Ritual Communication of Camlica Region in Seyyid Ali Sultan Ocak

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Abstract

The objective of this paper is to introduce ritual communications of *Seyyid Ali Sultan Ocak* (Hearth) in *Çamlıca* Region, which is the designated research field located in *Kütahya*-a province in Western Anatolia. In rural areas, traditional rituals of Alevism are known to have been organized through ocak*s*. Each of those *ocaks* had a historical and charismatic religious leader, *Seyyid Ali Sultan* being one of these eminent figures. In other words, an *ocak* was formed as part of the *dede*'s families who descended from a historical religious leader. Traditionally, each Alevi belongs to an *ocak,* by birth. When individuals declare to obey Alevi rules and are initiated into Alevism in front of the *dede* and the congregation in an each *ocak* by *cem* ritual, that's when the relationships and responsibilities are formed among each initiated Alevi, named *talip*s.

This ethnographic study depends on qualitative methodology that consists of in-depth interviews, informal conversations, open-ended questions and observation of participants during the rituals. The collection of oral literature samples is one of the most characterizing parts of this research. The fieldwork studies of *cem* ritual lasted around two years, having started on October 20, 2012 and having ended on February, 15 2014.

I believe rituals to be unique means to maintain intra-group communication and group unity, following that group communication is a method to retain and continue ritual culture. In this way, I shall endeavour to clarify my belief that the study of ritual communication is essential, and explain quite a number of communication terms within the cultural context, whenever deemed necessary. I shall try to understand and analyze how they create, share and transfer this ocak culture and maintain their group's unity during their ongoing communication process of rituals.

Keywords: Ritual communication; Alevis; Seyyid Ali Sultan Ocak; Camlıca region; Cem ritual.

Introduction

In this paper[1],author have construed rituals to share the semantic contents of communication; to the transmission of certain messages and certain sorts of information. Rituals are represented in every culture by shared symbols and meanings, which individuals learn in an intricate process, naturally finding its reflection in their everyday lives. In addition, individuals create, learn and change ritual symbols and meanings in an interactive process.

Ritual Communication Of Camlica Region

Rituals are regularly performed by group members, who create and sustain rules and resources in any relationship. It's the group members, who categorize the world, achieve order, and take an indispensable part in vital steps such as decision making,

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1 While I was writing this text, the chapter "Why Ritual Communication" and "Analysis of Ritual Communication: Seyyid Ali Sultan Ocak Çamlıca Sürek" in my PhD thesis entitled "Ritual Communication: A Case Study in Seyyid Ali Sultan Ocak's Cem Rituals" was used as a reference. Kayhan-Kiliç, Seyhan. (2014).

problem solving, and the maintenance of group identity through the introduction of their cultural texts [1]. Seyyid Ali Sultan was a charismatic historical leader, in whose personal agenda the cultural contexts of the following group members are embedded. Now, the religious leadership of the group members carries on his agenda, with some changes, though.

Roy Rappaport, Edmund Leach, Stanley Tambiah and Anthony Wallace [2-5] look at rituals from a communicational perspective. Many anthropological definitions about rituals consider them to be a mean of communication. Rituals are interactional performances and the structure of a ritual is essentially communicative in nature.

Leach [3] postulates rituals as an instrument of communication, explaining ritual communication with two different and related points-of-view; "do things" and "say things" (p. 179), which relate directly to the scope of communication. Seeking answers to his questions "What does ritual mean?" and "How do we discover what it says?", [3] came to the conclusion that rituals are like languages (p. 180). He said "ritual is best used to denote the communicative aspects of behaviour" [3]. Similarly, Leach [3] regarded rituals to be some sort of a language- a form of social communication. Stating that "our day-to-day relationships depend upon a mutual knowledge and mutual acceptance" and "...each member of a group stands in relation to every other and in relation to a larger system" [3], he underlined the most crucial aspect of our ever-existing social ties and the importance of an effective communication.

I assume that my inquiries about the interaction through rituals are now evident. My questions will allow us to confirm Leach's [3] hypothesis that ritual is a medium of communication. Ritual structure explains how ritual allows communication of a meaning, focusing on how participation in a ritual allows for transformation and socialization. After making comparisons between everyday behaviours and those behaviours, I will show how everyday behaviours are associated with ritual. I shall also explain how ritual allows participants to maintain mutual consent and hierarchy. All these are keys to determine the validity of Leach's [3] premise; that ritual is a medium of communication. Edmund Leach [6] cited that behaviour includes signals as a part of culture. In other words, behaviour is encoded culturally. It is culturally defined "communication code" (p. 403).

Stanley Tambiah [4] defines ritual as, "a culturally constructed system of symbolic communication" (p. 119). It is constituted of patterned and ordered sequences of words and acts, often expressed in multiple media, whose content and arrangement are characterized in varying degree by formality (conventionality), stereotypy (rigidity), condensation (fusion), and redundancy (repetition)". At this juncture, I would like to underline the word of "multimedia". Ritual is performed with more than one medium of communication. It is difficult to understand and describe all cem rituals stage by stage. This is because participants are simultaneously affected by dance, music, text, prayer, sacred objects, performances, noises, illustrations, etc.

Anthony Wallace [5] classified rituals according to their purposes; technical, therapeutic, anti-therapeutic, salvation, ideological, and revitalization. Wallace (1966) defined ritual as: (...) communication without information: that is to say, each ritual is a particular sequence of signals which, once announced, allows no uncertainty, no choice, and hence, in the statistical sense of information theory, conveys information from sender to receiver. It is, ideally, a system of perfect order and any deviation from this order is a mistake (p. 233).

Similarly, Rappaport [2] saw invariance as central in most religious rituals. This is an essentially communicational definition and Wallace's [5] individuals were influenced and manipulated by ritual communication. Ritual is regular and standard, but also highly communicative.

Ritual Space

West and Turner, [1] define space as an environment which is a key symbol to communication;

Environment is the situation or context in which communication occurs. The environment includes a number of elements, including time, place, historical period, relationship, and a speaker's and listener's cultural background (p. 7).

In the case of this study, communication is not always intra-group. This must be emphasized since the referenced individuals believe in their ancestor, Seyyid Ali Sultan. The study is limited to the group's environment, which includes their location, relations and cultural backgrounds.

According to Turner [7] each *cem* ritual is "performed in a sequestered place" (p. 183). All *cem* rituals, within Çamlıca Region, are performed in the *cemevi*, which means a gathering house. According to Turner [7] the *cemevi* is "designed to influence preter-natural entities or forces on behalf of the actors' goals and interest." (p. 183). It must be noted that their place of worship contains aspects of the functionality of the architectural model. A kitchen, pantry and toilets are located on the first floor. On the second floor, there is the cem room, plus two other rooms. Three sofas are placed in front of the door, for the dedes. Many objects in the cem room are sacred, which includes sweepers, sticks and belts, candles and portraits. I observed that a cemevi is physically safe, but not too very large. It is difficult to move around, especially when individuals are seated and particularly when the congregation exceeds 50 in number. Hence, during a cem ritual, there are often as many individuals outside of the cem room as within. Many of them are engaged with the arrangements. Many others chat in the different two rooms located in the cemevi. Therefore, I cannot say that all villagers are technically in the cem ritual. Many of the villagers are unable to participate in the cem ritual. They may be less enthusiastic or too patient. They may be elderly or too young. There are many reasons that members may not participate in the cem ritual. Often, it is quite practical and depends on the villagers' wishes and their availability.

The congregation of Çamlıca Region is neither temporal nor experimental and it gathers to realize their common goals. According to Durkheim's concepts of solidarity [8], it can be said that there is a mechanic solidarity in the region. Moreover, this group is not too big to be well-observed. There is face-to-face communication in everyday relations, especially when they meet

for a period of time during the cem ritual. Regarding the size of the group, as it was mentioned previously, the community of Çamlıca Region currently has 10 households with a total of 35 residents. However, the average number for each *cem* ritual varies anywhere from 60 to 80 participants. Not surprisingly, the numbers in the group sharply increase during the rituals. Others will attend from the centre of Kütahya, Eskişehir etc. These visitors from the outside of Çamlıca Region are considered, by the residents of Çamlıca Region, as guests. Hence, their mutual face-to-face communication and non-verbal behaviours and interaction during a ritual are not too difficult to observe. However, validation of the research takes a great deal of time.

According to the prudent observations of mine, participants begin to gather shortly after 17:00 p.m. However, each cem ritual generally starts at 19:00 p.m. The duration of the cem rituals is approximately seven hours. It must be noted that this information is rather general, though I have never faced different timings in the field. As it has been mentioned above, the prominent point is that Alevis-Bektashis perform their rituals during the winter, simply because they work less during this season. Alternatively, ritual performers in Çamlıca Region, prefer the Friday night cem ritual, which starts after 17:00 p.m on Thursday evening and ends after midnight, around 02:00 a.m. on Friday. Hence, it is called the Friday night cem ritual. This timing is very significant for the Alevis-Bektashis and Seyyid Ali Sultan Ocak in particular. They believe that God will accept all of their desires during this time, when Alevis Bektashis consciously prefer to pray and reach the spiritual world.

Ritual Time

Ritual timings are so vital for the believers, it is as if the timings are interactive amongst the individual believers, the group and their ancestors. For this reason, they prefer to arrange a specific time for the cem rituals. Clearly, the timings of the cem ritual affect the group's collectiveness and enthusiasm. Moreover, the ritual performers believe that God and their ancestors will better accept the ritual performers' messages if they are offered at a definite time. Furthermore, many other cem rituals have specific times, too. For instance, the Muharram cem ritual is not performed either before or after the mount of Muharram. The framework of ritual communication is specified by that time.

Ritual Participants

All members of Seyyid Ali Sultan Ocak, including both *dede,* sit on the post. Other participants, who are in the cem ritual, include; the other *dede*/s from Seyyid Ali Sultan Ocak or another ocak/s, *aşık*/s (minstrel), *rehber*/s (guide), twelve celebrants (except the *dede*, *rehber* and *aşık*), *talip/*s (believers), who are in the cem ritual, or in the lobby. They are members of Seyyid Ali Sultan Ocak. All of them affect the cem ritual in a certain way. Performers of cem ritual believe that God and their ancestors may watch them. Therefore, they try to satisfy both God and their ancestors. This belief has a great influence over the cem ritual. For apparent reasons, God and all the believers' ancestors are also considered to be obvious participants of the cem ritual.

Participants are not only senders and receivers, but they may also be silent during the ritual. For example, even if a person does not say or do anything, they affect the ritual because of their present entity. Many persons are, in fact, silent. Nevertheless, at least, they are witnesses to the cem ritual. In addition, a significant numbers of individuals may not stay in the cem ritual. Many of them are in the kitchen. Their task is to cook *lokma* (shared food). Still others are engaged with sacrifice. They slaughter and butcher the animal to cook it.

Not only oral literature, but also the vast majority of the announcements, reminders and comments are told by the dede and then aşık. In addition, the aşık play a more substantial role than the other celebrants. In this way, the oral tradition of the cem ritual is transferred by the dede and the aşık to the ocak's talips. Evidently, another function of the cem ritual is to educate the next generation. Each person participates in a peaceful, loving manner, since they believe that they are not hierarchically separated from each other in the Divine Reality.

Several participants perform a service [the *sakâ* (water), *câr* (sweep) or *tarikat abdesti* (ritual ablution)] and talk during the cem rituals. They play a lot more prominent roles than the other participants. Others are always silent and answer questions succinctly. They often respond and chant in chorus, "By God" (*Allah Eyvallah*!). In this way, they offer their agreement. They speak in chorus and together, accompany the ritual songs. Alternatively, they are simply, collectively silent. All participants must be silent when the aşık sings *düvaz*s (hymns in the honor of the 12 imams), the dede recites *gülbeng*s (prayer). Participants know when they must stay silent and when they must speak more loudly. Sinc cem ritual takes a long time, the participants need breaks-several of them. So, they rest. However, during their intermissions, they continue talking to each other. Informally, they can ask questions to the dede or aşık at this time. Hence, there are no ritualistic positions or words spoken during the interludes.

There is a person, whose service named *gözcü* is responsible to control discipline during the cem ritual. The gözcü entreated them to maintain silence in the cem rituals. The gözcü chided, "*Hü brothers*, *Hü sisters* (*Hü erenler*) (*Hü bacılar*)" to the participants. The word *Hü* is a characteristic expression of "He" to God, and used both as an expression of adoration and intercession. However, why did the gözcü not instruct the cem ritual participants to "be quiet" when they made excessive noise remains to be explored. Therefore, he reminds the participants of the power and sacredness of God. At the same time, the gözcü reminds participants that the cem ritual is sacred and performed both for and by the God and the ancestors.

As it has been mentioned earlier, words or sentences are spoken in chorus, by all the cem ritual's participants so as to express their feelings. In addition, the repetitious portions of the *düvaz*s and *nefes*s (hymns about mystical experiences) are sung by all the participants. The enthusiasm of the ritual participants gradually increases as they say in chorus, "*Allah eyvallah*, *Allah Allah*, *tövbe estağfirullah*, Ya *Muhammad*, *Ya Ali*, *Ya Hussein*".

Many anthropologists have studied rituals and offered several fundamental approaches concerning the goals and desires of the participants**.** Through the periodic performance of a ritual, participants form, reaffirm and maintain order in their social

group. Metaphorically, a ritual is like a safety valve, in that it controls and reduces anxiety of the participants. Accordingly, the reduction and fulfilment of feelings and desires are psycho-sociological functions of rituals. This may be recognized as a form of social solidarity. As the information regarding the function of rituals have been adequately provided until this point, it is evident that the aforementioned psycho-sociological functions include a solidarity within their society and the capability to help members accept, recreate and also rebuild relations between the actual and historical individuals [2,6-9].

Ritual Classification

All cem rituals of Camlıca Region are life-changing rituals. The *Muharram/Aşhura,* Union (*Birlik*) and *Abdal Musa cem* rituals are calendrical and annual act of remembrance, all of which are indicators of the common memory of Alevis-Bektashis. For this ritual, individuals remember their history regularly, introduce their troth to the saints and maintain their continuity and solidarity. These rituals are performed to maintain strength, peace and fertility. In *yıl/görgü* rituals, which takes place once a year, individuals want to maintain the mutual consent of the people. They control their members once a year. The *düşkün* (the excommunicated person) *kaldırma* and the *dar cem* rituals are performed to maintain the mutual consent of the people as well. At the *düşkün kaldırma cem* ritual, the individual will sacrifice an animal and will promise to obey community rules.

Afterwards, the community will forgive the individual, who will be then accepted again as an insider. This ritual is performed to reintegration of deviant. The dar cem ritual is performed at the time of an individual's death. The surviving relatives of the deceased must sacrifice an animal to avoid being outsiders. However, the direct functions of the these rituals are the protection and maintainence of the group identity to establish a powerful communication.

Symbols of Cem Ritual

I shall to try to understand ritual communication with key symbols. First however, it is necessary to explain my own understanding of symbols. Turner [10] focused on symbols and later defined symbols as actions within ritual performances. According to Turner [10], a ritual symbol "is the smallest unit of ritual which still retains the specific properties of ritual behaviour; it is the ultimate unit of specific structure in a ritual context". He noted that symbols can be objects, activities, words, relationships, events, gestures, or spatial units [10]. Turner [10] believes that, in order to understand culture, one must understand that rituals are composed of dominant symbols and people's shared meaning of these symbols. Turner [10] underlined the social aspect of symbols;

Symbols instigate social action. In a field context, they may even be described as forces,' in that they are determinable influences inclining persons and groups to action. [. . .] The symbol [is] a unit of action" (p. 36).

However, according to Geertz [11] symbols are a "controlling behaviour"; symbols "are 'programs'; they program social and psychological processes" (p. 52-216). Ortner [12] used the notion

of key symbol, instead of Turner's [10] dominant symbols. I shall also use Ortner's notion to advantage, in this research. She cited that there are five characteristics, which create a clear understanding of a key symbol; clearly, the key symbol is culturally important for natives. It is found in many domains and many different contexts, actions or conversation, or it is found in myth, ritual, art etc. It is either elaborated or restricted. Moreover, it is surrounded by a culture. Ortner [12] classifies symbols according to their functions. She defines summarized symbols as blessing objects and catalysts of emotion. Additionally, symbols have details about a special person, place, or things, in multiple various contexts, for this reason, it is to be seen that symbols are crucial to understand what is culturally important.

Let me share Fikes'explanations of symbols (p. 151). He cited that symbols indicate relations between words and what they represent. These relations might be arbitrary or conventional. Fikes gives two examples for this exact matter of inquiry: The first is a crown, it may represent a king or a queen. The second is a flag. It may often represent a nation (p. 151). According to Ortner [12], a flag is a summarizing symbol. Elaborating symbols, on the other hand, relate to root metaphor and a key scenario. A root metaphor is identified and explained by Ortner [12], "it is felt in culture that many aspects of experience can be likened to, and illuminated by the comparison with, the symbol itself". For the root metaphor, she gives an example of the Dinka's cattle-beasts. According to Ortner [12], "cows provide for the Dinka an almost endless set of categories for the conceptualizing and responding to the subtleties of experience".

Rituals constitute a verbal, nonverbal and behavioural symbolic system. Nonverbal ritual communication employs body language, gestures, facial expressions, voice, smile, personal and geographical space, time and artefacts, whereas stories, myths, folk tales, names, nicknames, jargon, explanations and heroes are verbal manifestations of organizational culture [1]. I shall now introduce the symbols and categories of organizational culture as adapted from Hatch, 1997.

According to Hatch (1997) (as cited In West and Turner, 2004, p. 280), there are three categories of symbols in organizational (ocak) culture; physical, behavioural and verbal manifestations. By means of the Hatch's model (1997), I shall offer all cem ritual manifestations of Çamlıca Region through the cultural context of their ocak organization **(Figure 1)**.

Now, one can interpret the many manifestations of the Seyyid Ali Sultan Ocak in Çamlıca Region. First, way (*yol*) is a key symbol that includes a metaphor and an elaborating symbol at the same time. This is because *yol* has analytic and symbolic clusters. The *yol* indicates the culture of the Alevis-Bektashis, especially their religious order and moral values. The members of Seyyid Ali Sultan Ocak*,* in Çamlıca Region, believe their religious order has been originated with *Hakk-Muhammed-Ali*. Through their *gülbeng*s (prayers), they ask for help from Hakk-Muhammed-Ali. Metaphorically, while yol decodes as being on the way of Hakk Muhammed Ali. Yol is an umbrella term and it is not used only in Çamlıca Region, but also refers to Alevi-Bektashi belief system. So, all other manifestations of Alevis in Çamlıca Region are in an index of the yol.

Figure 1 Manifestations of an Organizational Culture Hatch, 1997.

At this juncture, the ocak is in an index of the yol. In the case of Çamlıca Region, the Ocak is a dominant or key symbol. According to the lexical definitions, ocak represents fire, fireplace, a large black kettle (*kara kazan*), raw and cooked foods, a focus point or a mid-axis. For the members, the ocak is also a place to heal. The ocak is not merely a physical object, in that it also refers to the sacred linage of the dede families; who descended from *Ahl-al Bayt* (the family of the Prophet Mohammed). This relationship supports their belief in the dede's supernatural powers. For these characteristics, the ocak may be said to function like an organization, where there is a hierarchical relationship between different ocaks.

There are deer antlers in the tomb of Seyyid Ali Sultan in Çamlıca Region. The locals of Çamlıca Region believe these are the deer antlers of Seyyid Ali Sultan. The deer antler is a summarizing symbol, which is blessed by them. They believe that the deer antler has curative properties for a sick person's back. It is also believed that the deer antler is a catalyst for emotion. This belief stems from the stories I have listened about the miracles of Seyyid Ali Sultan. They believe that when soldiers came to capture Seyyid Ali Sultan, he mounted a deer. In addition, the deer antler is an index symbol for the powers of the ancestors of Seyyid Ali Sultan.

Aşure is a catalyst of emotion, hence it is a summarizing symbol. Aşure is a reminder of the Karbala Massacre. When individuals of Çamlıca Region cook aşure, they understand that they fasted for the Imam Hussein and for all of the other victims, who were killed in the Karbala Desert. They also perform the Muharram cem ritual. In addition, aspersing participants with water in a ritual is known as *sakka suyu.* As it was personally observed, this is performed in all cem ritual in Çamlıca Region. I shall explain what kind of symbolic and historical meaning *sakka suyu* comprises for the specific ritual in advance. First of all, it should be realized that water is a summarizing symbol, which connotates strong feelings. The sakka suyu shows reverence and is a catalyst of emotion. One remembers how the victims of the Karbala massacre waited in Karbala Desert without water. There is a simple natural importance of water in the ritual, for one cannot live without water.

The dede sits on the *post* which symbolizes the authority of Hakk Muhammad Ali and the Twelve Imams. The post is a rank. In the same vein, the *tığbend* symbolizes a rank. When an individual ties

the tığbend, we understand that the individual has been initiated into the ocak and, then gets interrogated annually. When individuals tie the tığbend, they move up from an individual status to a talip status. Both the post and the tığbend are sacred symbols in the cem ritual. In Çamlıca Region, the *çırağ* is both a candle and the light of the candle's flame. Metaphorically, the çırağ is the symbol of an awakened, enlightened soul, so the participants use the term "awaken çırağ" (*çırağ uyandırmak*) in the *cem* ritual of Çamlıca Region. It is the light of the Allah-Muhammed-Ali. Hence, the *çırağ* must be extinguished only by hand.

Codes and Channels of Speech

The talips of Seyyid Ali Sultan perform rituals to maintain the best understanding among the group, and between the group and their ancestors. Using the cem ritual as a pathway or a communication channel, the informants send words, sounds, actions, or gestures as messages. Additionally, channels are often varied. This is in accordance with the interest and goals of the cem ritual participants. Therefore, in a cem ritual, the originators use many different channels to affect each other, God and their ancestors. For instance, the participants send their wishes through gülbengs. We understand that the dede calls upon the saint for assistance during the cem ritual. The gülbeng is the channel that transmits the message from the participants to God and the saints.

The blessings, reverences and adjurations are heard by the locals. They almost prefer "We" rather than "I". For example, "We have voice, may Haji Bektas Veli (saint) give us breath" they say. Almost always, gülbengs start with the sentence, "In the name of the Prince, *Allah Allah*", and they end with "Attention to the truth and the faithful, ya Ali!". Gülbengs contain a very unique verbalism. It forms a comprehensible code for the groups. However, this code is not comprehensible by the outsiders. This is because forms and styles of speech with different dialect features are used by the insiders and especially by the participants of the *cem* ritual. Hence, these codes are very restricted.

The Nefes, düvaz, *deyiş* (a song about mystical love) and *mihraçlama* (a song about the journey (named after Miraj (*Mirac*) of the Prophet Mohammed to Heaven) are various important channels in a cem ritual. These form a considerable part of the oral literature of Çamlıca Region and contain aesthetic codes. Their oral literature contains their unique stories and morals. Furthermore, the participants of the cem rituals must not laugh, when the dede recites the gülbeng, nor when the aşık sings the nefes, düvaz, or deyiş. There are many ritualistic behaviours that may accompany these channels. One should note that women are not allowed to sit whilst the aşık sings the nefes, düvaz and deyiş. Moreover, neither women nor men are allowed to sit as the *aşık* recites the mihraçlama. These behaviours regarding the constraints on gender are an characteristic part of their ritual rules.

The *bağlama* is another channel. All ritual songs are accompanied by this musical instrument. Metaphorically, it is known as, "the stringed Qur'an". The bağlama is played by the aşık, who endeavours to transform all the ideas and beliefs of the participants in cem through the instrument. So, like holy

scriptures, this instrument employs an indispensable function. Generally, the participants of the *cem* ritual in Çamlıca Region use various codes and channels to maintain the best possible understanding of each other, the group and their ancestors.

Anthropologists have observed that rituals are manifested in literature, theatre, storytelling, games or as scenarios (Turner, 1977c; Ortner, 1973). The Miraj (mystical journey of the Prophet Mohammed to *Miraç* or Heaven), and Karbala Massacre are key scenarios for Alevis in Çamlıca Region. As it was previously explained, the cem ritual of Çamlıca Region is based upon The Assembly of Forty Saints (*Kırklar Meclisi*) in Miraj. Both the Miraj and Karbala Massacre scenarios are animated by the participants of the cem ritual.

Semah as a Nonverbal Communication

Many anthropologists cite that dance is a way to release anxiety, which may occur as a result of life crises like marriage and childbirth. So, a dance is arranged periodically to relieve tension and resolve the anxiety [9,13] (Malinowski, 1925, pp. 59-60; Gluckman, 1963, pp. 124-125; Hanna, 1979, p. 5). Turner [14] wrote dancing as to be some sort of witchcraft, which might be related to a cathartic theme. Radcliffe Brown [15] wrote that the dancer loses himself/herself in the dance, unified community, social harmony transformation from the ordinary level to the extraordinary (pp. 252-253). Margaret Mead [16] cited that dancing has an educational role, and both boys and girls develop individualistic skills through their socialization process (pp. 97-99, 108).

Judith Lynne Hanna [13] hypothesizes why people dance, and remarks that dancing is a nonverbal mode of communication that is a more effective channel than verbal channel [13]. Dancing is a kinetic (body motion) language which is learned in the culture through the shared thoughts, senses, feelings and movement. According to Hanna [13], dancing is an important part of culture that communicates the components of emotions, stories and norms.

The *semah* is *a* religious dance from the cem ritual and serves as yet another channel. It includes other important aesthetic codes, kinetic (body motion) language and dialects. Five women always perform the *Kırklar/Analar Semahı* (semah of the Forty/ Mothers), while the aşık sings the *miraçlama*. Again, it must be noted that the twelve celebrants wear neither socks nor shoes in the *meydan* (a wide place, where the twelve services are perform in front of the dedes' post) during the semah or any of the twelve services.This is a physical code and as noted previously, may be decoded as, "to die before death (*ölmeden önce ölmek*)". They are questioned at the meydan by the dede during the cem ritual. It is a simile for the Day of Judgement, and they know that they will be naked (*üryan büryan)* before God when the time comes. They understand they will not have any worldly material objects in the hereafter. Hence, in their way, they animate the Day of Judgement. So, "die before death" is the key scenario.

One may consider music and the semah as a pattern of body movement in the cem ritual. These are instruments for ritual domination. Children learn how to perform these patterns, according to their roles as a musician, dancer or talip. The semah

is a nonverbal language with a semantic structure and an inner meaning. The participants of the cem ritual learn their culture through their whole bodies. They infect interaction with each other, because their music and dances are performed, shared and learned physically, ideationally and emotionally. Clearly, dancing maintains the unity of their bodies. This is because synchrony is essential for the unity of the cem ritual. Not only dancing, but also speeches and behaviours that are performed in chorus, help to maintain the group unity, all of which are synchronic and interactive.

Face-to-Face Communication; "cemal cemale"

Mead [17] and Goffman [18] mentioned that face-work is the key dimension to analyze the public-self. They questioned whether we must always be conscious of our performance or not. Hence, their interests include theatre, as a metaphor for everyday life. I believe that their face-work analysis has helped me to interpret my data, since the cem ritual is, by definition, a type of face-to-face communication. The believers of Alevis Bektashis, especially in Çamlıca Region, call it "*cemal cemale*". The individuals employ symbols to establish and interpret meaning from their environment. The verbal and nonverbal symbols that we use to communicate with our friends and families are strongly influenced by our culture.

I have attempted to understand the corporate culture of Seyyid Ali Sultan Ocak. As shown with the examples, it is extremely vital for the members of Seyyid Ali Sultan Ocak to be interconnected with each other and with their ancestors through the symbolic and metaphoric verbal, non-verbal and physical cem ritual manifestations. They believe that the spiritual world is generated by the group in their cem rituals. The self concept is developed in the enculturation processes and cem rituals assist them in this complex process. The dede, aşık, rehber, twelve celebrants and all other participants develop a self concept of each individual. Moreover, they believe that myths, stories and miracles about historical holy persons help them to develop a self concept. According to Goffman [19], the processes include several *face-to-face behaviours* (speech, gesture, glance, distance amongst participants). For example, at the meydan, the Çırağcı places the çırağ on the *erkan kilimi* and then he kneels in front of the çırağ. Hence, there is a certain distance between the two physical objects; the çırağ and çırağcı. When an individual assumes the *dâr* position, there is a distance between the post and the individual. This is based upon feelings towards the objects and simultaneously, the inner meanings of the objects.

All participants play their own role in the cem ritual. To exemplify, females assume the dâr position several times in the meydan, as they sing the *mersiye*, which called a dirge about the martyrdom of Imam Hussein for the Karbala Massacre. These two roles are completely different from each other. The *niyaz*, where each participant kneels on the meydan and kisses meydan or his/ her forefingers on the right hand, *sefalaşma*, which a is form of greeting that includes shake hands and kiss, *rızalık*, where the participants of the cem rituals try to provide mutual consent amongst one another, *tövbe*, where the participants recite, "We

are sorry for all our sins and omissions…" are ritualistic positions in the cem rituals. They are offered with the appropriate sounds and speeches. These ritualistic positions are performed for peace and mutual agreement between themselves and their ancestors. It should be noted that the cem ritual is performed with more than one medium of communication. All participants are simultaneously affected by the verbal, non-verbal, physical objects, words and behaviours. *"Are you satisfied with each other, or not?"* the dede questions, through which he announces to all the participants, if someone is dissatisfied with something or someone, after which they are to come to the meydan. If all are silent, then the dede continues to give advice to the participants as follows;

 "Look brothers/sisters in the *âyin-i cem*. There is a salve for an open wound. There is no salve for a hidden hurt. If you say you are sore, we shall try to apply a salve…"

"Bakın âyin-i cem kardeşler, açık yaraya merhem olur, kapalı yaraya merhem olmaz. Siz yaranızı söylerseniz biz de merhem olmaya çalışırız…" (*Ali Kayıhan* (male, 1947-2013) November 25, 2012-November 16, 2013, *Muharram Cem Ritual,* Çamlıca Region, *Seyhan Kayhan Kılıç*.)

This part of the ritual is called mutual consent, where someone declares their dissatisfaction with the person in question.

Social Order; Yol

Cem ritual standards, principles, values, behaviours, beliefs, procedures are subconsciously shared by the believers in Çamlıca Region. As a group, the members arrange interaction and communication by their rules. If a group agrees upon their norms, they believe that their unity is maintained. Conformity and social order are enabled by those group norms. Norms represent an underlying social consensus, for the group regulates and reproduces itself. It must be noted that the population of Çamlıca Region have been found to be cohesive.

Ritual rules also include the morality of the group. Every society gives its members a sense of good and bad. Religion provides a framework for correct and false, sin and pollution and the usual *do*s and *don't*s [9,13,15,20]. The ritual rules of Çamlıca Region are an essential part of their belief system. These rules are called *erkân*. A group of people in Çamlıca Region believe that the erkân are given to them by God, their ancestors and especially, their charismatic ocak leader, Seyyid Ali Sultan. Norms are learned and generalized by ritual songs, myths and scenarios. They are passed from generation to generation. For example, as noted throughout the paper, in the ikrar cem ritual of Çamlıca Region, the *dede* reminds the young spouses of the norms of the ocak.

During the cem ritual, individuals in Çamlıca Region have social interactions. They must obey the rules of their Ocak, and must avoid breaking the taboos in their daily lives and in their rituals. This is sometimes called as 'ritual avoidance' or 'ritual prohibitions", as postulated by Radcliffe-Brown [15]. The dede recounts *ritual avoidance* or *taboos* during the Muharram Fast. During the Muharram Fast, the most important rule is that individuals must not quaff water, eat meat or use a knife. In addition, in Çamlıca Region, there are rules regarding pollution

and food taboos. Many animals are not allowed to be eaten by the members of the group, in that if any individual eats forbidden animals such as rabbit, pig, donkey, horse, dog, cat, then they are considered to be unclean. They may restore their status by making a sacrifice, though. The believers in Çamlıca Region describe forbidden animals as *haram,* while the others are considered to be *halal*. If any person breaks the norms, they may perform a ritual to redefine their status. Because of the change in their status, people are obliged to make either a bloody or a bloodless sacrifice. A ritual sacrifice is also an essential norm to maintain intergroup relations and social order.

This is the last example concerning norms. Individuals of Çamlıca Region avoid marriage outside of their group. They wish to marry those who are Alevi, since they believe that there are great differences between Alevis and Sunnis. Moreover, Alevis in Çamlıca Region are not allowed to divorce. They believe this is an important reason to avoid mixed marriages. However, it is always possible to come across exceptional cases.

Conclusion

The primary function of rituals is communication. Rituals can be a medium of communication. Rituals are culturally constructed by the system of symbolic communication. Rituals convey information from a sender to a receiver. In a ritual, group members try to maintain together, both group solidarity and unity, through a mutual communication. They communicate and transmit shared symbols and meanings. Every group has a unique culture. Their culture includes verbal, nonverbal and behavioural manifestations. These manifestations are repeated and strengthened in an interaction between ritual participants. As a result, a ritual is a communication performance. Hence, to maintain the *intra-ocak unity*, communication is the main function of ritual performance.

One must remember that their ritual communication is not only defined as intra-group connection. Rather, it is three-legged. First, they communicate with each other, within the group. This is the interpersonal communication. Secondly, they strive to communicate with God and all of their ancestors. Finally, there is the intra-group communication amongst each person, who is a logical member of the group. Their ocak culture occurs within these three-legged communication. Obviously, this ocak culture has an identity and a personality which is embedded in their ocak structure.

Ritual communication includes shared symbols and meanings, attitudes, opinions, beliefs and a series of bureaucratic rules and procedures among the ocak members. The aim of the ritual communication is to maintain a better understanding, interaction and an agreement amongst members within a culture. An ocak may also exert control, have a ranked hierarchy and even excommunicate the members, when they sin or break rules of conduct.

Each time a cem ritual occurs, an index is created, along with other manifestations. It consists of place, each participant's background, their mutual relations and the historical period of their Ocak. In other words, the Ocak's organizational reality is created and

maintained. This phenomenon is shared by the members of Seyyid Ali Sultan Ocak in Çamlıca Region through cem rituals in their environment. Evidently, cem rituals of Çamlıca Region are performances that include symbolic and behavioural processes. The cem ritual performance is regulated, shared, cooperative and mutual. I would like to emphasize that all rituals are interactional between participants, services and the supernatural [21-23], to which they pay attention and respond. During the ritual, both the reception and acceptance of the messages are fundamental multimedia performances, for which I described the cem ritual as a communication.

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