



On the Religious Sacrifice Motif in the Book of Dede Korkut Qurban of Dede Korkut

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Abstract: *Dede Korkut Stories, which are the products of the transition from epic to folk tale, are the building blocks of oral tradition. Traditions, customs, beliefs, geographical conditions, wars with their enemies and extraordinary events of the Oghuz is told through the story. In addition to encountering many motifs in the work, there is also a sacrifice motif. Are encountered. There are third sacrifices motif at the Dede Korkud Stroies, which consist of twelve stories. First, the sacrifice motif in The Story of Dirse Han's Son Boğaç Han is seen as an animal, in the second, the sacrifice motif is seen as a group of male animals in the Kam Püre Son Bamsı Beyrek Story, and in the third, in the story of Kazan Bey's Son Uruz Being Captive, the son uses the analogy of sacrificing himself for his father. In this study, the sacrifice motif in the mentioned stories has been examined.*

Key Words: *Dede Korkut, Sacrifice, Motiv*

1. INTRODUCTION

The most important product of the transition period from epic period to folk storytelling and one of the most important works of Turkish literature is the Book of Dede Korkut. They are the epic stories of the wars of the Oghuz Turks with other Turkish tribes or with the Greeks, Abaza and Georgians. According to Gökyay; It took its final shape in the 15th century and was written down in the 15th and 16th centuries (Gökyay, 2007). The author of the stories is unknown. However, as the narrator, we listen to Dede Korkut. There are two manuscripts of Dede Korkut stories. One of the copies is complete and is in the Dresden Library, Germany. An incomplete copy with six stories is in the Vatican. The subject of Dede Korkut's stories, which consists of an introduction and twelve stories, also varies. The real name of the work is "Kitab-ı Dede Korkut Ala Li-san-ı Taife-i Oğuzan" (The Book of Dede Korkut in the Language of the Oghuzes). The book consists of twelve epic stories and a preface. The first (Dirse Han Son Boğaç Han) and the twelfth (İç Oğuz's Rebel to the Outer Oğuz Rebel and Beyrek's Murder) stories are told about the struggles among the Oghuzes. On the other hand, the story of Basat Killing Tepegöz and the story of Deli Dumrul, the son of Duha Koca, are discussed in the struggle of the Oghuzes with extraordinary powers. In the remaining eight stories (Looting



of Salur Kazan's House, Bamsı Beyrek, Son of Kam Püre, Captivity of Uruz Bey, Son of Kazan Bey, Kan Turalı, Son of Kanlı Koca, Yigenek, Son of Kazılık, Emren, Son of Begil, Segrek, Son of Uşun, Salur) On the other hand, we see the struggle of the Oghuzs with their neighbors. Hundreds of studies have been carried out on this work by local and foreign researchers.

In the stories, the Oghuz are Muslims, but religion is not seen as a strong element. Before going on a journey, the Oghuz chiefs make ablution with pure water and pray two rak'ahs. During their attacks on the enemies, they send salawat and pray to "*the well-known Holy Prophet Muhammad*". At the end of the wars, they always turn the churches in the castles they took from their enemies into a mosque, kill the monks and give the call to prayer. Despite all this, they drink the drink prohibited by Islam and offer the infidel daughters a drink. They eat horse meat and drink kumiss. In fact, in the story of Deli Dumrul, the Protagonist does not know God and wants to fight him.

In addition, the stories come from four great angels (Gabriel, Azrail, Israfil, Mikail), prophets (Hazrat Musa, Prophet Muhammad), three caliphs (Hazrat Ebubekir, Hz. Osman, Hz. Ali) and the Quran (Amme, Tabereke, Yasin, Ikhlas Surahs, etc.) are mentioned. Because they are Muslims; they ask their wishes only from God and sacrifice for him, in his name.

In the stories discussed, the religious sacrifice motif was determined and examined by making use of the current online version of the Motif-Index of Folk-Literature (Thompson, 2016). The aforementioned stories are summarized by making use of the book named "Dedem Korkudun Kitabı" (Gokyay, 2007) written by Orhan Saik Gokyay and published by Kabalci Publications.

1. Sacrifice (Qurban)

According to Sevan Nisanyan, the word is; *qurb* ق ر ب, which comes from the Arabic root *qrb*, is derived from the word "closeness, proximity". This word is the infinitive of the Arabic verb *qariba* ق ر ب "was close, approached, approached" in fu'l meter. This verb is synonymous with the Aramaic/Syriac *qrēb* קרב "to be close, to approach, to ally". This verb is cognate with the verb *qerēbu*, which has the same meaning in Akkadian. *qurbān* ان ر ب, which comes from the Arabic root *qrb*, is a quote from the word "votive to god". This word is derived from the Aramaic/Syriac root *qrb*, *qurbānā* קר בּוּרְבָנָא "votive, offering, gift". This word is synonymous with the Hebrew word *qarbān* קָרְבָּן. This word is in Hebrew *qarab* קרַב. It is derived from the verb "to be close, to approach, to offer a gift and the gift" (Nisanyan, 2022).

Sacrifice, which is often met with the term "Sacrifice" in Latin-based languages such as English, French, Italian and Spanish, comes from the Latin "Sacrificium", which is formed by combining the words "sacer" meaning holy and "facere" meaning to do. This word denotes the act of presenting objects to a god or other supernatural beings, making them the property of the god and thus making them sacred (Britanica, 2022).

Some researchers find the origin of the sacrifice in the totemic cult (worship) (Hubert, Mauss, 1964). In some publications, the psychological basis of the event is emphasized, the concept of sacrifice is defended as one of the most important means of satisfaction of the instinct of aggression in humans, and it is reported that this instinct will be satisfied mostly through the eyes, followed by the feelings of touch and hearing. (Freud, 1971)

It is seen that the tradition of sacrifice, which is thought to have started in the prehistoric period, is a ritual that continues its effects today. When we look at the ancient civilizations in general, it is observed that the rituals performed for the sacrifice have common points in many societies. Considering both the practices and the chosen sacrificial animals and the rituals



performed; It has been concluded that the sacrificial tradition in monotheistic religions originates from the sacrificial tradition in ancient civilizations, it is a continuation of it somewhere and is highly influenced by these motifs.

Over time, the "human sacrifice" is abandoned and the offering of farm animals as sacrifice instead of humans comes to the fore. Animals are often sacrificed by ritual slaughter. Sacrificing large numbers of cattle and pigs at the harvest feasts not only pleases the gods and ancestors, but also ensures that the feaster has a good place in the afterlife. (Çetin, 2009)

The first sacrifice made with the intention of worship in history, Hz. Adam's sons are the victims of Abel and Cain... They presented their sacrifices to Allah in order to understand which one was right in the disagreement that broke out between them. While the animal sacrifice of Abel, the owner of the herd, was accepted, the fruits offered by the farmer Cain were not accepted. Unable to bear this, Cain killed his brother Abel.

The most famous sacrifice event in the history of humanity is Hz. Abraham's. The famous historian of religions Mircea Elida comments: "Morphologically, Abraham's sacrifice of his son is nothing but the sacrifice of the first child, which was frequently practiced in the ancient eastern world and which the Hebrews continued until the time of the prophets. The first child was often seen as God's child... This meant restoring what belonged to God... In a sense, Isaac was God's son, since he was given long after Sarah had passed the age of fertility. But Isaac was given to them through their faith. Whereas in the whole of the Ancient-Semitic world such sacrifice was only a customary, fully intelligible rite despite its religious function, in Abraham's case it was an act of faith. He does not understand why this sacrifice is wanted; yet he does it, because that's what God wanted. With this seemingly absurd act, Abraham initiates a new religious experience, faith." (Eliade, 2017) p.118-120

As for how monotheistic religions view human sacrifice; The most basic example explaining the subject is Hz. We see it in the story of Abraham sacrificing a ram sent by God, as he prepares to sacrifice his son at the request of God. This event ends the practice of human sacrifice, which was common among the peoples of the Middle East, for monotheistic religions.

In Judaism, sacrifice was the most important element of religion until the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple. Although the Old Testament did not give a definition of sacrifice, in Judaism, sacrifice, whether animal or vegetable, is defined as an offering on an altar, as a sign of devotion to God, to gain favor or obtain forgiveness. Hz. The tradition of sacrifice, which started with Abraham, was continued by Isaac and his son Yakup. The Jewish custom of sacrifice was abolished after the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple; for the sacrifice was peculiar to the Temple, and to the Jews the Temple was one. Thus, only reading the Torah and praying remained a form of worship; their place was the synagogues. (Bars, 2000)

In Christianity, no sacrifice is made to God. Because the "sacrifice" is Hz. It is Jesus himself. Hz. Jesus sacrificed himself on the cross for the sins of all mankind. According to belief; the evening before his crucifixion, Jesus said, "This is my body," and distributes bread to his disciples. Then he pours a bowl of wine and says, "This is my blood." Hz. Jesus used the bread and wine to show his body and blood, and commanded his followers to repeat this sacrificial ritual to commemorate him. In most Christian communities, this command is carried out on Sundays. (Tuğrul, 2010). I would also like to add that; The tradition of Holy Qurbana in the Eastern Syriacs, Kourbania in the Greek Orthodox and Dušni Brav in the Serbian Orthodox is an animal sacrifice ritual that has survived until today.

Sacrifice is a fixed worship with the Qur'an, Sunnah and consensus. There is evidence in the Qur'an that sacrifice is a legitimate form of worship. Hz. Abraham's son Hz. It is clearly



stated that a sacrifice was given to them as a ransom (sacrifice) instead of Ismail (Surat al-Saffat, 37/107). There are other verses that point to the legitimacy of sacrifice: (Surah Hajj, 22/28,34,36-37), such as. It is clear that the slaughter of animals mentioned in these verses is not for the purpose of supplying meat, but is a practice for worship. The fact that the flesh and blood cannot reach Allah and that the essential thing is sincerity and piety is included in the text of the verse itself clearly reveals this. The Prophet Muhammad accepted the sacrifice as an act of worship and he himself sacrificed it. It is known from various hadiths that the Prophet Muhammad sacrificed every year from the time he died until his death. (TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi, 2022)

In addition, bloodless sacrifices are still made today. For example, in Anatolia, especially in the Alevi and Bektasi society, various food items such as halva, Âşûre, dried nuts are usually offered as sacrifices instead of blood sacrifices in families; go to holy places, these foods that are eaten collectively are called "lokma" and this still continues today.

According to Uno Harva, who made one of the first serious studies on the subject of sacrifice and sacrifice ceremonies of the peoples of Central Asia; Ceremonies of sacrificing or offering to the spirit of the dead are common among the peoples of Siberia. Animals are often sacrificed to the spirit of the dead, but the purpose of this sacrifice is not always a treat to the spirit in question, but sometimes it may be in the form of gifting an animal to someone in need. Most rituals associated with sacrificial rites are similar to hunting rituals derived from the hunting culture. For example, the bones of the sacrificed animal are preserved without any damage. It is believed that when the bones are preserved, the sacrificed animal will serve the owner of sacrifice in the other world. For the Altay nomadic peoples, the horse is an important sacrifice compared to other sacrifices. even so that it does not mix with others, beads are attached to its bridles. There may be differences in the ritual practices of the sacrifices given to the spirit of the dead and to the sky god, for example, Altaic Tatars may sacrifice for a healed patient. In the Altai, Ulgen is seldom sacrificed because he is a God who loves people. but every adult must make a sacrifice when he is to marry, and this horse must be white. For example, Goldes hold an annual sacrifice ceremony in the fall, the date of the sole is decided together, it is held in the most crowded or the oldest village where the oldest shaman lives. The night before the sole, the tribe's shaman performs hymns and dances, and the next day they go to the tree of tribe collectively. The animal that was tied to the bottom of the tree of tribe the day before is sacrificed. Women do not take part in this ritual in any way and cannot eat the meat of the sacrifice. as an example, of the old roots of this custom; He notes that in the Altai during the Hunnu dynasty, in the fifth month of each year, the peoples came together and sacrificed to the ancestors, the sky, the earth, and the spirits. As an example, today Buryats gather as families on the "sacrifice mountain" and bring milk, kumiss, and sacrificial animals to be presented with those who come. (Harva, 2015) p.442-454

Mircea Eliade, who made one of the extensive compilations on the subject, talks about sacrifice customs in the Altai; In many tribes, shamans also have a sacrificial priest. Also, for example, Yakuts do not have a figure of the goddess of the earth and are not offered sacrifices to her. The Cumans begin an obscene song; The purpose of this is to increase the sexual power of men. The meaning of this rite, similar to which can be found in other places (Caucasus, ancient China, America, etc.), becomes clearer to the extent that its cosmological function (renewal of earth and life) is included in the well-known rite of horse sacrifice. Shamans also have their own special gods, unknown to others or to the public, to whom they offer sacrifices. A reindeer is sacrificed to the deceased shaman, the candidate puts on his new clothes and



performs his shamanism in the "official session". Also, there are examples of father shaman and 9 shaman sons. Although it is rare, in Altai and Gols, the shaman takes the soul of the deceased to the realm of shadows, and paints his face black with soot so that it is not recognized by the spirits. The same custom occurs in other places for the same purpose, in bear sacrifice. Baynay, the god of the hunt, can have fun in the fields and forests as well as in the eastern part of the sky. But the sacrifice of black buffalo to him indicates that he was originally a ground god. In general, Horse sacrifice and ascension are carried out for various purposes such as investigating the causes of a disease and healing the sick, accompanying the soul of the dead on the Underground way, and purifying the house. Shaman from Ülgen whether the sacrifice was accepted or not, learns; information on how the weather will be and the new harvest gets; He also learns what other sacrifices God wants. This event constitutes the culmination of "ecstasy"; the shaman is exhausted. As a matter of fact, as we have mentioned before, many Turkic people sacrificed to the same Sky god, but did not resort to the shaman for this. They take the sacrifice to the god of the underworld and spare the patient's life. (Eliade, 1999)

2. Religious Sacrifice (Qurban) Motif in Dede Korkut Stories

Dede Korkut, the product of the transition from epic to folk tale In his stories, the sacrifice motif is encountered at the ends of twelve stories. The sacrifice motif encountered in the three stories is the meaning of Islam, the religion of the society. The sacrifice is sacrificed in the name of Allah and for him. Gokyay said the following about the sacrifice motif in Dede Korkut Stories: He says: "As in all other Turkish nations, the sacrifice has an important place in the social life of the Oguz Turks. In the stories of Dede Korkut, it is told that a horse from a stallion, a camel to a male camel, and a sheep to a ram were slaughtered as sacrifices in various places." (Gokyay, 2016) p.1022

The sacrifice motif in Dede Korkut Stories is an important motif in the Turkish epic tradition in terms of showing the belief of the society. It clearly shows the faith and social life of the society, it is usually a divine way of thanking the god who puts the sacrifices by the hero in order or ensures the salvation of the hero.

2.1 The Story of Dirse Han's Son Boğaç Han

In Dede Korkut stories, the sacrifice motif first appears in this story. Bayındır Khan organizes a big feast every year for the people he rules. He orders three separate tents to be prepared for the guests who will come at one of these feasts and to host the guests in these tents. These are the White, Red and Black tents. Those who have a boy in the white tent, a girl in the red tent, and the black tent are for guests who have no children. Bayındır Khan sees people without children as cursed by God. Dirse Han has no children. Since he came with 40 of his men, this behavior was difficult and he decided to hold his wife accountable. While asking his wife to account, he finds himself listening to advice. But he also took the advice and arranged a big dinner. He helped people and received their blessings. He eventually has a healthy son. The boy has grown up and wrestles with his big bull, which is freed from its rope, at a feast organized by Bayındır Han. He restrains and beats the bull with his mighty fist. With this valor, he gained fame and received the compliment of Dede Korkut, and his name was Boğaç han. He was also rewarded by his father, who is proud of his son. Jealous of this, his father's 40 men vilify his father, Boğaç Han. A hunt was organized and at that time, Boğaç Han was shot by his father with various games. Her mother's milk and mountain flower cure Boğaç Han's wound and heal. Fearing that Boğaç Han will recover and take revenge on them, 40 traitors flee by forcibly taking Boğaç Han's father with them. Boğan Han, who went to save his father, who was kidnapped by taking 40 brave men with him, defeats the traitors and saves his



father. His father Dirse Khan gave the throne to Boğaç Han, who saved him, and this epic story ends in this way. (Tezcan, Boeschoten, 2018) p. 35-49

V. Religion

V10. V10. Religious sacrifices. V12.4. V12.4. Animals as sacrifice:

In the story, after the episode in which Bogac han saves his father, we see the sacrifice motif in the emotional scene where Dirse han and his son Bogac han meet. Dirse Han expresses his embarrassment towards his son, Bogac Han, who saved himself, the two hug and kiss. father and son reunited, Bogac khan saved his father from the traitors. his father Dirse Khan hugged and cried for his son, then Dirse thanked God and sacrificed. not only that, but also, thank God, he fed the poor and distributed alms. (Gokyay, 2007) p.37

Gokyay states that we see the same motif in the Kazakh-Kirgiz epic, Dudar Kiz, and adds that male animals are preferred and sacrificed in the bogac han story (Gokyay, 2007) p.1022 Here, they sacrifice mostly for the sons of the fathers and for them to be healthy and good sons. The event that took place as a result is a kind of proof of this.

Examining the same motif, Ali Abbas Cinar says that according to the sources, the main livelihood of the ancestors of the Turks was animal husbandry, the basis of these was horses, camels and sheep, and we see that the Oğuz raised animals in herds. According to him, Turks traditionally convene a congress once a year, Kurultai, and in this festival, decisions are taken for the future of the country and the people. In these meeting, sacrifices are made to God, and we see an example of it in the book. (Cinar, 1999)

2.2 The Story of Kam Pure Son Bamsi Beyrek

Bayındır Khan gathers the Oghuz people he leads in a conversation. All the gentlemen who came to the meeting came with their sons. Püre Bey, on the other hand, was upset because he did not have a son to continue his lineage. Oghuz chiefs wished a son for Püre Bey and a girl for Piçen Bey to give to the boy who would be born. Kam Püre had a son and Biçen Bey had a daughter, and they made two of them cradle notches. They named the girl Banu Çiçek (Baniçiçek). After the boy grew up, he saved the merchants who brought him gifts from the infidels and took the name "Bamsı Beyrek". On the night of their wedding to Banu Çiçek, Bayburt Hisarı Bey, who had a crush on Banu Çiçek before, attacked and captured Bamsı Beyrek and his thirty-nine brave men while he was asleep. During this time, sixteen years have passed and no trace of Bamsı Beyrek can be found. Banu Çiçek's brother brought a bloody shirt of Yaltacuk, the son of Liar, to Deli Karçar and said, "Bamsı is dead." says. Thereupon, Banu Çiçek is given to Yaltacuk. On the wedding night, Bamsı Beyrek escaped from the castle with the help of Bayburt Hisarı's daughter, who was in love with him. He informs Banu Çiçek that he is alive. Bamsı caught Yaltacuk, who escaped, but left when he asked for forgiveness. Later, they captured Bayburt Fortress with their men. Finally, a wedding is held for forty days and forty nights, in which Bamsı Beyrek and Banu Çiçek get married. (Tezcan, Boeschoten, 2018)p. 68-95

V. Religion

V10. V10. Religious sacrifices. V12.4. V12.4. Animals as sacrifice. V12.4.9. V12.4.9.

Horse as sacrifice

V12.4.4. V12.4.4. Ox (bull) as sacrifice V12.4.6. V12.4.6. Sheep (ram) as sacrifice:

In this story, we see the sacrifice motif in the scene where Bamsi Beyrek, who escaped from the enemy as soon as he received the news of his lover's marriage, reunited with his father, who was blinded by crying years later. With the joy of reuniting their son, who has been lost for years and actually held captive by the enemy, the parents sacrifice to God. they even help



the poor and the poor.(Gokyay, 2007) p. 87. In fact, this can be regarded as the moment when the act of recognition (Anagnorisis) mentioned in Aristotle's poetics takes place. As a result, he reunites with his heroic mother and his blind father after years, gets to know them and is recognized by them. (Aristotle, 1987) p.34-35.

In the story, the event takes place in the form of sacrificing from horses, camels, sheep and cattle. Examining the sacrifice motif, Gokyay states that the most reasonable animal for sacrifice among the Turks related to this situation is the male animal, and even this is a horse from a stallion, a camel to a male camel (bugra), a cattle to a bull, and a sheep to a ram. we should also state that the sacrifice motif is mentioned in the same way in the Cora Batir epic of the Kyrgyz. (Gokyay,2007)

Cinar, who examines the subject, says that the male of the camel, cattle and sheep was preferred, and one of the reasons for this was that the power is taken from Bugra, the ram, the stallion and the bull ensured the destruction of the enemies on the battlefield. It is not a coincidence that this belief in the Dede Korkut stories appears as ram, stallion, bugra and bull meat, but a complementary element to the hero. (Cinar, 1999)

It should also be noted that since there was no male camel (bugra) motif in Thomson's list in this review, we included him under the religious animal sacrifice title, not directly like other examples.

2.3 The Story of Kazan Bey's Son Uruz Being Captive

Kazan Bey was very upset that his son had not shed any blood yet and was beheaded and could not have a name. He expresses his regret that he did not prove his valor to his son. His son also drinks a lot about this situation. He asked his father to teach him how to fight and how to shed blood. Thereupon, Kazan Bey took his son out hunting. Meanwhile, the enemy comes and Kazan Khan begins to fight. Despite telling his son to just watch him, the boy joins the battle without his father noticing. When the battle is over, his father cannot find his son. When he could not see it at home, he returned to the place where the enemy was fought. When he saw his son's sword, he realized that he was captured. He went to war alone with the enemy. But Kazan Bey is defeated because he is alone. Burla Hatun, the wife of Kazan Bey, who learned the situation, attacked and defeated their enemies with forty girls and other Oghuz beys. The Oghuz returned to their homeland and ate and played for seven days and nights. Dede Korkut prays and the story ends. . (Tezcan, Boeschoten, 2018) p. 96-110

V10. V10. Religious sacrifices. V12.4. V12.4. Animals as sacrifice.

V12.4.6. V12.4.6. Sheep (ram) as sacrifice:

In this story, we see that Uruz does not listen to his father and uses the sacrifice motif when he goes to war on the enemy. Here, Uruz says "like the ram slaughtered in Arafat", referring to an analogy, saying that he will also be sacrificed for his father's sake in the same way.

Gokyay, who we mentioned to have studied the sacrifice motif before, states that it is here in the form of sacrifice, which is obligatory in Islam, and that there is a hadith of the prophet Muhammad in the form of "the best victim is the ram". He gives an example that the prophet Muhammad sacrificed two beautiful horned husbands on the feast of sacrifice. (Gokyay, 2007)

3. CONCLUSION

Dede Korkut Stories, consisting of an introduction and twelve stories, is a product of the transition from epic to folk tale. These stories, which started to take shape from Central



Asia, have changed in the motif structure of the stories because the Turks came to Anatolia and accepted Islam. Dede Korkut Stories, which have two copies, are the building blocks of Turkish literature. The stories reflect the traditions, customs, traditions and beliefs of the Oghuz society, and the struggle and heroism among the tribes are the main themes of the stories.

The main themes of the stories are; Different motif structures are encountered in the stories because of bravery, competition, homeland, national and religious values. One of these motifs is religious sacrifice. The sacrifice cannot be limited to a single subject and has a very broad framework. The most comprehensive classification study on the victim motif is seen in Stith Thompson's Folk Literature Motif Index. The religious sacrifice motif, according to the Motif Index Book V10. It is located under the title of religious sacrifices.

In the Dede Korkut Stories, which were written down in the 15th century, the religious sacrifice motif was also encountered. Twelve stories were examined, and a religious sacrifice motif was found in three.

First, the sacrifice motif in The Story of Dirse Han's Son Boğaç Han is seen as an animal, in the second, the sacrifice motif is seen as a group of male animals in the Kam Püre Son Bamsı Beyrek Story, and in the third, in the story of Kazan Bey's Son Uruz Being Captive, the son uses the analogy of sacrificing himself for his father.

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