

# IN THE NAME OF

ALLAH, THE MOST  
GRACIOUS, THE  
MOST MERCIFUL

may Allah be  
pleased with  
him  
**UMAR**

may Allah be  
pleased with  
him  
**SABŪ  
BAKR**

On the authority of 'Ali bin Abī Ṭālib  
(may Allah the Exalted be pleased with him)  
that when he described the Prophet, peace and  
blessings of Allah be upon him ❁ He would say, 'He was  
neither excessively tall ❁ Nor extremely short ❁ But rather  
was of a medium stature among (his) people ❁ His hair was  
neither extremely curly ❁ Nor straight ❁ But rather it was wavy  
and flowing ❁ He was neither corpulent ❁ Nor was his face  
completely circular ❁ But it was slightly rounded ❁ (His complexion)  
was fair with some redness ❁ His eyes were very black, his eyelashes  
were long ❁ His joints were large and his shoulders broad ❁ He  
was smooth-skinned; a thin line of hair ran from his chest to his  
navel ❁ His hands and feet were full-fleshed and sturdy. He  
walked with vigour, as though descending from a height  
❁ When he turned to look (at someone or  
something), he would turn with  
his whole person ❁

may Allah be  
pleased with  
him  
**ALI**

may Allah be  
pleased with  
him  
**UTH  
MAN**

## AND WE DID NOT SEND YOU (O PROPHET) EXCEPT AS A MERCY TO THE WORLDS

(The Noble Qur'ān, 21:107)

Between his shoulders was the Seal of Prophethood ❁ And he is the  
Seal of the Prophets ❁ His heart was the soundest and most generous  
of hearts ❁ His speech is the most truthful of speech ❁ He was the  
gentlest of people ❁ And the kindest of them in companionship ❁  
Whoever saw him unexpectedly would be awe-stricken ❁ Whoever  
came to know him would love him ❁ Whoever described him would  
say, "I saw neither before him nor after him anyone like him". ❁  
[Source: Imām at-Tirmidhi's ash-Shamā'il al-Muḥammadiyyah]  
❁ O Allah! Send prayers and peace upon the Prophet of Mercy  
and Intercessor of the nation, Muḥammad, and upon his  
family altogether and upon all the Prophets and Messengers ❁  
Designed by: Muslim Hands, for the benefit of its donors,  
beneficiaries and staff in this world and the next, āmin! ❁

# THE HISTORIC ART OF THE HILYE

## EXPLAINED

**The Hilye is a text and Ottoman art form which typically revolves around the physical description and character of the Prophet Muhammad (saw).**

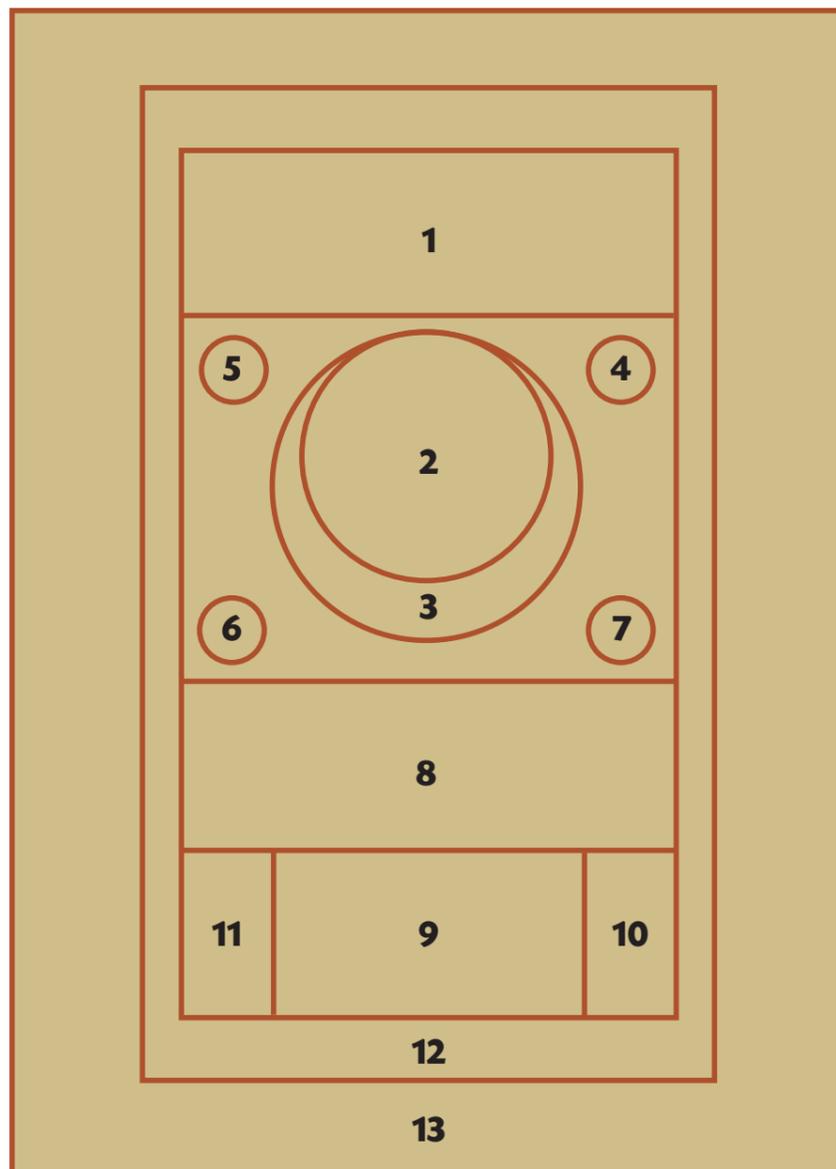
Hilye comes from the Arabic word Hilyah, which literally means **ornament**. It can also mean physiognomy, natural disposition, likeness, characterisation, and description.

Hilye art pieces encompass all of these things, **describing the appearance and character of the Prophet (saw)** while being beautiful ornaments that you can display in your homes.

Many Hilye pieces rely on Ali ibn Abi Talib's (ra) short description, which you are holding right now. The Hilye has also been composed from other descriptions given by other companions like Abu Hurairah (ra) and Umm Ma'bad (ra).

The first Hilye to be produced as an art form was most likely the one by the **great Ottoman calligrapher Hafiz Osman Efendi in the 17th century**. He created the Hilye format we see most today, basing it on the Prophet's (saw) description in Imam at-Tirmidhi's ash-Shama'il al-Muhammadiyah.

## Elements of the Hilye



- 1)** The **baş makam** (head station) is the top panel, containing the Basmalah (the formula name for, 'In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful').
- 2)** The **göbek** (belly) is a circle. It contains the first part of the main text of the hadith, the physical description of the Prophet (saw).
- 3)** The **hilâl** (crescent) is an optional section with no text, encircling the göbek, and often gilded. Together, the göbek and hilâl evoke the image of the sun and the moon.
- 4-7)** The **köşeler** (corners) are four rounded compartments surrounding the göbek, typically containing the names of the Four Rightly-Guided Caliphs (ra). They could also contain the names of Allah, the titles of the Prophet (saw), or the ten Companions (ra) given the glad tidings that they will enter Paradise.
- 8)** The **âyet** or **kuşak** (verse or belt) is a section below the göbek and crescent, containing a verse from the Noble Qur'an about the Prophet (saw).
- 9)** The **etek** (skirt) contains the conclusion of the description that began in the göbek, a short prayer, and the signature of the artist. If the main text fits completely in the göbek, the etek may be absent.
- 10 & 11)** The **koltuklar** (empty spaces) are two alleys or side panels on either side of the etek. Sometimes, they contain the names of Companions (ra), but typically they just contain ornamentation.
- 12 & 13)** The **iç** and **dış pervaz** (inner and outer frame) together form an ornamental border.