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**TRACES OF OLD BELIEFS AND TRADITIONS IN TODAY'S TURKISH
CULTURAL LIFE**

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Abstract

The word "shaman" is a word used to describe a magician who treats diseases with their own unique methods, which evicts evil spirits. Before the Turks adopted Islamic religion, they believed in the religion Gök Tanrı and Shamanism was a part of the belief in Gök Tanrı Religion. Shamans were the wisdoms of illness. The most important features of shamans were that they could make contact with spirits and travel to the world of spirits. This belief system is continuing or resembling applications on contemporary Anatolian Turks.

Key Words: Shamanism, Turks, Gök Tanrı Religion

INTRODUCTION

Shamanism is a system that continued as a belief system among the pre-Islamic Turks for a period of time. Is this form of belief a religious belief or not? There are different answers to this question and different perspectives on the subject. Shamanism consists of some activities performed by the "shaman" using spells or magic, such as treating illness, traveling to the spirit world, and talking to spirits. Shamanism has been particularly influential in the Central Asian Turkish world. However, studies on this subject have had an impact on many societies, including Native Americans. Especially the works of Ahmet Ali Arslan attract attention

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regarding Native American Shamanism. After the Turks adopted the religion of Islam, some cultural changes occurred both in the cultural sense and in the way of life. These changes have been seen mostly in daily life, especially in social terms. These changes have affected the lifestyle and approach to life to a greater or lesser extent. This effect manifests itself in many vital activities, from the treatment of diseases to clothing.

The aim of our article is to provide a general perspective from the available literature on whether the effects of practices applied in Shamanic culture and aimed at treating some diseases exist today.

1. Shamanism

Throughout history, Turks have encountered different societies based on their nomadic lifestyle, and they have encountered different religions due to their nomadic lifestyle. Shamanism is among the oldest belief systems. Turks are the Muslim nation today, and there is no other nation that embraces Islam as much as the Turks and gives it an equal meaning. Türkler ve İslam dünya çapında eş anlamlı görülmektedir. Türk denince İslam akla gelmektedir. Erdem (1998: 90)'e göre:

“When Turks became Muslims, they rearranged their history, legends and traditions, in short, their culture, with Islamic spirit and motifs. In this sense, the Turks' entry into Islam was synonymous with the transition from one culture to another, and there was no possibility of stepping back again. In their current manifestations, Turkishness and Islam are synonymous. When we say Turk, we mean Islam, and when we say Islam, we mean Turkishness. Perhaps there is no other nation among Muslim nations that has integrated itself with Islam this much.”

When it comes to Shamanism, the first question encountered is whether Shamanism is a religion or not and how to define Shamanism. The most general answer to this question is that it is a belief system with magical content. According to Türkan (2007: 131), "... from Central Asia, to the inner regions of Siberia, from Lapland, among the Eskimos, from Nepal, to Tibet and from Native American America, to China, Korea, "It is a belief system with religious and magical content that has spread from Japan, Pakistan, India, Australia and even Africa."

Shamanism is a belief system based on worshiping nature beings. In Shamanism, in addition to the worship of natural beings, there is also the worship of ancestral spirits. This belief is an indication of respect for ancestors. Although there is information from foreign sources about how this belief emerged, there is no definitive information about the birth of this belief system. According to Pamir (2003: 157):

“Shamanism is an ancient Asian religion based on the worship of ancestor spirits and nature beings. It is not known exactly when this religion emerged or what changes it went through. However, as learned from ancient Chinese sources, it is understood that Samanlık first emerged among the Central Asian Turks and then spread among other Turkish tribes.”

Shamanism is a belief system that has not only spread among the ancient Turks but has also been seen in many other societies. It appears in some small forms of application in different societies. This belief system is not considered a religion. It was mostly used as a magic trick to predict the future and treat diseases. According to Gömeç (1998: 47):

“It can be seen that today's Turkish belief is not a religion, but rather a magic whose basic principle is to command and command spirits, genies and fairies and to inform them of the future. All these stories do not only belong to Asian Turkish communities. "Although it has minor changes, this lifestyle called Shamanism is seen in the Mongols, Japanese, Eskimos, Malaysia, Australia, the Caucasus, Iceland, North America and many parts of Africa.”

a. Characteristics and Duties of Shaman

Shamans acted as a kind of clergy in the ancient Turks. However, it would not be appropriate to call Shamans strictly religious men. It would be more appropriate to evaluate the shaman as a sage who has certain positive characteristics in society. The most distinctive feature of the shaman is that he can fight against evil spirits and knows how to fight. In Shamanism, evil spirits are in a constant struggle against the Sun and the Moon. Sometimes evil spirits drag the Sun and Moon into their dark world. This is where the shaman comes into play. In the ancient Turkish belief system Shamanism, shamans are generally responsible for driving away evil spirits, and while doing this, the shaman makes different sounds.

“According to shamanic belief, evil spirits are in constant struggle with the Sun and the Moon, sometimes capturing them and dragging them into the dark world. This is the reason for solar and lunar eclipses. When the Sun or Moon is eclipsed, Shamanists shout and beat drums to save them from the captivity of evil spirits. According to them, these noises are to scare evil spirits” (İnan, 1995 as cited in Pamir, 2003: 164).

Shamans have great respect for nature. They attributed the disasters that befell society to nature being angry and lived in harmony with nature. Animals, which are a part of nature, are also considered sacred and protect people. Shamans believed that some animals guided people according to their personalities. The service animal also reflects the person's subconscious world. According to Ünlü (2012: 128):

“Shamans live in harmony with nature and respect everything in nature. Shamans, who believe that people have a lot to learn from animals, also believe that animals guide people. Animals both teach people many things and protect them. Shamans believed that everyone had at least one animal guide spirit. This guiding

spirit protects the person, gives strength and guides him. Here, the guide animal also symbolizes the person's subconscious. "Understanding the nature of the animals with which we share personality similarities also means understanding our own shortcomings and problems."

The shaman has the ability to change shape depending on the problem he encounters. In order for the shaman to know which animal to take on, he must first define and know the problem. The shaman can only drive away evil spirits with the help of these spirits. In other words, as the Shaman turns into a helping spirit, his personality begins to appear within that spirit. As a matter of fact, the fact that some Shamans make spiritual journeys by taking the form of a wolf, bull, bear or cormorant reinforces this idea (Buluç, 1970: 318 cited in Türkan: 2008: 137).

The shaman is known as a protector by the clan he belongs to. He is usually in a tense state. The shaman walks around the houses and drives away the angry spirits of the ancestors who come to harm them. In shamanism, the flight of the soul (rising to the sky, descending to the underground) and "extase" are a sign of activity that occurs simultaneously. The shaman drives away the souls of the dead who do not leave their homes and are thought to harm their living relatives in their moments of anger, chases some of them to the underground floors, and goes up to the heavens to present the sacrifices to the high gods (Kafesoğlu, 1980: 29 cited in Gönel, 2011: 35).

The shaman is in contact with the other world. When necessary, he travels to the other world through different spirits. Shaman uses his power to travel to the other world for the benefit of people. "The shaman uses this power thanks to beings called helping spirits. Thus, the Shaman mediates between gods and humans for the benefit of humans by communicating with the other world as he wishes" (Perrin, 2001 cited in Özgür, 2006: 7).

Shamans are people who are always remembered with positive characteristics. Every activity they undertake is for the benefit of the society to which they belong. They are generally dignified, intelligent and have healing properties. These adjectives were also used to describe them. In the sky god belief (in Shamanism), the religious official is called kam (seer, healer, magician, reformer, judge, wise, dignified, dignified, intelligent, philosopher, wise person, etc.) (Quoted in Ermetin, 2009: 23; Kapağan, 2014: 804).

2. Shamanism and Sky God Religion

Shamanism and Sky God belief do not mean the same thing. However, they seem to be intertwined with each other and are still perceived as synonyms today.

When Shamanism is mentioned, belief in Sky God comes to mind, and when belief in Sky God comes to mind, Shamanism comes to mind. According to some researchers, Shamanism and Sky God belief are related but different concepts. According to some researchers, Shamanism is a part of the Sky God belief. According to Mandaloğlu (2011: 120), “Religion in the Ancient Turks was shaped as belief in a supreme being who was the ruler and creator of the universe. Turks describe this supreme being as "Tengri". Their religion is called the Sky God Religion. Shamanism is a magical system within the Sky God religion.”

According to some researchers, Shamanism is not a religion. Sky is a part of God belief. It developed within the belief in Sky God. However, it is possible that Shamanism is intertwined with religious elements. Since Shamanism is related to disasters occurring in nature, it has gained a religious dimension due to strong natural events. Shamanism also influenced the forces attributed to nature in the Turks, and in a way, the religion gained solidity (Kafesoğlu, 2002: 300-302).

In general terms, Shamanism is not considered a religion. The main concept of religion is the belief in Sky God. Shamanism is based on a number of religious rituals, with the belief in the Sky God at the center. According to Dalkılıç (2007: 25), “When the basic elements of traditional Turkish religion are considered, it is seen that the Sky God is at the center. Sky God is the core of religion and constitutes its basis. All other elements are shaped around it. The Sky God rules over the earth and the skies.”

3. Reflections of the Ancient Traditions of Anatolian Turks to the Present Day

Turks have spread to many parts of the world and the Turkish presence continues in every continent. They have not broken away from their past lives and traditions throughout their continued existence. Turkish culture continues to keep the roots of the past alive on every continent. Turks living in Anatolia are also a part of the Turks spread all over the world.

Even after the Turks came to Anatolia through migration and accepted the religion of Islam, they did not completely lose their old life and beliefs. They continued to live a unique life by intertwining their old belief systems with the new phenomena they encountered and accepted. Some practices related to Shamanism, especially among the ancient Turks, continue

in similar ways under different names or practices. What we hear today; She appears with names such as old woman and dervish. According to Kaya (2001: 218):

“... ancestor and nature cults merge and continue their existence within Islamic beliefs and practices, in the form of the saint cult. Cults related to the Sky God and its possessors can be encountered especially in connection with Shamanism. "The functions of shamans in the ancient Turks and in today's Central Asia are implemented through individuals referred to as hodjas, old wives and dervishes in Turkey."

One of the areas where the effects of practices originating from the ancient Turkish belief Shamanism and Central Asian Turkish beliefs and traditions are seen is wedding ceremonies. Most of the practices observed in the wedding ceremonies, from the time the bride leaves her father's house to her husband's house, bear the traces of old Turkish traditions. We can give examples of many practices in Turkish national consciousness and culture, from covering the face to tying a red belt. According to Emen (2015: 40):

“It is possible to see the traces of the old Turkish culture and belief system in weddings and in all the practices carried out until the bride leaves her father's house and goes to her husband's house. "It is possible to see this effect in all practices, from playing the drum to tying the red belt, from covering the bride's face with a red scarf to wedding meals, from the falling of the log to the hair ceremony, from the download ceremony to kicking the jug."

Turks who settled in Anatolia adopted the religion of Islam. However, having adopted the religion of Islam, they have not completely abandoned the thousands of years of traditions they learned from their past lives, that is, from their ancestors. They harmonized their past lives in a way that did not contradict Islam and continued to live their old traditions. According to Uğurlu and Koca (2010: 7):

“The Islamic model that is experienced in Anatolia even today is a model that has been synthesized with the old beliefs and beliefs of the Turks. In fact, in various regions of our country, failure to act in line with these old beliefs can even be considered a religious sin. "The Turkish people were able to bring together the religion of Islam, which they adopted and lived in Anatolia, and the old beliefs and beliefs that we can call other colors, but they also adopted Islam as the dominant color."

4. The Similarity of Treatment Methods Used by Anatolian Turks in Shamanism

Turks experienced some changes in their cultural structure after the acceptance of Islam and migration to Anatolia. Before the modern world and the recent changes in medicine and other positive sciences, the Turks solved the problems they encountered with some methods coming from the rich world of experience in their past. The experiences of the past somehow penetrated into their lives and continued to live in life.

Thousands of years of knowledge and experience of the past lie behind the treatment methods of diseases, which are also known as the old man's treatment methods. People who lived in the past tried to get rid of the negative situations they faced by taking advantage of nature or materials they obtained from nature, when opportunities were limited. The effort to find a cure for diseases or negative situations and the belief systems developed based on these practices have been effective in the development of these practices. According to Sever (2004: 96):

“Traditional folk medicine practices were born thousands of years ago as a result of our ancestors' perception and interpretation of natural events and their environment, and their reactions to the events and situations they were influenced by, and their interactions in social life. "In the traditional treatment approach, practices that have been experienced and tried many times and the beliefs developed around these practices have been effective."

Considering the ongoing effects of Shamanism today, the concept we especially encounter is the understanding of trying to find cure for diseases. However, these values are melting in the wheel of the modern age. These values can only be protected by recording them and passing them on to future generations. According to Tunç (2007: 150):

“Shamanism continued its existence among Turkish peoples. Today, traces of shamanism have been found in many areas involving the birth, marriage and death periods of the people. There are many interpretations based on criteria based on oral tradition rather than scientific results. However, it is useful to point out that with the rapid progress of our age, these values are melting in the wheel of the age. "The task of research is to record the cultural values and oral information that have remained in the corner."

Many things implemented in the marriage-related activities carried out in Osmaniye Düziçi District are connected with the old Turkish culture. Taking people who cannot get married to places of visit, tying rags to trees, and having a "toy" tradition at weddings are all traditions inherited from the Shaman culture or the belief in the Sky God, and are interpreted in different ways and integrated into today's lives. This is an indication that old traditions still continue in some way. Such ancient practices also play a regulatory role in society. According to Bülbül (2016: 170):

“As a result of our research in Düziçi district, we observed that people who cannot get married are taken to visiting places to increase their fortunes and the practice of tying rags to trees, the "toy" tradition, which is an effort to host the guests in the best possible way at the wedding, the concept of "hearth", which describes the connection between fire and the house, the brides who go to pick up the girl, All these things,

such as the joking coercion made by the relatives of the house, the tradition of "hair" in which some substances believed to have various meanings are thrown when the bride comes to the boy's house, some practices applied to the bride on the threshold of the house, which is considered sacred in the old Turkish culture, and the belief of "wedding", which means the bride does not talk to the elders of the house. Beliefs have an important place in ancient Turkish culture. In these practices we see, belief is a system chain that guides, encourages, punishes, and in short, completely dominates people.''

The "hearth" tradition is among the most concrete examples of the reflection of the ongoing healing tradition based on the shamanic tradition in Anatolia. Today, in Anatolia, people who are believed to cure diseases with supernatural powers are called Ocak or Ocaklı. Hearths are homes or families where certain illnesses are cured by a person or someone to whom he symbolically delegates his talents. (As cited in Ögel, 1977; Demir, 2015: 23).

DISCUSSION, RESULTS AND SUGGESTIONS

Turks, as different tribes, migrated to many regions around the world. Today, Turks living in different regions of the world show many common characteristics. The reason for this is their common origin and spread to different regions from the same geography.

Wherever they go in the world, Turks still preserve the traces of their old beliefs and life. The beliefs and traditions of the past still continue despite the different cultures and beliefs they have adopted.

Among the Turks living in Anatolia, it is possible to see the traces of the old beliefs of Shamanism and the Sky God belief in folk traditions and belief systems, from illnesses to weddings.

The information we provide here is undoubtedly insufficient to convey the values that are part of the Turkish rich culture and tradition. However, it will be a general source of information about the subject.

There are still some of the connections within the daily life of Turks related to old beliefs. But it is still being discussed whether Shamanism is a religion or not. Shamanism is not a religious phenomenon. Arose on the basis of witchcraft on its own it is a complex cultural phenomenon. In other words, witchcraft is essentially primitive art, medicine, aesthetics, nature. It contains thoughts and religious thoughts within itself. Shamanism, neither to itself it is neither a specific religion nor a form of magic. There are various aspects that are relevant to both fields. It is a form of belief and a technique that combines religion and world views (Mömin, 2013).

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