

THE MYTHS AROSE AROUND THE CULT OF SELAHATTİN BUHARİ DEDE CULT LOCATED IN THE VİLLAGE OF THE KELES PROVINCE OF BURSA

*Hülya TAŞ**

ABSTRACT

Dedeler village is one of the nomadic villages of Keles province in Bursa. The village that had no immigrants coming in and thus has preserved its traditional cultural structure. The village was named after Selahattin Buhari who is buried here. The name of the village did not exist in written documents until 1908. The information on the identity of Selahattin Buhari can only be learnt through the legends told among the villagers. A celebration festivity is held in the name of Selahattin Buhari every year in September. Selahattin Buhari and his wife came from Bukhara to the village in order to spread Islam and the rules he's set in the village are still being obeyed today.

Key Words: Bursa, Dede, Keles, Selahattin Buhari.

ÖZET

Bursa'nın Keles İlçesi Dedeler Köyünde Selahattin Buhari Dede Kültü Etrafında Oluşan Efsaneler

Dedeler köyü Bursa'nın Keles ilçesinin Yörük köylerinden biridir. Dağlık bir arazi üzerine kurulu olan bu köy, dışarıdan göç almayarak geleneksel kültür yapısını korumaktadır. Köy, adını burada yatan Selahattin Buhari'den almıştır. Köyün adına yazılı kaynaklarda ancak 1908 yılında rastlamaktayız. Selahattin Buhari'nin kimliği hakkındaki bilgiyi de ancak köyde anlatılan efsanelerden

* *Uludağ University Turkish Language and Literature Department Lecturer.*

öğrenebilmekteyiz. Her yıl eylül ayında Selahattin Buhari'yi anma şenliği yapılır. Buhara'dan eşi ile birlikte gelerek İslamiyeti yaymaya çalışan Selahattin Buhari'nin köyde koyduğu kurallara günümüzde de uyulduğu görülmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Bursa, Dede, Keles, Selahattin Buhari.

According to the information sources Dedeler is one of the oldest villages in Bursa¹. The village has been recorded in the book of accounts dated, H(islamic calender).937/ M(the gregorian calender)1530. However in the 1908 dated yearbook property distribution and the 1925 dated Greek Fecayii villages list it is stated that the village is a part of Harmancık township of Atronos province. And also in the 1927 yearbook villages map the village is shown in the borders of Harmancık township of Atronos province. (Cemiloğlu 2002b: 57) Dedeler village is named after the entombed Islamic Saint.. The “ler” plural suffix in the word Dedeler has often been used in old documents for naming states and nomadic groups. (Cemiloğlu 2002a:42)

It is not known when Selahattin Buhari Dede was born or died. We can not get enough information on matters like Selahattin Buhari's family or education and no one in the village mentions him by his name. Everyone in the village uses the word “Dede” when they mention him.

According to oral information sources Selahattin Buhari was called the grandfather of grandfathers when he first came to the village because of his miracles. The name of the village is “Dedeler” because Selahattin Buhari became a martyr and was buried here. The name became a part of the village and remained as Dedeler.(KK7²-KK8- KK9)

Dedeler is one of 37 villages of Keles province. It is 11km away from Keles. In 1927, 253 people lived in this nomad village in 1990 the number was 549 (Kaplanoğlu 1996: 113) in 2000 yı 440, and as of 2010,485 people live in 68 house holds. The population of the village decreases day by day because of the young population immigrating to Bursa because of economical reasons and the village's not allowing immigrants.

There is one school in the village which was opened nearly fifty years ago. There was a primary school accepting students until third grade but in 2008 due to lack of teaching staff the 48 students of the school were transferred to the school in Baraklı village. There are almost no illittrate individuals in the village and most of the young population go to university.

¹ The Other is Kirazlı Village.

² KK: Person of Source

Today a part of the school is being used as an infirmary. One health officer working here also renders his services for Dedeler, Dağdemirci and Yağcılar villages. There is also a guest house in the village to accommodate visitors. The needs of the visitors staying at the guest house are dealt by the village headman.

There are two mosques in the village. One of the mosques next to the tomb of Selahattin Buhari is very old and it is not being used the exact date when the mosque was built is not known but is thought to be built in the times of Selahattin Buhari. There are a number of decorations and calligraphy in the mosque. These calligraphy and decorations were made by Kazım Okur in 1949. The new mosque is built near the old one.

The houses in the village are made of bricks blended by cob and hay. Every house has a small garden in front. The villagers grow their own fruit and vegetables.

There are three bakeries in the village where villagers bake their own bread. The women bring the dough they prepare at home using a carrying stick called “*minetle*” and bake as much bread as they need.

Agriculture and stock breeding is not a really developed line of business in the village. The rough terrain makes it difficult. Strawberries and cherries are grown and sold gross. Village women sell grape molasses and wine leaves in the village markets. Stock breeding is less than in the past now thus milk production is at a low level. The milk collected in the village is sold in Bursa. Villagers make dairy products like butter and cheese only enough for themselves.

The men in the village go to other villages for olive, peaches and gumbo picking accordingly with the season. The financial income of the village is quite low. Almost all of the villagers work for a mere pittance.

Although a chrome mine was opened in the village in the 1950’s it was closed one year later due to lack of workers. However in 2007 a private corporation bought the mine and re opened it.

The Tomb of Selahattin Buhari

When Dede died his beloved wife and the villagers who believed in his sainthood came together and built a wooden tomb. (KK9, KK10) This wooden tomb was later put down³ and re built by the villagers and the Dedeler village foundation in 1999.

³ Raif Kaplanoğlu, mentions that this tomb was built in 1817 in his literary work “Bursa Encyclopedia,” pg.113.

The tomb consists of two sections. A small room leads to the burial chambers. In the burial chambers a water bowl, a few knives, and a few stones which Selahattin Buhari allegedly used to scare away the Greek's with his finger prints on are displayed. The wand Dede used to hit the earth and blast water and helped the paralysed with and the buck horns were stolen before the tomb was taken under protection. Today a replica of the wand is kept at the tomb and it is being used to help the paralysed patients.⁴

The sacrophagusses of Selahattin Dede and Zübeyde Sultan are in the second room and there is round stone in between which is believed to be from the times of Selahattin Dede. On the wall of the tomb there is a short text about Buhari's life but there is no date of birth or death written on.

There are old graves behind the tomb where Selahattin Buhari's relatives and two sons are burried. However the graves other than the two sons are lost.

The practises during the tomb visits

To make a vow at the tomb is to resort to its miracle for a wish made. The person making the vows and wishes believe that the tomb would mediate between them and god. If the wish is granted the person fulfils whatever vow he has taken at the tomb. (Boratav 1984:42)

Tombs are often considered as centers for health and kindness. Selahattin Buhari was told to be a healer of especially paralysed patients at his time, this is why the tomb is mostly visited by paralysed patients or their relatives. The visitors of tombs believe that saints are close to god and they express their wishes to god through them.

Visitors bring a scarf and towel with them. The towel is spread over the sarcophagus of Selahattin Buhari and the scarf on Zübeyde Sultan's. These towels and scarfs are later sold and money is raised in order to be used for the needs of the tomb. The visitors first pray for their wish to be granted and then perform a ritual prayer called "namaz". The patient's hands and

⁴ For broader information Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, lists the necessities of forming a culture, in his book named "*Epics as Culture History Sources*" as follows. The saint of the culture has to have died in most cases. There are three main necessities for a saint to become a cult. 1- A tomb built in the name of the saint or artifacts that have been inherited or believed to be inherited. 2-The tomb or the artifacts have to be visited in order to make wishes or seek cure for diseases and sacrifices or vows shall be made during these visits. 3- The presence of the name of the saint in the words said as prayers. All there of these does not have to happen at the same time, in some cases one of the above is enough.. see. pg.9.

faces visiting the tomb are rubbed with soil taken from between the two sarcophagusses and a glass of water taken from the fountain outside whose water is believed to have been blasted out of earth by Dede's wand. When the soil settles in the glass of water it is drunk for cure. The remaining soil is then put back where it was taken from.⁵ The fork shaped iron replica of the stolen wand is rubbed against the patient's suffering body part. If the jaw and mouth of the patient is paralysed the wand is placed in the mouth and pulled gently.

Most of the visitors of Selahattin Buhari's tomb end their ritual by saying the words " If my illness is cured I shall sacrifice an animal for the sake of Dede". If the patient is cured after the visit the visitors then sacrifice an animal in front of the tomb and the meat is given to children and the villagers.

The charity festival held in the name of Buhari Dede

A celebration festivity is held in the name of Buhari Dede every year in September. The name of the festival is Charity Festival because it is held for charity purposes for both Dede and the villagers. The charity is organized by the Dedeler Village Foundation. The festival is carried out as follows: On the day of the festival the villagers, people from neighboring villages and from Bursa gather at the tomb and pray. Meanwhile food is prepared in large kettles in the village square for charity purposes. After the noon prayer of the men at the mosque the people gathered in the village square are offered rice,meat and stewed fruit juice.

Here speeches are given about Dede mawlid prayers are said. The problems of the village and the villagers are brought up. Folk dances and songs are performed. People who attend the charity bring watches, carpets or live stock with them and sell them through auction. The money raised from these sales are kept to sponsor the next charity event.

Result:

As a result Bursa is a rich city in Anatolia with tombs and saints. One of the combatants we can count in is Selahattin Buhari Dede. Selahattin Buhari Dede remained as a local saint according to the classification made by Ahmet Yaşar Ocak mainly because his identity can not be confirmed exactly and the information on his character is based on legends and myths. We can classify him as a village or clan saint according to his social status and also as a missionary saint when we consider the duties he undertook.

⁵ Taking soil from inside the tomb now prohibited. The soil is now taken from the outside.

The Turks have been influenced by many different religions or belief systems through out their history. The oldest Turkish communities is Middle Asia adopted a religious system that consisted of three parts, ancestors cult, nature cult and Sky God cult. The Ancestor's cult is one of the oldest and rooted cult of all. This cult consists of an understanding that the ancestor passed away helps the family in the afterlife creating a mixture of fear and respect. (Artun 2001:25) Earth-water, trees and mountain cults⁶ are observed in the myths told in Dedeler village.

The traditional cultural values created around Selahattin Buhari Dede are kept alive through individual and communal applications today. The individual applications are, performing a namaz prayer in the tomb, placing a towel on Selahattin Buhari Dede's sarcophagus and a scarf on Zübeyde Sultan's, taking soil from inside the tomb and mixing it with the water from the spring outside and have paralysed patients drink it, touching the patients with the fork like replica of Selahattin Buhari's stolen wand and sacrificing animals in order to make their wish or vow come true. The communal practices are to organise charity events in Autumn and not to have the drums and shrill pipes played at weddings, seeing off soldiers and even in the special early morning wake up call during The Holy Month of Ramadan.

The holiness and sanction power gives the myth a different feature in the sense of communal practice. As Bilge Seyitoğlu points out the myths and legends are protectors of traditions and customs, they lead the public and inspire them about right and wrong, they add meaning to the places they happen to be and have a protective and healing role.(Seyitoğlu 1997:270) The myths and legends told at Dedeler village have the same patterns.

The texts of Legends

The arrival of Selahattin Buhari:

Selahaddin Buhari, who is considered to be a saint and the founder of the village went to Khorasan from Bukhara and then to Dedeler village in Anatolia by the request of Ahmet Yesevi⁷ around the year 1400 according to

⁶ For broader information see, Abdülkadir İnan, Shamanism Today and in History, Turkish History Foundation 1995 pg.48-67.

⁷ For broader information see. Ömer Lütfü Barkan's article on Islamic monasteries and Colonizator Turkish saints of the invasion times. "Followig the conquering of Bursa as Evliya Çelebi recorded, it is sgnificant that many saints from Bukhara and Khorasan came and settled in Bursa... Emir Sultan is of Hüseyini heritage and was born in Bukhara."pg.279-304,see. Fuad Köprülü, First Sufis in Turkish Literature., pg 37-59.

the gregorian calender. 40 Saints including Emir Sultan, Tezveren hazretleri, Bayraklı dede, Seyd-i Nasr, Molla Fenari, Somuncu Baba Selahaddin Buhari came to Bursa to spread Islam. Emir Sultan sent these 40 saints to different parts of Bursa. At that time Selahattin Buhari came to this village where Greeks lived in.

Zübeyde Sultan,i Selahattin Buhari's wife also came to the village and lived here.Selahattin Buhari told the rules of Islam to the Greek villagers and convinced them to accept Islam. He taught the villagers how to be a good muslim. (KK3, KK10, KK11)

His Struggle to have Islam Accepted:

When Selahattin Buhari came to the village and asked the Greeks to accept Islam they said “ We need to see a miracle to believe that Islam is god's way, find water in this dry land” Selahattin Buhari then hits the earth with his wand water blasts out of where he hit the earth. (KK2-KK5)

The Miracles of Selahattin Buhari:

However the Greeks were reluctant to believe in this miracle and and said “ this could easily be a coincidence, lets set fire in the oven and you enter it, if you come out un burnt then we shall believe in you”. Infact the Greeks wanted to burn Selahattin Buhari and get rid of him. So Selahattin Buhari said “ Ok I will enter this burning oven but if you still do not believe I shall spiritiually punish you and send you away from this village”. The Greeks agree and Selahattin Buhari recited Bismillah, said his prayers and entered the oven and the oven was closed. When the oven was opened a few minutes later Buhari walked out un harmed the villagers accept Islam. (KK3, KK5)

The Punishment of The Ones Who Did Not Take Selahattin Buhari's Warnings Seriously:

The Greeks had a fondness for musical entertainment accompanied with drums and the drums and the shrill pipe⁸ and also alcoholic beverages and wine. Selahattin Buhari expalined that this was not the way of Islam and warned them to stay away from this kind of entertainment. However, some did not take this warning seriously and continued this type of entertainment

⁸ In the mountain villages region of Bursa “davul-zurna” duo and “dümbek'e kaba çalgı” terms are being used see Cemiloğlu:2002 b, pg.171.

and became paralysed. When they came to Buhari for forgiveness Buhari healed them with his wand.

It is said that the myth written below happened 15-20 years ago and there are people who witnessed the event.

Recently a government official visiting Keles was invited to a wedding in Dedeler village and he noticed that the drums and the shrill pipe was not being played and asked why it was forbidden. The villagers answered “ Selahattin Buhari forbid this ages ago and we still obey this rule” finding this odd he said “ This is nonsense bring me the drum and I will play it ”. Although the villagers try to convince him not to and told him what had happened in the past to those whom did not obey Buhari’s rules they could not and the government official played the drum in front of Buhari’s tomb. First the drum tore and he became paralysed after a while he went to Buhari’s tomb and asked for forgiveness and returned to his healthy state again. (KK5, KK7)

The Punishment of Children:

The sound of drums played in Yağcılar village was heard in Dedeler village and Buhari’s two sons ignored their father’s warnings and went to listen to the drums to the next village. Selahattin Buhari stated in his will that the graves of his sons shall not be inside his tomb. (KK8, KK3)

The Punishment of People Cutting Down Trees:

During Selahattin Buhari’s early years in the village when he spread Islam he warned the Greeks not to cut down green timber. One individual’s house burned down because he ignored Buhari’s warning. This is why the woods next to the tomb is called “Dede woods” and no one cuts even a branch out of that wood believing that their house or barn may burn down or their children may get sick. (KK1, KK3, KK10)

The vow taken to sacrifice animals:

When the Greeks in the village accepted Islam Buhari wanted to sacrifice a calf and said “wherever this calf lays down it shall be sacrificed there” and the calf lay where now Buhari’s tomb is located and it was sacrificed there. Buhari gave the meat away to the villagers. All the animals to be sacrificed are still being cut at the doors of his tomb. (KK6- KK5)

Foreseeing The Future:

Selahattin Buhari knew that he would become a martyr fighting in the village. He told that he would like to be buried here. Buhari prayed to god saying “Whoever comes to visit my my tomb shall be relieved of their sins and their prayers shall be answered”. This is why it is believed that the prayers said here are answered. (KK7, KK6)

Oral Sources

Person Oof Source	Name Surname	Age	Education	Occupation	Birth Place
KK1	Fadime Sevinç	62	Illiterate	House wife	Dedeler Village
KK2	Mustafa Sevinç	80	Literate	Free lanced	Dedeler Village
KK3	Ahmet Sevinç	36	Primary	Village headman	Dedeler Village
KK4	Zeynep Yavuz	67	Illiterate	House wife	Dedeler Village
KK5	Zekiye Çicek	76	Illiterate	Tomb orderly	Dedeler Village
KK6	Halim Aslan	70	Literate	Driver	Dedeler Village
KK7	Şaban Oruç	43	Primary	Former village headman	Dedeler Village
KK8	Zekiye Aynış	45	Literate	House wife	Dedeler Village
KK9	Şaban Çicek	63	Secondary	Farmer	Dedeler Village
KK10	Mehmet Koçuk	50	Literate	Former tomb orderly	Dedeler Village

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PHOTOGRAPHS



A remote view of the village



“Minetle” bread dough



Women baking bread at the bakery in the vilage square



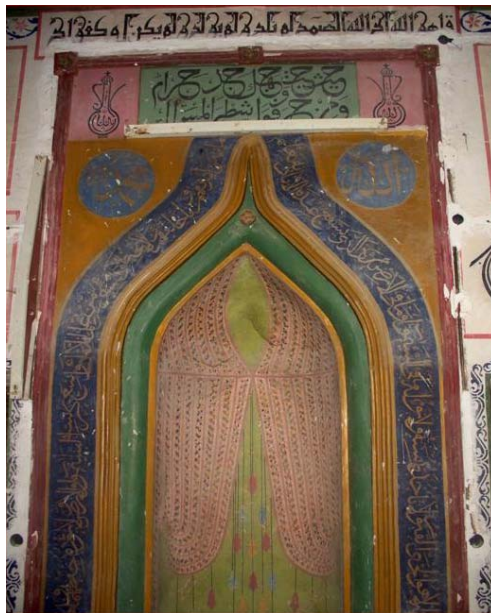
The writing on the wall of the mosque the “Celi Sülüs” and the calligraphy called “Nesih”



The Celi Sülüs calligraphy "Rabbi Yessir ve La Tuassir Rabbi Temim Bi'l-Hayr"



Celi Sülüs calligraphy "Ebubekir"



The Altar





Tomb's of Selahattin Buhari



Possesions of Selehattin Buhari Dede



A practice on a paralysed patient