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**АНАЛИЗ НА РИТУАЛИТЕ И СИМВОЛИТЕ НА ВЯРАТА В
ДЕМИР БАБА ТЕКЕ (ДЕРВИШКА ОБИТЕЛ) В БЪЛГАРИЯ**

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**ANALYSIS OF THE BELIEF SYMBOLS AND RITUALS IN
THE DEMIR BABA TEKKE (DERVISH LODGE) IN BULGARIA**

The Demir Baba Tekke in the northwest of Kemaller (Isperih) town is one of the social religious institutions formed in culture. Demir Baba Tekke which is an important visit place for the Alevi-Bekashi people in Bulgaria has formed a chain with the beliefs and rituals around it.

Ўn our presentation an analysis of the symbols and rituals around the Demir Baba Tekke will be made.

Key words: The Demir Baba Tekke (Dervysh Lodge), religious ,beliefs, symbols, rituals.

INTRODUCTION

The life style considered for the needs of a society forms the culture with its complete materialistic and spiritual elements. (Gungor, 1976: 75) The social and religious institutions in this life style and the behaviour forms constituted around these also form a part of the culture.

Deliorman and vicinity together with Albania are the places where Bektashis have spread the most in Rumelia and a lot of Bektashi Tekkes (Dervish Lodge) have been founded. (Tanman 1994: 150)

The Demir Baba Tekke at the north-west of the Kemaller (Isperih) Town is also one of the important social-religious institutional formations in the culture. The Tekke is placed in a valley where long stairs descend. There are vow trees decorated with coloured cloths in the right and left of the stairs going down to the Demir Baba Tekke and at the end of the stairs there is sacred water. There is a vow rock in the garden of the Tekke, a rock for the ill to get recovered, rocks set upright near the caves, and a rock which has the footprints of Demir Baba and Caliph Ali.

There are various symbols on the walls of the Tekke. All around the symbols some rituals have been originated.

What is the source of the beliefs and rituals formed around these symbols? What did they give the answer for? We can give the answer to the cosmic symbolism with the help of the History of Religion. Eliade states that “the protection of the culture is the existence of the images and symbols” (Eliade 1992: 25). If the language of the images

and the symbols are to be revealed a dialogue will be formed with the culture consequently with history.

In the communiqué an analysis of the symbols and ritual around the Demir Baba Tekke will be presented.

A – DEMIR BABA TOMB

Architecturally an interesting tomb Demir Baba tomb is octagonal, it is eight metres high and six metres wide. On the door of the Tekke there is the “lâ fetâ illâ Ali, la Seyfe illâ Zülfikâr” (there is no man other than Ali. No sword other than Zulifkar) writing. Demir Baba’s sarcophagus is large as the other holy men’s (saints) sarcophaguses.

Its environment has been surrounded by twelve candlesticks which is called “cerag” in the Bektashi terminology. Other than these cerags that represent the twelve imam’s spirituality there is a twelve armed big candlestick which originates from the same symbolism and cerags lined on three steps called “taht-ý Muhammed”. At the head of the sarcophagus there is a twelve sliced huseyni crown, a pair of metallic shoe and two knives at the foot. There is also a vow chest in the tomb. (Tanman 1994: 150)

On the sarcophagus of Demir Baba there are cloth coverings, towels and various clothes left by the visitors. That is baby clothes for new born babies so they can be healthy and strong, a wedding dress for the ones to be married in a near time is left for a while on the sarcophagus of Demir Baba. The people who wear these clothes are believed that they will be healthy, tranquil and happy.

The Alevi-Bektashis people in the Deliorman vicinity show great dependence to the Demir Baba Tekke and a lot of visitors come to the tomb. The beliefs and rituals formed around the Demir Baba tomb has to be carried out during the visit to the tomb.

B – ANCESTOR CULT

In the evliya (Muslim saints) menakýbnames (books on Muslim Saints) we can identify the motives in nature cult, ancestor cult and similar cults before the Turks accepted Islam together with the ones in Buddhism, Manichaeism and Mazdeism. We can specially see these motives in the Bektashi epics. (Ocak 1992: 70)

These motives and cults also exist in beliefs and rituals composed around the settlement places of the Velis (Muslim saint) and their tombs.

It is necessary to mention about importance of one of the old Turkish belief before Islam that is the ancestor cult which has been the preparation of the basis of the Veli (Muslim saint) cult. The ancestor cult which is one of the oldest and most fundamental beliefs amongst different Turkish groups bases on the sanctification of the ancestors. (Ocak 1992: 12)

On the other hand, this cult not essentially worshipping to the ancestor in person, it has appeared in a mixed fear and respect belief that after their death they gained superior power and by this he can help people (Ocak 1992: 12).

The French historian Fernard Grenard doing a research in Middle Asia in the 1890’s studied the Veli cult where he promenaded and deduced that the Veli cult had relation with the old ancestor cult by comparing the visits to the graves and sacrifice ceremonies. (Ocak 1992: 12)

C – TREE AND VOW

Beliefs and applications about trees in the history of Turkish culture are very old. In the old Turkish belief the tree is accepted as the centre of the world. This tree is the vertical centre combining the sky and earth (Turan 1992: 543). The tree is the cosmic transition means between the sky, the earth, underground, man and god. The tree constitutes the unknown non-exhaustible source of the cosmic life, on the other it hand represents the sky and the heaven.

In the old Turkish belief system submitting a sacrificial, vowing to make and offering to express their gratitude to the creator, protector and the one and only God was a widespread application. For the outgoing god to bring back the luck ceremonies were done under the trees which represent the god and pleading to god, and this ceremony was done by tying cloth to the holy tree (Ergun 2004: 374).

According to the belief, the root of this tree reached to the hell underground and the branches to the heaven in the sky. God existed in the heaven namely “Ishyk alemi” “the universe of light”. People, who want something, get cured from an illness or to be saved from trouble by the help of god used the tree as a means which they believed that it reached to the place of god. The god learning the illness, discomfort by the means of the tree helped them (Ergun 2004: 374).

In the Turkish tradition the sacrifice done to God in the holy places were done in two ways; bloody, and bloodless. The bloody and bloodless sacrifices were submitted to God with parity a ceremony or a religious ceremony (Ergun, 2004: 374).

The bloodless sacrifices are hanging worn-out pieces of cloths to the Shaman drum, pouring fat and wine to the fire.

Turks before Islam showed their thankfulness and gratitude by binding clothes and worn-out clothes to the tree, vowing a sacrifice to the souls of the mountains, forests, tree and water.

Today parallel to these belief and rituals in the Muslim Turks instead of vowing a sacrifice to these souls, beliefs and rituals as vowing a sacrifice to the Velis (Muslim saints) has aroused.

The clothes bind to the trees and bushes surrounding the Demir Baba Tomb first is leaving something from their belonging for the person who has vowed, by leaving a piece from their belonging to a place where is accepted as holy is to keep the communication going and remembering him (Tanyu 1967: 329).

The tree being connected like this with man’s life is related to the belief that it is a carrier of life in the capacity of an entity which can revive continuously. The tree is considered as the symbol of life and eternity (Ocak 2000: 112).

The region of Anatolia is on of the most interesting the place where the tree cult has appeared in the Muslim Turks. Especially amongst the Alevis (partisan of Caliph Ali) the respect to the tree being in the state’s official documents attracted attention. In a report sent to the II. Abdulhamid by an Ottoman governor called Memduh Pasha indicates that Alevis showed great respect to the old trees and visited them frequently (Ocak 2000: 114). Not only amongst the Alevis vows and sacrifices are presented and wish clothes are bind to these trees by all of the Anatolian people. Also people believe that cutting down a great tree is nothing good and will bring bad luck.

Another point that attracts attention about the tree cult the relation of tree-saint has been identified in nearly from Middle Asia to Anatolia where this cult is seen. Radloff during his researches in Siberia has identified graves of saints near a tree in some places and interpreted these as the souls that are believed to exist in the trees came into being in the identity of Muslim saints. (Ocak 2000: 117)

When all of the visit places in Anatolia is examined there are trees accepted as blessed near most of the graves or tombs. All of these show us this. Between the Turks, especially in the Alevi groups the tree cult is very important and beliefs and rituals about the tree are living.

D – THE STONE CULT

Since old ages the things that have continued amongst the lifeless entities in the nature has taken attention of man. To this esteem where ever in the world you are the rock which is standing with its grandeur or an astounding granite block ascending towards the sky has attracted the respect and amazement of the ancient people. With its durability it has been seen as the symbol of existing eternally (Eliade 1975: 181; Ocak 2000:102).

In the first place of these factors forming the respect in people is the belief of the existBecause of this beliefs and rituals have been formed nearly all around the world. Most primitive societies, believed that their ancestor's spirits were in the stones that they accepted as sacred. In the primitive societies, there are stones that are accepted as god and worshiped. Besides these there are many stones that are accepted as sacred and used religiously and for spells. (Hancerliođlu 1975: 617)

The recent knowledge shows us that some stones and rocks are accepted as blessed in the Turks before the period of Islam in Middle Asia. In the 1920's Joseph Castogne touring in the Mavennânnehir region explained that people showed great respect to big and strangely shaped stones and rocks, and that these rocks could have good or bad effect on people, and was believed that they had power of spell and for this they were regularly visited and included that there was a grave of a saint near every stone. (Ocak 2000: 103–104)

Recently we can say that there are lots of beliefs and rituals about stones and rocks living in Anatolia. Besides the only book on saints that includes epics on stone and rock cult belongs to Hacı Bektash Veli.

In one of the narrated epics here Hacı Bektash Veli took a stone and cut it into two (Tanyu 1968: 143). In the book on Muslim Saints there are other epics about stones.

In or near the Hacı Bektashi Veli Kulliye (complex of buildings including school adjacent to a mosque) there are the Five Stones (witness stone), Salutation rock, Horse rock, perforated stone, cushion rock, shoulder pain rock (Tanman 1996: 463) some related functionally with the kulliye and various stones keeping alive the epics about Hacı Bektashi Veli.

Also in the garden of Demir Baba Tekke we see a manifestation of the beliefs and rituals forming in the axis of the stone cult explained above. Women pass their head scarf in the hole of the stone and wish for their headaches to cure (Georgieva 1998: 177). Also the visitors pass their handkerchief through the hole of the stone and wish things. These wishes are mostly buying a car or a house, getting married, having a happy family life.

Another application about this wish stone is passing a ring through the hole of it. When the ring is thrown into the hole if it passes and drops from the other side it is believed that the wish will come true.

Another visit done after the visit to the Tekke is to the rock placed upright where the caves are. A similar stone is at the Hacı Bektash and according to the ritual the one that can't pass through the hole of this stone is a sinner. That's why people are afraid to pass through this hole. According to the belief if a sinner tries to pass through the hole he/she falls from the four metre tall precipice. (Georgieva 1998: 177)

The real interesting epics related to the stone and rock cult are the rocks that have human marks. Also in the written in the *Menâkıb-ı* (book on Muslim Saints) Hacı Bektash-ı Veli when Hacı Bektash flew to Anatolia in the shape of a pigeon he perched upon a stone in Suluca Karaoyuk and his feet sunk into this rock. (Ocak 2000: 105).

Hacı Behtash's follower called Sarý Saltýk's hand and feet prints existing in Kaligra (Bulgaria) are also mentioned in the same book on Muslim Saints. All of the stones and rocks in question are accepted as sacred and visited frequently. Today there are many rocks all around Anatolia which is believed to have the marks of the footprints of Caliph Ali's horse and for this it is visited and blessed. (Ocak, 2000: 105)

Another visit place around the Demir Baba Tekke is the place where the marks of Demir Baba's iron shoes and Caliph Ali's horse called Duldul are.

A big rock adjacent to the wall of Demir Baba Tekke is a place where people wanting cure and health lie. Same application can be seen frequently in Anatolia. For example, in one of the graves in front of the Ashik Pash tomb in Kýrshehir there is a rock in the shape of a cradle. If mother's whom their children don't live lie their children there it is believed that their children will live (Tanyu 1967: 265).

There are many similar applications all around Anatolia. The manifestation of this cult can be seen in the frame of Islam from Middle Asia to nowadays in Anatolia and Balkans.

E – WATER CULT

From the oldest eras the Turks water in the nature cult has been and important element. In the Orhun inscriptions "earth-water" is mentioned as the protector spirit. (Inan 1976: 40)

Water, in the belief lineage from Middle Asia to Anatolia has a feature of purifying and cleaning. The purifying feature of water is seen in Baptism in Christianity and Abdest in Islam.

Also on the left side of the Demir Baba Tekke's garden entrance there is water that is believed to be sacred. Demir Baba hit his five fingers of his hand to the rock and a clear five fountainhead water source has appeared. (Noyan 1995: 618)

It is compulsory for the visitors of the Demir Baba tomb to stand in front of the water before entering.

At this place, three swallows of water must be drank and the face should be dampened three times. Then, metal (change) money is thrown into the water. Water is taken from the source to take home. It is given to the people who can't visit the Tekke and for curing the ill. Seldom, it's sprinkled to the ill animals to get cured.

There are a lot of visit places where the water is accepted as sacred in Anatolia. One of them is in the Bektash Valley in Giresun. In the Yurucek hill when Caliph Ali got thirsty he pronounced besmele and hit his sword to a rock three times. In the third time water gushed out. (Korkmaz 2005: 389)

Water in the sacred places is sacred as well. The well water next to Kaaba (zemzem), well water of Mother Mary's house in Efes and well water in the house where Saint Pavlos was born in Tarsus, the well water in Apollon Temple in Didim and well water in Saint Pierre are examples of this determination (Ersoy 2000: 189).

F – OTHER RITUALS

In the south wall of the Demir Baba tomb there are two holes that is said to be the devil's eyes. Different rituals are applied for these holes. The first one is the person who finds these holes without looking are sinless. If he/she can't find them have sins. (Georgieva 1998: 181)

The other ritual is that these holes belong to the devil. The visitors close their eyes and target these holes with their fingers. If they reach the holes they believe that took out the eyes of the devil.

G – “SOLOMON'S SEAL DRAWN ON THE WALL OF THE TEKKE”

This symbol drawn on the south wall of the Tekke is called as the “Seal of Solomon or the Star of David. (Freke 2001: 120)

Solomon's seal is two triangles put on the each other. In the Judaism the Cabala belief the first and the upward placed triangle represents absolute entity (God). The triangle placed downwards symbolizes the universe which is god's shadow. According to the Hebrew, every corner of the hexagon represents a prophet. These are; Prophet Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Harun and David (Koca 1999: 191). According to the Islam belief “ism-i azam (one of the names of God)” is written on the seal.

Actually this seal reflecting the whole of esoteric thoughts has placed in the Alevi-Bektashi belief. One of the important places where the Seal of Solomon exists is the fountain of the tree (Feyzi Baba Fountain) in the Haci Bektashi Veli Tekke. Under the signboard of the inscription relieve of the Seal of Solomon is placed.

CONCLUSION

The motives about the tree cult, stone cult, rock cult and water cult aren't other than the continuation of the beliefs of Middle Asia. These cults which were sacred before Islam continued their sacredness after gaining a frame in Islam. Mostly these sacred cults take place together with the Veli Cults.

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