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**THE COMPARISON OF MEVLEVI AND
BEKTASHI RITES FROM THE TRADITION
TO PRESENT IN TERMS OF TURKISH MODE
AND SUFI MUSIC**

Abstract

Keywords: *Mevlevi, Bektashi, Sema, Semah, Ayin.*

The concepts of **Semah and Semâ** which may be shown among the most descriptive structures for religious music and dance culture of İslamic civilisation are the musical prints of Mevlevi and Bektashi sects. Turkish religious dance culture that has come with Shamanism, maintaining it in public, brought it's being to light in two sects, Mevleviyeh and Bektashism.

In Mevleviyeh and Bektashism's book, human is a reflection of God. Cüneyd-i Bağdadi, a sufi philosopher, says “Sufism is that God kills you in yourself and keeps you alive in Himself” [Gölpınarlı, 2009: 495].

While plenty symbols belonging to belief systems could be transferred throughout generations due to the power of belief and music, music could make us feel the effects of social changes through sense of holiness added to the power of expression. This study aims to focus on and compare the concepts of Semah and Semâ in terms of manner, rhythm, Turkish mode and sufi music within Mevlevi and Bektashi belief and music traditions.

1. Introduction

İslamic cults mostly are different sectarians' offsets that has turned into an institution. In any monotheistic religion, the source of opinions is the holy book and getting away from this source and

getting different cultures has increased being a cult. The thinking system called Tasavvuf occurred as a result of meeting rich and settled cultures while Islamic religion expanded from Arabic Peninsula to South, and cults followed this formation. Mevleviyeh and Bektashism were the most expanding ones among those cults [Gölpınarlı, 2009: 495].

Semah and Sema concepts that could be shown among the most descriptive structures of Islamic civilization for religious music and dance culture are musical prints of those cults that has reached today.

It is accepted that the first Turkish religious dances were met in the religion system called Shamanism in the 14th Century B.C. Turkish religious dance tradition that began with Shamanism – maintaining its presence in public- came to light again in two cults; Mevleviyeh and Bektashism in the 13rd Century Anatolia. On this line of progress, the dances that began with Shamanism and maintained their precenses till today with Mevleviyah and Bektashism cults are Sema and Semah. Along with having no detailed information about Shaman dances, it is believed that the aim of those dances is having a trip to sky and reaching Gods and spirits with prayers going into trance due to the effect of the drums they play during the ceremony.

Shaman dances spontaneously during the ceremony. There is no planned patterns for prayers, poems or dances. According to the thinking of Mevlevi and Bektaşî, human is the reflection of God. Cüneyd-i Bağdadi, a sufi philosopher, says “Sufism is that God kills you in yourself and keeps you alive in Himself” [Gölpınarlı, 2009: 495].

Sema is used for “Religious Music” more in Tasavvuf. In Bektashism, in the same opinion, musical dances under the name of Semah are constituted. This study aims to focus on and compare the concepts of Semah and Semâ in terms of manner, rhythm, Turkish mode and sufi music within Mevlevi and Bektashi belief and music traditions.

The word Ayin is of Farsi origin and it means “custom, menstruation, style, ceremony; habit, method, the way of living; the style of worship”. Even if it is assimilated by Mevlevi and Bektaşî cults in Muslims, it is used especially by Jewish and Christians for different worship styles and by various lodge and cults for performing

religious ceremonies that have movement and music elements [Tanrıkorur, 1991: 248].

There are two main meaning for the word Ayin: “Sema” and “Semah”. Sema is Mevlevi; Semah is the name of the religious games of Alevist Bektaşî. It is understood that the use of the word has changed in public while it is the same in Mevlevi cult. In some regions, the word “Pervaz” is used for Semah and those who perform it are called “Pervazcı”. The main point here –however it is said– is the belief that in any cults, Sema makes a bridge between people and God [Yönetken, 1962: 209].

The number of people whirling Sema is 9 and its multiples. Semah is performed in groups of 2, 4, 6, 8, 10 and 12. Semah is performed only in djemevi. It’s shouldn’t be performed in weddings or such entertainment ceremonies as it’s done today. The atmosphere in which semah is performed must include religious elements. Sema is performed as a show today in order to express Turkish culture although it was performed in Mevlevi homes before.

2. Studing it in terms of form

Mevlevi sects are the longest compositions after the form called “Miraciye” in Turkish music. In terms of the fact that it is branched in parts called “Selam” and that it is performed in a few parts, it could be thought to be similar to forms such in western music such as symphony and oratorio. More than one instruments are used. In Semah, there is no rule. It is one of the logest formed works in Turkish Folk Music. There is only baglama as an instrument. As tune struture, there is one or a few parts. It is asserted that Alevist – Bektaşî music is a subproduct of folk music [Onatça, 2007: 47–70].

Mevlevi sects that is like “Composition” in terms of form could be shown in A+B+C+D+B+C diagram. The form diagram of Prelude part is used as: 1st Section: A + Mülazime (Teslim) B – 2nd Section: C + Mülazime (Teslim) – 3rd Section: D + Mülazime (Teslim) B (A+B+C+D+B)

The common parts of Mevlevi Sects are:

1. Rast Na’t-i Mevlana
2. First solo (instrumental)
3. Prelude (instrumental)

- 4.1. Selam
- 5.2. Selam
- 6.3. Selam
- 7.4. Selam
8. Last prelude (instrumental)
9. Last Yürük Semai (instrumental)
10. Last solo (instrumental)
11. Aş-i Şerif (Kur'an reading) [Çalışır, 2010]

Form structure of Sema differs upto the regions. It has the structure of typical A + B (ballad form). Some parts could be composed of an only A sentence. Depending upon the lyrics many repeats could be done. Additionally, A + B + C + B structure (song form) could be met, too. Semah is composed of three parts called Ağırlama, Yürütme, Yeldirme Prayers.

3. Musical Comparison

The dervish playing the music in Mevlevi sects is called “Mutrib – Mutriban”. In Semah, Zakir (bard) sings the music. Semahs are performed by one or a few baglamas without having strict rules. Mevlevi sects are performed by many saz and its players under strict rules.

In Mevleviyeh, the head small drum player has an important role because he directs the music. Sects begins with Nat-ı Şerif of Itri, a Mevlevi composer. Then, Small drum player beats the drum standing on his right in the notes of “la re la re” in order to carry out the “become” that is “Kon” order of God. After that, the head reed player performs the first improvisation. This is thought to be like the angel's blowing the trumpet.

Semahs begin with a ritual reciprocal meeting. The balgama on the seat of honor is thought to be holy and it is played after entraining for the chest three times. The head Zakir leads the Semah team and other baglamas. In some Semah ceremonies saz instruments direct the melody like a pedal directs the bicycle. This melody is same in all the Semah ceremonies and it continues till the end. If the tune changes, saz instruments start playing in the way of this change (Ex: Bir Kız ile Bir Gelin – Fethiye). Semahs are the main works of

Turkish Fol Music in terms of their rhythmic structure [Bozkurt, 1990: 23].

In Sema sect saz team is mainly composed of reeds. If there is enough, instruments such as rebec, zither and tambour also join this team. There is a head reed player for reeds and a head small drum player for drums. The whole reciprocation is directed by the head small drum player. Sect singers perform the work beating two or three drums. Moreover, one sect performer joins the method using a "halîle" (bell), one another performer joins using a tambourine without bell (frame drum).

Semahs are performed using the instruments of Baglama, violin or such. During the performance of them, the method being used is Şelpe (serçe, pençe). There is no drum types. This means sticking to the privacy policy and keeping the safety of holiness.

There is not only one mode in Mevlevi sects. There are almost all of the Turkish music modes in those. However, the only common point is that any sects begin with Na't-ı Mevlana part. The mode of this part is Rast.

In some sects, four Selams belong to a composer while two preludes belong to an other composer and in some sects, all the lyrics belong to the same composer. Those sects might be grouped into three:

1. Those composed completely the same (such as Abdürrahim Künhi Dede's Hicaz sect).
2. Those process in different modes but end with the mode it has started with (such as İsmail Dede's Ferahfeza AySect gibi).
3. Those end with a different mode from the one it has started with (such as İsmail Dede's Saba-Buselik Sect).

There are many famous composers who are in Mevlevi cults. PençgH, Hüseyini and Dügah Sects are composed in 15–16th Centuries and their composers are not known. Among those, the sect in Pençgah mode is an example for Mevlevi composers. Köçek Derviş Mustafa Dede's Bayati Sect was composed later and it's the first sect whose composer is known. It is such an outstanding work that it has overshadowed the ones composed before it. Segah Sect composed by Buhûrizade Mustafa Efendi (Itri) is a masterpiece of Turkish Music. Makam geçkileri çok görülmekle birlikte makamsal işleniş tüm bestekârlarca ustaca yapılmıştır.

After those sects whose composers are known, until today, 161 sects have been composed and adding three “Beste-i Kadim” to this number it reaches 166. It can be said that all the sects are processed masterfully in terms of their composition techniques. Along with the fact that there are many mode routes mode process is done by all the composers masterfully.

In Semahs, the most common modes being used are Hüseyini, Uşşak, Kürdi, Hicaz or Neva followed by Buselik, Çargâh, Segâh routes. Modes might differ upto the regions and there are many mode changes in the works.

Mode Process, is the way that melody reaches the decision fret from the beginning in a pre-set volume area (it doesn't matter if it is in a small threesom or twelvesom space). This process type improves according to traditional meanings loaded on the voices by the stripes. In mode process, the ending of the melody takes place on decision fret. The sounds on which routes will be made by the ways of thinning-thickening are known. Only problem is that the organisation among these duties cannot be provided. This organisation can be provided with “mode process” [Say, 1985: 2809].

In both sects there are parts called “Terennüm” and parts in which only saz instruments are played. The meaning of Terennüm, used especially in Mevlevi sects, is a group of cells or words that are added by the composer in the purpose that it will convey the inspiration of the composer and ornament the work.

There are two types of Terennüm. 1. İkai (Rhythmic) Terennüm: These are groups pf words that have no meaning alone but show a relationship with the method (rhythm) when together. For example: Yel leli, Ten nen ni... 2. Lafzi (oral) Terennüm: These are words that composer adds to his work but that have a meaning even when alone. For example: “kurbanın olam, hey canım, hey mirim, a canım, a sultanım, mihribanım” [Tanrıkorur, 1991: 170–190].

Lastly, we should express that Mevlevi sects come from 13. Century and they are stil composed according to the traditions. The sects by Ahmet Çalışır in the mode of “Hicazkâr” and Sühan İrden in the mode of “Pesendide” are examples for this.

All these are sam efor Semahs. There are fresh Semah sects today. However, to become a Semah composer, it's needed to be a

researcher and mode master in Tasavvuf. A Semah sect composer can do his job using folk music examples. Some of the Semah sects composers of different years are Âşık Hüseyin Çakman, Âşık Mahsuni Şerif, Âşık Ali İzzet, Âşık Zamani, Şah Hatayi, Teslim Abdal, Âşık Nesimi.

4. Rhythmic Comparison

Mevlevi sects consist of four Selams. Any Selam has a different meaning. 1st Selam: Expresses a human's own service. 2nd Selam: Expresses the magnitude and power of God and the admiration of humen to this power, 3rd Selam: Expresses the turn of this admiration into love, 4th Selam: Expresses turning into humanity that's the aim of recreativity and its inability.

It's also possible to see the sect's parts as parts that consist of the performance of for different Works that are played in different methods. In preludes, generally, the method of Devr-i Kebir Kebir (28/4) is preferred. Four Selams in order:

1. Selam: It is performed in the methods like Ağır Düyek (8/4), Devr-i Revan (14/8), Devr-i Hindi (7/4), Düyek (8/8).

2. Selam: It is slower. There is no meeting; Sema begins as the music begins. It's performed in the method of Ağır Evfer (9/4).

3. Selam: Devr-i Kebir (28/4).

In the third Selam part which is the longest one of the sect, different methods are used in order not to maket he work monotony. In the first verse of this Selam mostly Devr-i Kebir (28/4), rarely Frenkçin (12/8) is used. In Saz terennüm, Aksak Semai is used. After the Ahmet Eflaki Dede's stanza about Sultan Veled starting with the Turkish verse "Ey ki hezar aferin, bu nice sultan olur", which is repeated in nearly all sects, there is an accelerating method of yürük semai in other ongoing Persian verses. Third Selam goes up gredually starting with Aksak Semai and reaches the top [Tanrıkorur, 1991].

Forth Selam is short. It's like Ağır Evfer (9/4) that is the second Selam. It is sung with the composition of the second Selam. Last prelude is composed in the method of Ağır Düyek (8/4) or Sofyan (4/4) while Last Yürük Semai (6/8) is composed in fast yürük Semai Method. It includes slience and serenity. Sect music ends with Son

peşrev and last yürük semai, but whirling dervishes keep whirling. In this while a last reed improvisation is played. Kuran, Fatiha and Gülbang (Gül prayer) prayers are said, and the sect becomes completed [Tanrıkorur, 1991: 251].

There are mode routes and method changes in three part Semas. The main rhythmic property of Semah is that in some kinds of Semahs there are some different rhythm forms. Rhythmic changes are generally met part routes and they change in the same mode and at the same time. They follow a line that gradually accelerates. In some Semah, the form slow-fast-alow-fast (Ex: Bugün Yasta Gördüm – Urfa). But all kinds of Semas get slower while they are being completed. We can meet ones whose pace is slow among some Arguvan Semas. Alevi totes and Semahsa re thought to have strong prints from Anatolian culture and believes.

There are modes of Sofyan (4/4), Düyek (8/8), Yürük Sofyan (4/8), Aksak (9/8), Raks Aksağı (9/8), Türk Aksağı (5/8), Semah Aksağı (10/8), Devr-i Hindi (7/8), Devr-i Turan (7/8), Aksak Semai (10/8), Curcuna (10/8), Yürük Semai(6/8) in Semahs. Considering measuremental properties of them, measures that consist of beats in twos are used more than those in threes. We can see that the method of 9/8 is used in semahs from any region while the method of 4/4 is the second in the order of usage frequency. There are rhythmic changes not only between the parts, but they are also in the parts. Most of the saying which are used in Semahs are in the form of Koşma.

5. Lyrics comparison

The lyrics of the Sects that are composed in four parts any of which is called Sema are selected among the works of Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi such as *Mesnevi*, *Divan-ı Kebir* and *Ruba'iyat*, the poems of his son Sultan Veled and Yunus Emre and poetical works by some Mevlevi poets. The ends of the verses in lyrics are enriched using fit-to-rhythm words called “terennüm” such as “Hey Hünkar-ı Men, Sultan-ı Men, Ra’na-yı Men, Ziba-yı Men, Makbul-i Men, Matlub-i Men”. It can be concluded that same there are same lyrics in different sects. However, in any sects in the third Selam part, this verse by Eflaki Dede is absolutely composed in the method of Yürük Semai:

*Ey ki hezâr âferin bu nice sultân olur,
Kulu olan kişiler, hüsrev ü hâkân olur
Her ki bugün Veled'e inanûben yüz süre,
Yoksul ise bây olur, bay ise sultân olur.*

[Özalp, 1992: 49]

Moreover, in the fourth Selam part of any sects (mostly this part is the same of the second Selam part) the verse by Hz. Mevlana is used benignly composed in the method of Ağır Evfer.

In the part of third Selam, after this first part, with a Saz terennüm composed of Sksak Semai method, Turkish verse beginning with the lyrics by Eflaki Dede:

Ey ki hezâr âferin bu nice sultân olur [Özalp, 1992: 50] is composed.

Lyrics connecting each other with Saz terennüm composed of the same method follows this. Yürük Semai keeps accelerating and becomes more amusing [Gölpınarlı, 2009: 375].

It is concurred that in terms of lyrics process, a poem or verse is used in any Works in Semah. In general, different lyrics are used in any Semah. When we have a look at books that include respirations written in Bektaşî lodges in the while between 18th Century and 20th Century, in any of them, we can meet the poems by folk poets such as Kaygusuz Abdal, Şah Hatayi, Pir Sultan Abdal, Kul Himmet, Muhiddin Abdal, Sesem Ali and Turami. In semah, generally, lyrics of different poets are used for any three parts.

Result

The differences between Mevlevi (Sema) and Bektashi (Semah) Sects

Mevlevi (Sema) Sect	Bektashi (Semah) Sect
It's one of the Turkish music forms. Classical art music composition mind of Turkish music dominates it.	It's one of the Turkish religious music forms. Folk music variation mode of Turkish music dominates it.
Main instrument is Reed.	Main instrument is Bağlama.
Post prayer is said by Şeyh Efendi.	Post prayer is said by Dede.

Whirling dervishes wear black cadigan, white tennure, “sikke” on their heads and shoes called “mest” on their feet.	Semah whirlers, instead of one type of wearing as it's in Mevleviyeh, wear daily and more local clothes. Those whirl Semah on bare feet.
Those are long formed compositions. Mevlevi Sacts could be liken to forms such as symphony and oratorio in Western music in terms of performance.	Those are short formed compositions. Bektashi Sects are like Tukish Folk Music forms in terms of performance.
Formation structure is (A+B+C+D+B+ C)	Mostly, it is like typical A B structure (ballad form) in terms of formation. Moreover, it's possible to see A B C B structure (song form).
It comprises of four Semas. Those parts are played in the same mode but with different methods (with different routes in each greeting). The methods used mostly are short, simple, long and compound ones.	It comprises of three parts called Ağırlama, Yürütme and Yeldirme prayers. Those parts are played in the same mood but with different methods. The methods used mostly are short, simple, long and compound ones.
It is performed by Mutrip Group. It's vocalized by those who perform the rite and those who whirl Semas are called “Semazen”.	The one who vocalizes Semah is called Zakir (bard). It is generally performed by one or more baglamas.
Ceremonies are mostly conducted by men.	Ceremonies are mostly conducted by men and women. Public watching the ceremonies joins during the music and prayer.
The number of people whirling Sema is 9 and its multiples.	It is done in groups of 2-4-6-8-10 and 12.
There are mode routes in the work. Procedures with the longer ones are generally accelerated in the part of “Yörük Semai” through the end of the Sema	There are not many mode routes in the work. The procedure used more is $\frac{3}{4}$ one. The order in some Semah ceremonies is slow-fast-slow and in some it is from fast

ceremony. All the Ayin-i Şerif are in an order.	to slow. Almost all Semah ceremonies comprise of similar melodies.
Lyrics are mostly by Mevlana. Some poems by Yunus Emre and Sultan Veled are composed too.	Lyrics are mostly composed of the poems by Pir Sultan Abdal, Kaygusuz Abdal, Şah Hatayi.
The head small drum player leads the crowd.	Zakir (bard) leads the crowd.
It starts with prelude.	There's no lyrics at the beginning.
There are some parts in all the Sects in which same lyrics are composed.	Lyrics could be different in all the Semahs.
Along with playing percussion instruments especially liddle drum is supposed to be important.	Percussion instruments are never played.

Similar parts of Mevlevi (Sema) and Bektashi (Semah) Sects

Mevlevi (Sema) Sect	Bektaşî (Semah) Sect
Hz. Mevlana is the founder and he was born in Khorosan.	Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli is the founder and he was born in Khorosan.
Special to Mevleviyah Sect.	Special to Bektashism Sect.
Represents the Miraj of Hz. Mohammed	Represents the Miraj of Hz. Mohammed
Starts with saying some parts of Kur'an and Mesnevi and ends with saying Fatiha and Gülbank prayers.	Starts with saying some parts of Kur'an and Ehl-i Beyit and ends with Gülbank prayers said by Dede.
During sema, right hand is facing up, left hand is facing down.	During sema, right hand is facing up, left hand is facing down.
There are singing parts among.	There are singing parts among.
Symbolyses the tour of stars around sun.	Symbolyses the tour of stars around sun.
During whirling time, left leg stands still without knee bending while right knee should be bent and moved to the right side harshly in order to have a complete turn.	During whirling time, left leg stands still without knee bending while right knee should be bent and moved to the right side harshly in order to have a complete turn.

In both sects, the love to the God is symbolised and this love provides loving other people and learning the real meaning of love. There is a rumour that Hz. Mevlana and Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli, the sages of Mevleviyeh and Bektashism, met in Konya but Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli settled in Kırşehir because he thought that there would be a greater sage. However, the fact that both cultures effected eachother could be understood due to the way they make **Semah and Semâ**. The fact that both sages were born in Khorosan and that both sects represent the Miraj of Hz. Mohammed demonstrates this relationship. Music, in this case, is the most important mediator of approaching the God.

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