

A SCHOOL PROVIDING EDUCATION TO ORPHANS

Yayın Adı : Hürriyet Daily News
İli : İstanbul

Periyod : Haftada 6 Gün
Sayfa : 1

Tarih : 13.01.2018
Tiraj : 5.948

1/2



AYŞE
ARMAN

a a r m a n @ h u r r i y e t . c o m . t r

A school with 154 years of history

I have always marveled at the legendary Darüşşafaka School, a school founded on a fantastic philosophy. They believe in quality education and equal opportunities in education. They educate children who have lost their mothers or fathers and do not have anyone to support their education. The school prepares them for life. What can be more endearing than that? And they have been doing this mission for 154 years. There is no other example in the world. And most interestingly, it is not a public school, nor a private one; there are no funds to support them, they work only and only with donations.

For me, this school's presence for 154 years is an indication that humanity still exists. I didn't know the story of how the school was founded. I listened to the story personally from M. Talha Çamaş, chairman of the executive board of Darüşşafaka Association.

He is also an alumnus of Darüşşafaka. He lost his father when he was only two years old. But he always felt the need to keep the fact that he had no father as a secret when he was little. He thought that if the subject was brought up, and if his friends found out that he had no father, he would feel marginalized by his friends and feared they would bully him for that. But things had changed once he got into Darüşşafaka. After seeing that hundreds of other students around him were in the same condition as him made him feel better about himself. They were even. And then a great fraternity had begun: The Daçka Fraternity.

Let's come to the story of its establishment.

Young bureaucrats of the Ottoman Empire, aged between 28 and 35, spent their lives between the Laleli and Sultanahmet districts of Istanbul, both within walking distance. They lived in Laleli and worked in Babiâli. The Grand Bazaar was the only commercial center at the time. While commuting between home and work, they kept seeing children roaming around the Grand Bazaar, every morning. After doing some research, they learned that these children's fathers had died in battles, which is why they were not going to school. Darüşşafaka emerged out of this quest to find what could be done for these children to prepare them for life. First, they found an old, ramshackle school in Çemberlitaş, also within that area. They cleaned it and then opened it to education. Not only Muslim children, but Greek and Armenian children also came to the school. After seeing that there was a huge need for such a place, they brought the issue to the attention of Sultan Abdulaziz. After that, the process of making it into an actual school began. The land where the campus was located in Fatih belonged to Abdulaziz. They asked an Italian architect to initiate a project. The famous Balyan family then took charge of the construction. And then with funds from philanthropists, Darüşşafaka was born.

When they first founded the school, they wanted to admit both girls and boys. And the campus in Fatih had been designed accordingly: A single building but with two entrances; they were that farsighted. But the mentality of the era prevailed and girls were not admitted. Unfortunately, girls were allowed into the school only after 100 years, in 1974. At first, teachers were volunteering; among them were Namık Kemal, Yahya Kemal and Behçet Tarcan, all of whom are prominent figures in Turkish literary history. French teachers also came, and scientists. Today, there are 1,000 students being educated there, from 69 different provinces across Turkey. Half of them are boys and the other half are girls. All are brilliant young people. They are very successful in arts, culture, science and sports and they later fill prominent positions within the society.

Long live the Daçka Fraternity!