

The Cult of Water in Turkish Belief Systems

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Abstract

In many belief systems throughout history, holiness has been attributed to the water element. In the Turkish belief system, too, water appears as a purifying element to which sacrifices are made, wishes are made, and the representative of abundance and fertility. In the sources, we see that the Turks prefer places close to water as their living space, and that water is the address of protection from evil and diseases, purification and cleaning, in short, healing. It is possible to see traces of the place of water among Turkish cultural codes in the first Turkish Islamic works, Dede Korkut stories, legends and travel books. When we look at the Turkish administrative system, while the Turkish khan and lords are responsible for protecting and watching over their people, water also protects the Turkish lords.

On the other hand, it can be said that the main axis is formed around the water, from the fact that the new-born child has a healthy and beneficial long-lasting life in the transition period rituals in Anatolia, from the wish that the marriage will be prosperous when the bride pours water in a new marriage and the marriage will be fruitful, to the celebrations in the hidrellez around the water. In this study, the place and meaning of water in Turkish belief systems will be tried to be evaluated with examples.

Key words: water, cult, Turkish culture, folklore, cultural heritage.

Introduction

In basic terms, the “cult” is a belief which needs a certain ritual and worship. Turks’ maintaining of their old belief under the new one even after accepting monotheist religion of Islam, as a result of not breaking out with accepted previous values for many ages. Even Islamic scholars say that Islam doesn’t approve practices of fortune telling, magic and spell and indicate that these applications are against to belief of Allah’s unity, Turkish people continued these applications with a base of “sacred of the belief” for a long time. We can classify these beliefs which Turks brought mostly while migrating from Middle Asia to Anatolia: Elders Cult, Nature Cult, Tengrism Cult, Shamanism.

Water, which is sacred in many belief systems, represents the essence of matter and life. The Turks accepted water as a source of abundance and fertility and settled where there are water resources. This issue has been frequently emphasized in important researches of Turkish culture such as Divan-ü Lügatit Türk, Kutadgu Bilig and Dede Korkut. In today’s transition period applications, the scattering of the bride over the water, the pouring of water on the grave and the clipping of the new-born baby can be evaluated in this context. This study is derived from the paper named Water Cult presented at the Imcofe 2017 symposium held in Spain in 2017.

“Water” In Terms Of History Of Religions

Water, in every religion, culture and belief system, is one of the main elements of creation, healing, cleansing, fertility and sanctity. Anasır-ı erbaa, which is considered to be the principle of natural existence in ancient Greek, medieval Islamic and Christian philosophy, consists of earth, water, air and fire in classical philosophy (İnt1). cult in ancient folk beliefs; “Respect shown to beings that are considered sacred to Allah, to beings that have received Allah’s special love; adoration, adoration”; “All kinds of religious ceremonies”; It is defined as “worship” (Çağbayır, 2007: 2890). Generally, cult means “reverence and worship of beings known as lofty and holy. This respect and worship require certain rites, which are prayer, sacrifice, and religious ceremony” (Example, 1971: 147). There are gods of water in different mythologies. While he is "Poseidon" in Greek mythology, he is known by names such as "Enke" in Babylon, "Hapi" in Egypt. In Turkish mythology, although he is not a god of water, he has a guardian, he is respected, his hair is

scattered.

Among the Islamic works related to the cult of water, a lot of information can be found in the 10th century. We find it in the travel book of the famous Arab scholar, the traveller Ibn Fadlan. Fadlan states in his travel book that the Oghuzs have little to do with water, and that they do not like to see the merchants washing at night while others are bathing because these are signs of magic. In the same work, it is stated that the Pechenegs were poorer and darker than the Oghuzes and that they stayed near the water and shaved here as well. Bulgarian Turks state that if a man accidentally kills someone, they put him in a wooden chest, hang him on a place similar to gallows, and leave three loaves of bread and a bowl of water on his head. In this way, it indicates that it is believed that maybe he will be forgiven. Here, again, there is a reference to the purification and holiness feature of water. In the same work, it is also mentioned that there was a tribe on the right side of the Kimeks and that they worshiped water. In addition, it is reported that among the Oghuzes, Mongols and Dwarves, it is a taboo that water should not be polluted, it cannot be used for washing clothes, washing should be avoided to the extent that the clothes can handle, spilling water on the ground is a crime, and it is believed that the use of water is a reason for magic (Şeşen, 2022:26,29,39).

The feature of the Turks to swear by water is reported in the travel book as follows: "If the Turks want to make a deal with a ruler or person, they come to an idol made of copper. Then they bring a container with water in it. They put him in front of the idol. Then they put a rough piece of gold and a handful of roe millet. Then they bring the women's shalwar and put them under the bowl. "We swear to you. If you break this oath and commit treason, may God make you a woman. Wear this salwar. They say, "May God infest you with an enemy that will make you crumble like this millet, and you will turn it like gasoline, this gold". The man drinks the water after taking the oath. If he breaks his oath, he will die or be in trouble." it is stated. Here too, swearing on water is a reference to holiness (Şeşen, 2022: 47). Water was taboo for the Oghuz, Dwarfs and Mongols. You shouldn't have polluted it. It was forbidden to wash the body and clothes in water. According to them, bathing in water would attract evil spirits and cause lightning and lightning to divorce. It was a crime to spill water on the ground. Washing was also prohibited in the Genghis Law. With a container, water could be poured over the hand and face. Ancient Shamanists did not wash their clothes, they wore them as much as they could. They believed that the reason why people use water and not wash is a magical reason (Şener, 2022: 58).

Inan (2020), who conducts one of the most comprehensive studies on the cult of water in Turks, mentioned in her study "Shamanism in History and Today" those mountains, lakes and rivers are considered sacred and sacrifices are made. Celal Beydili's book "Turkish Mythology Encyclopaedic Dictionary" contains the following information about the Sumerian water deity: "In Sumerian mythology, it was written that everything was anonymous before. Later, "enki," the god of wisdom and water, gave names to everything and thus the world was created (Beydili, 2003: 21).

J.C. Cooper, in the article titled "An Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Traditional Symbols", examined the beliefs and rituals on water in the world, and compared fire and water to the union of man and woman, "alloy marriage". In ancient medical science, human nature was evaluated according to the four states of water in the body. In astrology, the rotations of the heavens and the effects of the stars on people have been tried to be explained by the water-centered zodiac system. Geographical definitions and climatic features are named by the presence and absence of water (Islamic encyclopaedia ab-1 life article). According to Plato, water is the source and essence of everything in the universe (Akman, 2002: 1).

Water is God's blessing that gives life to everything. It can be said that positive and negative fluctuations on human life are proportional with water's drying out and increase. Water is beautiful, sacred and the foundation of civilization for Turks. Also, drought and aridity are a disaster and punishment (Dönmez,1988:14). Before passing on to water's reflections over Turkish culture and Turkish literature, it's better to look its foundations at different religions and beliefs. Water represents productive powers in all religions. Because water is the foundation of the world and humanity, it is a cure for every sickness, it keeps diseases from patients and cures all sick people. Water is a factor of being a potential power, principle of undissociateness, foundation of cosmic manifestation, carrier of all seeds, changer of all forms, symbolizes first essence that everything will return back.

Water symbolizes return to the first form and rebirth at rituals, myths and cosmogony. Because, sinking into

water is losing of shapes' forms. Coming out of water reply of creation where shape is expressed for the first time. Purification with water has same specialties too. Everything gets dissolved in it, every shape shatter, every past becomes history, nothing remains same in it. For this reason, sinking into water is equal to death, to rebirth. A person who sank into water is like reborn again, sinless, has no past and can start to a new life (Eliade, 2003:196).

Water purifies and refreshes, it erases all past. And so, water and being washed cleanses from guilt, cleans up all evilness, cures madness and illnesses. Because of that, in many belief systems, before entering to temples and before ritual of sacrifice, people take bath. Baptism in Christianity and ablution in Islam are good examples of these situations. Baptism in Christianity is the most important holy way of purification because it represents burying of Jesus Christ. A fountain represents "Fountain of Life". And water represents Virgin Mary. Practise and evaluation about water in Christianity and Islam is like:

As taking ablution is a must for praying, it is also a must for holding Holy Quran, to circumambulate the Kaaba and to perform a funeral prayer too. Also, being ritually clean all the time, to get into bed as ritually clean, eating and drinking while ritually clean are good deeds. A martyr's merit is given to those who die while ritually clean. Our prophet (pbuh) has said: (Those who die while ritually clean do not suffer pain of death. Because being ritually clean is the sign of a believer.

It's the key of the prayer and purifier of sins from body). (When a Muslim takes ablution, his sins go away from his ear, eye, hand and foot. When he sits, he sits as he is forgiven). (The most beneficent of good deeds is prayer. Believers are those who continue with ablution. A believer must be ritually clean in daytime and should sleep at night as ritually clean. When he does like this, he gets under the protection of Allah SWT. When he eats and drinks while he is ritually clean, the food and water inside his stomach call Allah. They ask for forgiveness for that person as they stay inside of him.) Baptism is being together with Jesus Christ with the help of Holy Spirit. Thus, every person be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Being baptized in the name of Jesus Christ doesn't mean of being baptized by using his name. Being baptized in his name means being baptized in order to be a partner with Him and devotion to Him.

In the third heavenly religion, the sanctity of water, its purification, the beginning and essence of life appear before us. The purification of the servant with water, which is valid in Judaism and Islam, is seen with ghusl and in Christianity with baptism. In Judaism, the name of the Israelites is Hebrew in the sense of "those who pass through water", and Moses (mosheh) means coming from water (Pala, 2009:442). In Indian myth, the Ganges River is believed to flow from heaven. As soon as the ashes of the dead are poured into the water, they rise to the level of the gods (Dallapiccola, 2013:38). In the Old Testament, giving water to guests was used as a power to wash, clean and heal their feet (Genesis 18/4; 24/17, 43; 1 Samuel, 25/41). In Christianity, the child born as a sinner must be baptized in order to be cleansed. Water is the element in which many peoples were destroyed by the miracles of many prophets. It is also stated in the Qur'an that every living thing was created from water (Al anbiya 21/30) and that Allah's Throne is above the waters (Hud 11/7).

Hz. Yusuf was protected by fish. Prophet Yunus, who was in the middle of the flood. Noah's common motif is water (Pala, 2009). "Ma", which means water in the Quran, is used in many places. Here, too, the creation process of man, his being the essence of matter, the continuity of life and its necessity and importance for sustenance are emphasized. Surah Baqarah Verse 22: "Your Lord has made the earth a mattress and the sky a building for you. He sent down water from the sky and brought forth various products for you as sustenance. Do not associate partners or partners with him knowingly" (Baqara, 2/22). In the 10th verse of Surah Nahl, "He is the one who sends down water from the sky. "From it he gives water to drink for yourselves and herbs to feed your animals" (Nahl, 16/10).

In Hittites' religious rituals, the first condition of their worships to their Gods with a great fervor was being purified (material and spiritual cleaning). Hittites must be clean for their rituals. Because filth defiles human's body and soul together and turns human a useless robot who cannot fulfil his duties. The pre-condition for not getting punished by Gods is a catharsis. The point in "catharsis" cannot be accepted as mental purification only but with physical cleaning too. In order to entering to Gods' house, to get into temples, to pray, to offer sacrifice, it was a must to be cleaned and washed with water (Sevimli, 2004:264). Çoban (2019) stated in her study that water was the place where gods and goddesses lived in the Hittite

belief, and in many legal problems, the water god's arbitration was applied.

Water is the symbol of life. Water, which is rich for seeds, fertilizes soil, animals, and women. The rhythm of water gets consubstantiated with moon, makes every shapes of it to be seen and to fade out regularly, makes universe to get it's cyclical pattern. So, water-moon-woman triad shapes out universe and human productivity. In this context, water gets consubstantiated with sperm. Water is seed and rain is the sperm. In sexual related cosmogony symbols, heaven hugs and seeds earth via rain. And so, getting pregnant via water motive takes place in many myths.

As a matter of fact, God himself used water to animate/revive his work of art. The source that soil gives to water is a fact but if the earth was not moist and damp were unable to be create this work of art. As every natural water has been honoured in the beginning, they have the baptising virtue (Eliade, 2003:204). As water is a cure, it also rejuvenates. Life is water thus, there is an art of healing with water in so many places. In Ottoman Empire era, cities such as Edirne have hospitals where mental patients were cured by water is a well-known fact. While patients are thrown into water in India, Fin-Ugor people accept some of illnesses' reasons as insult to water.

Water became important at death as it is important at birth, at rejuvenating and at being cure. Water quenches death's thirst, it melts dead and makes it solidified with its seed. Water kills the death and terminates it as terminating human's destiny and makes it immune against to pain. Water's religious versatility gave birth to many worshipping near at fountain sides and riversides throughout history. This situation comes from water's holy place and values at creation of universe. Running water lives, is in motion, source of inspiration, cures and guides. Myths happen at near to water. But there are evil spirits which dwell next to water in many mythologies; such as nymphs. There is also flood symbol related to water which explains as all humanity will sink and perish under water. It's a foundation of a new human race and an establishment of a new era.

Whatever religious view it represents, water's function is same as always; dismembers whole, terminates shapes, sanctifies, revives, purifies. Water leads the way in creation but devours created one later. Water cannot get into shape, everything came out of water and so, water cannot exceed itself. Every shape dies and reborn with water every time. The reason in cosmogony and flood are to re- unify and creation. We can give examples from different cultures' water understandings: In Aztec and Inca water is basic chaos. In Buddhists, water is continuous movement of materialistic world. Passing across the river is to pass illusions world to reach Nirvana and Enlightenment (Akman, 2002:10, 2).

As in all Turkish communities, water is alive, a source of energy and healing in Altai Turks. For this reason, people who go to the water source are expected to greet the water and raise their hands to their heads three times after drinking water. The animals they see in the water are actually Arjan, the owner of the water. For this reason, people should respect these animals and make a sacrament ceremony with a mixture of flour and mare's milk, with a cloth-tied fire called "Calame" (Ukacina and Yamaeva 1993: 122). In his study, Şayhan connects this ritual of the Altaic Turks to the understanding that every being in the Turks, even the stone, has a soul. Water also has a soul and should be blessed (Şayhan, 2018:96). After looking water's place in belief systems, it's needed to look water's place and importance in Turkish culture.

Water In Turkish Culture And Belief System

In Altay Myth of Creation water takes place as concisely: "There was no land and sky in the beginning... World was an endless water. There was no small island on this water where even ever- flying God could touch on." In Ural Batır Saga's first verses also telling us there was only water in the beginning:

"... In the beginning of beginnings Where there was no humankind

No were coming and passing through No one could ever know

Whether there was a dry land in there or A place there should be

Surrounded by sea..."

Yet in Ural Batır Saga, Ural Batır goes to search for Tirihıw, the fountain of life and faces with many challenges. Even he passes over these obstacles, he cannot reach to this water. At the end of this saga, Ural Batır turns his diamond sword -which he got as a relic from his ancestors- 3 times over his head and stabs it

into soil as showing the beginning of water in order to lake people's thirst who were near to death from drought. He calls his son Idil and tells him as "Go my son, go to where your feet take you and walk among people and never look back till you reach to a great river." Idil who was walking without giving a pause stops and looks back for a time and he sees a great river which was coming after his footsteps. And so, Akidil river comes to life. Also, Ural Batır's other sons named as Hakmar and Yayık gave their names to rivers with same story.

As Ural Batır's time of death closes by, he doesn't drink a cup of fountain of life and pours around him. By this, earth-sky (yer-su) becomes immortal. (Ergun, 2000:79) In Oğuz Kağan Saga, Oğuz Kağan marries with a girl who sits under a tree which resides in the middle of a lake. (Akman, 2002:4) It has been discussed water factor in sagas and myths related to creation. We know will try to explain how water is approached as a "cult" at Turks. One of the most important possessors that Old Turks attribute holiness is water possessor. As Turks accept water as force and source of abundance, they accept as agonizing and a protector God too. According to them, water was an old and sacred entity. Talaykan (Yayık Han), ruler of seas and protector of dead's, sits where seas merge and rules to them.

By accepting as water has a soul, it's common to please water possessors or asking something from them. This water spirit called as Garan in Yakutsk people. Also, there is a big freshwater sea beneath surface and it's called as "Al-su".

Water is the opposite and complementor of fire that it extinguishes (Akman, 2002:5). Water and fire mentioned as; night and day, green and red, good and bad sayings, smiling and laughing. "...*Black night doesn't come near to bright day*

Green water cannot be put into red fire..."

Earth-water cult became one of an official cult at great imperial era. Especially at Göktürk Empire era in Orhon writings, water is deified and given personality. Earth-water belief is a certain understanding of motherland. In order to not to make Turk's soil and water unprotected, God was giving Turkish Khans over Turks. Earth and waters were punishing those who were not giving good services and rebelling. At Göktürks' era, they were saying for those who couldn't establish a state as "living like grass-water (ot-su)". (suv-öl senility-damp) Yet in Göktürk writings it is said that; "If you do not move away from your land and water, Turkish people you will see receive kindness" This shows motherland consciousness at Turks. Also, Turks call barren lands as "dry".

The cult of water appears as an element that helps the Turkish khans in case of difficulties in their lives. In the inscription of the Göktürk khanate, "the Turkish god above and the Turkish holy places and waters were made as follows: My father İlderiş khan and my mother İlbilge Hatun were definitely lifted from the top of the sky and lifted higher so that the Turkish people would not perish" (Çoruhlu, 2010:33). From this point of view, the benevolent and protective understanding of water is seen in our Turkish culture. In Irk Bitig, which is a fortune-telling book, it is mentioned that he is saved from death by the power of a riding horse or after being exhausted from exhaustion, by the power of the god or by drinking the water he sees. Ögel and Uluç interpreted seeing water in a dream and getting rid of death as good and good (Uluç, 2016:37; Ögel:2014:421). As a matter of fact, scholars such as Ibn Sirin, Kirmani, Jabir Moor interpreted seeing water in a dream as good and beautiful (Int2).

At Dede Korkut, ablution is being taken from clean water, water cannot be polluted, drinking water is sacred, giving water for those who cannot find is a charity.

"May my high and black mountains become a pasture for you May my cold waters become drinks for you"

And in the same literary work:

"... I gave water to dried rivers

I gave sacrifices to black dressed dervish" (Ögel, 2002:319).

In the story of "Boğaç son of Dirsehan" as mother learned that mountain's spirit caused disasters which happened to her son, she says drought became a disaster as "May your grass never grow, may your rivers never flow, may your deer's turn to stone!" in cursing way. (İnan) In his dream, Salur Kazan sees that his homeland and home got ransacked and when he returns back, he talks and asks questions to his homeland

first (Ergin, 29). Water cult is also seen in a requiem which is said upon Beyrek's not returning back:

*"... If you ask the mountain which lays there Was my Master Beyrek's highland
If you ask cold waters..."*

Then he asks about his homeland to a river which he crossed by (Ögel, 2002:319).

Except these examples, by saying "may bloody rivers give passage" in Dede Korkut, those who pass great rivers were accepted as approved. Again, in Manas Saga, Cakıp Han who has no kids, complains about his wife's not taking a woad and not staying at night near of sanitary waters:

*"... She didn't become a mother for fourteen years Even didn't go to a sacred place
Didn't go to holy fountain and lied next to Didn't go under an apple tree and dance
Didn't get rid off from infertility and found a sacred way"* (Yıldız, 1995:235).

In Kutadgu Bilig, it's said as; "If you want to buy a house, ask its neighbours if you want to buy a place, ask it's waters". And again, in Kutadgu Bilig;

*"Dark soil and green water fit each other
A thousand flowers bloomed between them"*

The cult of water, which has an important place in Turkish culture, is used as a "sub". According to Bayat and Ögel, the beginning and end of life is water (Bayat 2015: 428; Ögel, 1995 II: 254).

In Divan-ü Lügat-it Türk, one of the best reflecting works of Turkish culture, water "rain made grass live." It is stated in Kutadgu Bilig as (Kaşgarlı, 2006:436) "Black earth and blue water fit together, thousands of flowers bloomed in the middle with a smile) (Hacip, 2019:579). In each of them, water is the epitome of abundance. In the book of Dede Korkut, it is said that the Oghuzs are "prepared for wars by making ablution from pure waters" (Ergin, 2008: 114). In the same work, in the story where the house of the Salur cauldron was looted, the water is as follows:

*"The water cascading from the rocks,
The water that moves the wooden ships,
The longing of Hasan and Huseyn is water,
The ornament of the vineyard and orchard is water,
The wedding of Aisha and Fatimah is water,
Shahbaz horses came and drank the water,
The water through which red camels come and go,
The water where the net sheep come and lie around,
You know the news of my army, not mana!
May my black head be sacrificed, my water, to you! - said."*

The water should give the news of the escaping! He passed through the water, this trip hit a wolf" (Kitabi-Dede Korkut, 41). Here in our culture, we see that water symbolizes abundance, fertility and life. Water is also an element that gives strength. As a matter of fact, it is thought that the power that allows Köroğlu to take from the strong and give to the weak and weak comes from water (Şehriyar, 2017:73).

"Elixir of life" as Old Turks said and called later as "fountain of life", the water of immortality is a well and mostly used motive too. A rumour refers to Zulkarneyn about this water; which is believed that it gives immortality for who drinks it: One day, Zulkarneyn hears about a water which gives immortality for who drinks it and makes his mind to search for it. According to rumour, Allah would be giving this water to a person who comes from bloodline of Sam (Simon). Zulkarneyn starts his travel with his aunt's son's, whose name is Elyesa and called as Hızır and his soldiers' escort. Fountain of life locates in land of darkness. Due

to storm, Zulkarneyn and Hızır get separated from soldiers and after a time, they arrive to land of darkness. Meanwhile, Hızır hears a divine sound and sees a heavenly light. He goes to this voice which attracts him and finds the fountain of life, he drinks from it and washes his body with. And so, he reaches to immortal life and acquires superhuman powers and skills. When he comes across with Zulkarneyn he tells what happened before and Zulkarneyn passes away. According to rumour, Koroğlu's dapple-grey horse also drank from this water.

Water Related Practices In Turkish Belief System

Belief of water as a life-giver and considering it as a holy creator became the reason for Turks to build up their settlements near to water. Because of this, water in family house has a respect. This belief can be seen when a new bride comes to her spouse's house for the first time and shows her respect to this water by putting wedding gifts into it (Akman, 2002:5).

When someone gets touched by evil eye, it's accepted as either that person gets into quarantine or the effect of the evil eye gets dispelled by lead boiling over that affected person. Quarantine practices depend on purification principal. Purification happens with water here. By putting an object of a person who affected, those who affected and who got affected gets purified. The situation at lead boiling process is also the same. The reason beneath lead casting is to purify the remove negative situation/sickness from tainted body/soul by cleaning them. For this, water's purifying power is being used. In the lead casting case, hot lead gets put into cold water and it takes shape in it. After it takes shape, a person takes it out from cold water and looks to it. As peaks and sharp edges happen at casted lead, it neutralizes evil eyed person's bad effect by putting out that evil eyed person's eye. The reason beneath lead casting is to make sharp edges which will put out enemy's eye (Acipayamlı, 1962:20). The reason beneath drinking or giving away the water where lead was in is to benefit from water's purifying power and effect. One of the important missions of water is its role in curing sick people. These waters generally named as spring water. Hot and sanatory ones which come from beneath earth naturally called as "hot springs", those surrounded get named as "thermal", that top is covered get named as "thermal spring" and those which has cold sanatory water springs are called as "mineral spring" (Ergun, 1987:5).

It has found of water's function as a cleaning element in ahi-order rituals. A person who works in one of craftsman organization for three years must join a set of rituals in order to advance from apprenticeship to journeyman. Craftsman's masters are called to this ritual. After praying ceremony everybody rises up and head of organization dons the journeyman with loincloth and advises him. Common symbols of Turkish-Islamic guild in all rules and regulations of ahi-organization are shalwar and drinking salty water. We see salty water drinking motive here. According to folklorist R.M. Dorson, salt has magical specialities among people. It's used in rituals to repel the devil.

White salt has a life-giving speciality and symbolizes man's active fertilising. We see salt's cleaner speciality in our practices too. For example; salt is poured onto new-born in order to clean him. Also, in some places of Anatolia, salt is added into lead casting's heated water. With cleaner speciality of water and salt, disease tried to be removed in here.

If we look at different practices about water in Anatolia:

In Mardin it's believed that rain in April month has a speciality to cure. This belief can be seen in Van too. It's said that there are also hadiths that shows this water's holiness too. As the expression goes, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) says "You came after me oh sacred water" as when rain drops open his hair by dropping his cover. At this point, in old and new beliefs, earth-sky and holiness unites. It should be remembered that God assigned Turkish Khans over sacred earth-heaven for not making them unprotected.

Polluted water can't show it's beneficial effectiveness towards people when it's needed. When people get into river at spring time in Nahcivan, in Tabriz, in Kars Salmaz, in Ağrı Taşlıçay and in Muş Bulanık regions, three times they say "All my weights, my unluckiness, my baldness pass to water" in order to live a happy and healthy year. In order to find cure and peace from water, there is a belief about not to pollute the water.

Among peoples' beliefs, water is the representative of a bright future. It's an enlighten to see water in a dream. To get rid of from troubled dreams, to tell it to the water is a known fact. Water is accepted as a

bright road at fortune-telling. Pouring water after traveller means to wish an open road for him. Pouring water over a grave is perceived as blessings.

The belief of “If people cry a lot after someone’s funeral, the grave of the dead person gets flooded” resides among Silifke nomads. In folks’ beliefs, water is the cure of the problem for who suffers. “Being in need of a sip of water” or “having no one to give him a glass of water” sayings take place in Turkish. There are vows which tell Hızır cult and water cult together. Actually, it’s not possible to separate Hızır cult from water cult and its explanation is hidden in Hızır’s essence. “May it be a promise to Hızır’s fountain” “Water’s Hıdır/Hızır, Water’s right” is being said. There are two river crossings in Tunceli where people attributes holiness those places are known as Hızır’s (pbuh) meeting place.

Water cult related traditions and beliefs in Safranbolu still continues today too. At prayers for rain, stones that are prayed on are put into a sack then that sack is put into water. In Yazıköy, next to stones that are prayed on, a piece of wood which resides on top of Madan Dede’s tomb also being put into water spout. After prayer for rain, 2 mt. long and 20 cm. length wood is taken back from water spout and is put back to its original place over tomb.

The most interesting one which reflects old Turkic beliefs in a best way, happens over Konarı lake, which locates at Safranbolu. Animals which are sacrificed before are cut here and their blood are poured into lake. Foods are eaten together and people have fun together.

At bride taking ceremony in Safranbolu and its area, when bride comes on horse, she must pass over a water. This water can be a river or a lake too. While passing over this water as bride on horse, even that water is dried up, she throws foods (such as apple or halvah) to water. Thus, it’s believed that the bride will be saved from evils and she will bring abundance to house. When bride comes to her spouse’s home, a Holy Quran and a pitch with full water are given to her. Bride enters to home by pouring this water all over the place and enters to her room by stepping on a prayer rug which is laid there to make her a good-natured person. The next morning of bride taking ceremony bride wakes up early and goes to a water spout. She goes there with groom and cut three breads into it (This breast changes as baklava in some villages). After that, bride makes spout full with water and runs back to home without looking back.

In the region, another water-related practice is seen at childbirth. To relieve the woman and make her to give birth easily, a door of a mosque is half-opened or any of a water spout’s water is released. Another belief suchlike this is seen at Harput: To a suffering woman at childbirth, an amount of water is given to her from her spouse’s shoe. Also, first milk that is taken from cow is thrown into a running water. According to belief, cow’s milk will run like water. If there is no water at that time, this milk is poured under a rosehip tree. At Harput, a coffin took place of a piece of wood at Safranbolu’s Yazıköy. An empty coffin is put into a river or a pool during prayer for rain.

Interpretation by looking to water is seen at Safranbolu area too. Ahmet Yıldırım tells a practice about this as: “A person who got sick or felt unwell puts three knives into water. He names these three knives with close-by tombs’ names. Knives rest in water till morning. In the morning, they look to knives. Whichever of these knives got moulded, the sick person goes to that knife-named tomb. A wafer and cornflower halvah are made. That person goes to tomb with them. He makes a vow and gives an animal as a sacrifice and cuts it at tomb. The sacrificed animal is cooked and eaten there” (Yıldırım, 1979: 34).

Since water is the representative of rain and abundance, the practice of praying for rain is seen in many parts of Anatolia. As a matter of fact, Diren (2019) talks about the practices in their region in his study titled healing waters and water cult in Ankara Kızılcahamam district and Kürkan (2018) in his study entitled Traces of Turkish Water Cult in Giresun. The purification and cleaning feature of water is also seen in the tradition of shearing. It is a reflection of the wish of the baby thrown into the water to have a fertile and healthy life. As a matter of fact, Daş (2022) mentions the same practice in his study titled “Water cult and its members in Bursa/Gemlik”.

This feature of water is also reflected in traditional Turkish architecture. For the purpose of cooling and purification, fountains, courtyards and wans were built in many parts of Anatolia. The tea madrasah in Afyon, Kayseri Çifte Madrasa/Gevher Nesibe Hospital and Madrasa can be given as examples (Demir, 2019:25). The night that connects May 5-6, Hz. Khidr and Hz. Hidrellez, which has the belief that İlyas will

meet where there is water and wishes will come true, is one of the periods when the traces of water culture are intense.

Türk Yılmaz (2013:97) states that in his study, the customs of women and girls in Anatolia to write petitions to God and throw them into the water were determined. In his work, Diren (2019:116) talks about the tradition of tying sackcloth and rag to the tree in a place called Dilek Tepesi. Öncül, in his work titled *A Living Place, Water Cult in Elazığ*, talks about the Euphrates River and the being called “Çay Hırtırki” believed to live here and the beliefs about it. The most important condition for the formation of a cult is the offering of sacrifices to what is considered sacred, which is understood from the offering of sacrifices to the waters in ancient Turks (Türkyılmaz, 2013). In many parts of Anatolia, it can be evaluated in this context that those who do not have children and whose fortunes are poor make vows and cut them at the water’s edge.

Again, in Anatolia, whenever people drink water, they hold their forehead, bend or squat, drink with their right hand or say “bismillah” before drinking it. There are also prayers which are said for water. “In the name of preyer-accepted person, may a pure water come out”, “May Allah make his water abundant”, “May Allah never make his river muddy”, “May Allah spare you from floods and waters’ evilness”. As it’s believed that water’s essence will conduce to goodness, to abundance and to health, it’s also believed that cloudy water could has evilness inside of it. Water’s clarity could have a white essence and flooded type of water could has a dark essence has also thought. Another examples to prayers toward water are like these: “May your son/daughter wash his/her hands and face with fortune water”, “Make your water become abundant”. The last prayer can be understood as “May your bright future take you to brighter ones” or “When you’re dead, return back to water as soon as possible”. “May water’s Aisha or Fatima become your offspring’s’ happiness” are also prayers. These contented examples which are chosen from Azerbaijan science people Mürsel İsmail Hekimoğlu’s studies show some differences from Anatolian examples. In Anatolia there are sayings like “May be sacred like water”, “May be bright like water”, “May your life be long as water”, “May people to serve you become more and more”, “May the water you gave become a goodness for your dead” take place. “Water is the right of the young and word is the right of the old” is said for many times. Withthe explanation that is made for this saying changed it to “Silence is the right of the young and word is the right of the old”.

When curses come for water, it should be said as “May you never find any water to clean up your unluckiness, your heaviness in your home”, so children’ rhyme -that they say when they swim in small rivers at spring time- should be remembered. In other examples, it’s said “May black water come from your mouth”. Black water calls black essence here. “May your mind turn to snow water”. This saying makes us to remember as snow water is not a clean or clear water but a flood-like one. “May Allah dry up your river”, “May Allah make your water muddy”; also made people to think blackessence in it. “May Allah never give water for your fortune”, “may Allah give flood to your homeland”, “May you never find any water to wash your father’s dead body”, “May your offspring be sad at the fountain”, “May you never bring water from fountains in new year”, “May your everything be disappear in flood”, “May you never find any pure water to use in fortune-telling to see floods inthe very first Wednesday of the year”, “May my blood become your Goddess of water”, “May water’s Aisha and Fatima never be cure to your sickness”.

In addition to this, when we see through Anatolian legends, we come across with water cult often. Prophet Abraham (pbuh) who doesn’t approve Nimrod’s idols, also comes against to them. Nimrod tries many ways in to kill Prophet Abraham. After pilling up and setting fire so many woods at today’s Urfa’s “Pool of Abraham”, Prophet Abraham is thrown into this fire. After Prophet Abraham is thrown into fire, a water comes out and puts out glowing fire. A lake occurs there.

Burning woods turn to fishes in the lake. That lake is called “Pool of Abraham” and to eat those fishes is a sin.

It can be classified water cult in general of legends as:

a - Get off the hook: Our heroes reach to water, they are desperate, they find salvation in taking refuge in Allah, their wishes come true but they don’t hold on their vows, they got punished.

b - Some of lakes’ creation: Our heroes who fight for religion was tried to be punished by being thrown into

fire. At that time, water puts south fire by coming out. A lake occurs at there.

c - Those who shows disrespect to blessings: Everything created from water and wheat -which are takeplace in the legend- is a blessing for people. People show respect to them. If they didn't get praised, they feel offended like a human and never return back.

d - The grief of a losing child: Mother's not being able to endure the pain of a lost child -whose kids were murdered due to any reason- and turning into stone, water coming from holes like eyes...

We see and understand the importance of water for Turks from phrases and proverbs they use: "Don't take off your shoes without seeing water", "Mirage seems fully water for thirsty person", "Fish is in the water but it's eye is at outside", "There is water in the well but dog's nose cannot reach to it", "Give milk to those who doesn't give water even", "Donkey says even I am in relief, I drink water from sea", "Water drips form ice", "Child pours water, elder slips on it and breaks

his bones".

Water is a frequent theme in Turkish literature. The axis is always on water in Evliya Çelebi's Travel Book, Necip Fazıl Kısakürek's Sakarya Folk Song, Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar's Entrance to the Five Cities, and Necati Cumalı's Thirsty Summer. In fact, when Evliya Çelebi is describing Bursa, it is said that "in short, bursa consists of water".

In his study, Belli (2021), he considers that Fuzuli's particular choice of water redif in his water ode is a reference to the fact that our prophet is an element that leads humanity to the right, pure and pure path.

In the legend of Sarıkız, Hasan drowned in Anatolia, and in the legends of the rain well of the Bekteş village of Afyon, it is mentioned that the water should not be polluted from its purity. In his work called Sandıklı Legends, Karakuş states that when the water well in Yaylacık is not cleaned, the seasons are dry, it is not necessary to pray for rain before it is cleaned, and even the well is dedeli. Önal (2005), in his study on Muğla legends, states that the common features of the legends in Anatolia are mountain, tree, water and bird. In the study of Köse (2022), Munzur Caves and its stream, Ana Buyer Lake, Hızır Lake, Gola Çetü, Ana Fatma, and Haskar Fountain on Düz Baba Mountain are important water resources in the Tunceli region. His eldest son brings water from seven different places, and states that he drank from these waters to find healing at sunrise.

Result

Waters is important to humanity from very first days of his existence. A life without water is unimaginable. For this reason, holiness to occur, rituals to happen and occurring of belief systems around it is a normal thing. The belief or water as the source of all creation is seen in many beliefs; we also see as water has accepted a holy entity in some beliefs too. So, many functions and duties were given to water, it's used in religious performances and it's blessed throughout history.

Water become importantly part of rituals in holy religions as Judaism, Christianity and Islam with its rejuvenating and clarifying effects. Water which has a certain place in holly books of these religions also become an important phenomenon in these religions' performances.

By looking water's importance in Turk's life, it can be seen as it's a reality that water continues and will continue with different beliefs and practices among people.

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