allows us to follow the traces of the long history. We can follow the traces of the cultural pieces of art or the pieces of daily artifacts. The findings in Urfa start from the very beginning of history to the current times, from pagans via Judaism and Christianity to Islam.

The Founder Elements and Manifestations of Uniqueness of Urfa

There is a different perception of time in Urfa.⁸ Anybody who makes a disciplined observation could interestingly see that Urfa does not live in the same

⁷ *Aya Köftesi*: A kind of Stuffed meatball is fried or boiled.

⁸ Time Perception is a branch of psychology about personal perception of time, sequences of events etc. See. J. Dawson & S. Sleek 2018.

era as the rest of the country, even the rest of the world. *Urfa has own time perception and this fact is only one element of Urfa's uniqueness.* Urfa lives in a mix of history, a different kind of time sequence actually which is not a true sequence but rather a multilevel perception of time. The commencement and dominant element of this time perception is the Prophet Abraham but he was followed by other Prophets, who have been in the Urfa region according to Islamic beliefs, Job (Ayyub - Eyup), Elisha (Elyasa), Shu'ayb (Suayb) and Moses (Musa). Jesus joined the history of the region with an important and special religious story. He sent the Mandyliyon (the handkerchief on which has an image of Jesus's face) and a letter to King Abgar Ukoma (-Dark), who was severely ill. The image was 'acheiropoietos' – not painted by a human being- and King Abgar was healed by the Mandyliyon, according to Christian beliefs. In the letter Jesus said that he blessed the city. So Urfa is not only a holy city according to Judaism, Christianity and Islam but also all differences of these three are interestingly melted in an Islamic pot and painted with an Islamic color, as easily can be seen above in the instance of Aziz Gecesi (Saint's Day). It should be stated here that there is not a consensus on this religious history. Independent from and despite the historical facts or debated religious beliefs Urfa lives in own time perception as said above.

Additional to time perception, *the second element of the uniqueness might be stated with the motto of Urfa: "The City of the Prophets"*. Along with Urfa's residents, local visitors or even tourists after only a couple of hours start feeling and believing in the holiness of the city. An average Urfa resident lives in this climate of thinking and a series of traditional-cultural events that support and keep the time perception. The prophets represent some parts, archetypical stages, pains and problems of life (for example Job's painful examination). Therefore, the residents can put themselves in a place in the long religious history and can easily create a meaningful story for their own lives. There is a concrete outcome of this kind of life perception: they do not live separately and cannot live an individual life. By believing that all events in the course of their lives have a special meaning not only

to test their faith but also a chance to develop their relations with God, they consider themselves to be agents in the patterned history of Urfa or one of the pieces of the puzzle. Therefore, they try to find a latent duty or role to fulfil or at least resign themselves to their fate. The most important and advantageous point of this kind of life is having a deep conviction about not being alone in the course of life and hoping for God's help to find meaning in all events of personal life.

The Perception of time and life meet the social fabric of Urfa at a third element of the uniqueness. Like the neighboring regions, the dominant element of Urfa's social structure is native tribes. All things source from tribes and return to tribes so, as in the religious impact which discouraged independent individual life, the sense of belonging to a tribe completely determines the character of the residents. Urfa's people do not think only of their own lives separately, they generally have traditional duties and responsibilities to society that means a heavy burden for them. Their lives never completely belong to them because they do not have themselves. They live the traditional life pattern doing their jobs and performing their customary roles. They always have to think not only of themselves but also of their people from close relatives to distant relations. Decisions an even private matters might not be 'private' enough in this social context, they might depend on tribal consent, approbation or even might be taken by the tribe directly. Therefore every person lives a traditionally determined life within this tribal structure, the life includes some innate duties and some innate rights which an individual never can change or quit -indeed only might try to run away from, taking risks which sometimes might be dangerous and even fatal.

The fourth element is the balances that facilitate a base for strict social rules, namely customary rules and gestures, etc. These balances are not only among people but rather among the tribes. In the course of history, the tribes have learned to create and keep these balances without disturbing them. These balances, if they kept long enough, become the real sources of every kind of social

rules, or at least become the source of traditional gestures and therefore might guide people's conduct without any overtly comprehended and named social rule. This social process is able to embody another cultural usage or custom of Urfa: Sıra Gecesi (literally, Night-in-Rotation)⁹. Every family in their neighborhood takes turns organizing a large-scale dinner party night. This kind of night includes dinner, ceremonially making Çiğ Köfte (Chee Kohfte) and singing traditional folk songs. In this way Sıra Gecesi currently has become a popular orientalist, touristic activity but originally it was certainly not. One of the most important parts of the traditional Sıra Gecesi was consulting, talking about actual serious problems of the region in a comfortable atmosphere. *These talks often opened (provided) a way to reach a satisfactory resolution of disagreements through open communication.* When two families from different tribes have a conflict for instance, they might meet in a Sıra Gecesi and treat each other at least in a kind or socially acceptable manner. Moreover, if a guest refuses to join this Sıra Gecesi or the host does not invite the people with whom they have conflict, they will have to not only confront some traditional sanctions but also will not fulfil a major obligation arising from this tradition. Guests who were invited and served are under the obligation to respond to the hospitality as hosts and hosts should give a chance to the people who were their guests to reciprocate as hosts. Therefore, the key point of the authentic Sıra Gecesi is mutuality and reciprocity, to keep the rotation intact, namely everybody should take his turn.

The last but not the least element is a kind of collective spirit of Urfa. This spirit can be seen as a collective consciousness in the Durkheimian sense and under this stratum there are a lot of collective representations of Urfa in Durkheimian theory (and in the Levy-Bruhl sense which comprise the basis of collective consciousness) (Durkheim 1997: 38-38.). With these commonly shared images and value-laden

⁹ This translation is mine. I found in some dictionary the translation: "traditional song's night". I believe that the key is not folk song sung in this night but the concept of rotation everybody should follow.

concepts the people of Urfa might think, feel and conduct themselves similarly. Their view of life, their attitudes and their gestures are close to each other. This spirit is not a completely independent element but an outcome of the first four elements.

All of these elements in their totality create and keep Urfa's uniqueness and they are not separately unique. It can be said that the fundamental idea of religion is the same in all Islamic countries. Secondly, the tribal structure is almost the same for not only the whole east and southeastern parts of Turkey, but also for most parts of the Middle East. Thirdly, there are a lot of cities and places in Turkey that are mostly accepted as holy or sacred. Additionally, as was said above, the elements of Urfa's uniqueness are actually not universally accepted things: all of them, especially historical stories are debatable.

The key factor that has to be understood about the uniqueness is that it is an outcome of the process through which all the elements function together. It is the combination of all these elements together, which has made and kept Urfa a unique place.

Every element played and has kept playing its role to bring about the outcome. Firstly, the Prophet Abraham's message and whole life as an example is an emanation of the highest degree of divine love, love for God, and because of this has been named Halil ür-Rahman (Arabi 1992: 78). Therefore his role is to exemplify and to illuminate the oneness or unity of God, as a symbol of this he demolished the idols of his people (The Holy Quran 21: 58-61) This concept of unity which is sourced from God's oneness, unites everything and hinders any disunity. The Second element –following prophets who are related with the Urfa region, supports this unity. The third element –the tribes have lived religiously, historically and traditionally according to incorporative culture in the region and were able to produce balances and styles of conflict resolution thanks to first two elements. The balances, which is a fourth element and the source of all special

social rules of Urfa region, like all other elements is an outcome of the previous elements. They generally support unity and solidarity of people of the region. The last element is a collective spirit that has been created by the first four and helps to keep and reproduce them continually.

Some Debates as a Conclusion

This study tried to show that there can and might be a peaceful living style that grew out of historical and philosophical sources other than the Enlightenment. Urfa is only one example which shows that it is possible. The historico-sociological character of Urfa is an important and key factor. Just opposite to the Enlightenment, Urfa's character reflects a low to high process, from particular to general and from concrete to abstract. Abstractness in this context means customs, folkways in a Sumnerian (Sumner 1940: 2-7) sense it is not a philosophical, highly speculative abstractness but a respectful view of religious traditional life.

Another interesting point is that this lifestyle, very different from the Enlightenment, has never claimed to have exemplar value. Urfa's residents modestly live their traditional lives not only seeing globalization's distortive effects upon them but also being a little bit dramatized by their routine traditional practice. Based on this, even though Urfa is not as universal as the Enlightenment claimed to be, this does not mean that Urfa can't be used as an example or that Urfa's sociological structure is inefficient. Anybody can put forward an objection that the Enlightenment is one of the most important turning points in history and it gives a new understanding about life; in the postmodern sense, it is a meta-narrative. However, stated as the beginning, this study has never asserted that the Enlightenment and Urfa's example are comparable with each other.

Like the specialties which create its uniqueness, Urfa has its own specific handicaps which come from its historical conditions. For instance honor killing, vendetta and berdel (-to barter minor girls for marriage) are relics of old

customary laws or traditions. Despite these usages, Urfa is promising and can show an interesting example to people who live in The Clash of Civilization era.

Lastly, according to their skills and level of insights everybody can find some of the clues of a special unassertive, peaceful, modest and respectful life which is symbolized by the first Cig Kofte. This Cig Kofte is not only symbolized a democratic aim, that is to say resisting against oppression but also the coherent togetherness of the different peoples as the blend of a variety of often contradictory species and herbs.

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