

THE BOOK OF DEDE KORKUT

Babayeva ELEONORA*

Abstract: “The Book of Dede Korkut” is an important resource book about the Turkish history, literature, identity, science and spirit. Actually, the fortune of Turkish people is similar to that of his. So far, misinformation has been conveyed to the Turks of Azerbaijan in this sense. They have been told that their language and history were based on Manna, Midia and Iran. The existence of the Scythians and the Huns have been ignored. It has been denied that they were one of the ancient peoples of Caucasia. In some cases, it has even been suspected that the Turks of Azerbaijan were attached to the Oghuz clan.

“The Book of Dede Korkud” has a very important part in learning about migratory and settled life of Turkish people and especially of the Turks of Azerbaijan, and in the formation of their national memory. “The Book of Dede Korkud” is also significant since it reflects and affirms a 1300 year period of Turkish history, and it shows rich Turkish culture and the origin of Oghuz to the world. At the same time, this work is also important because it shows the way to the future of Turkish people.

Key Word: Dede Korkut.

I. Introduction

The Book of Dede Korkut is an epic of the Oghuz, one of the major branches of the Turkish peoples. Better known as Turkomans, the name they acquired after their conversion to Islam, the Oghuz migrated farther west than most of the Turkish tribes to become eventually the Turks of Turkey. Both the Seljuks and the Ottomans were descendants of the Oghuz, as were the interim Ak-Koyunlu and Kara-Koyunlu dynasties. Their epic, presented here in English for the first time, constitutes one of the most important literary and historical documents from the world of the Middle Ages.

That a book so significant should appear in English only at this late date cannot be attributed either to oversight or to neglect but rather to a set of circumstances peculiar to the work itself. The epic was long lost, even to the Turks themselves, and its restoration has been fraught with numerous and perplexing problems of language and history. Not all of these cruxes have been resolved satisfactorily, but scholarship on the subject has finally reached a vantage point from which the work as a whole can be viewed quite clearly. We know now, with reasonable certainty, when and where this epic was composed, how it was transmitted, who some of its drama its personae were, and from what cultural milieu it emerged.

* Azerbaijan University of Languages Azerbaijan, Baki, st.Rashid Behbudov, 60.

The Book of Dede Korkut comprises a Prologue and twelve legends told largely in prose in the extant text.

Although each of the legends is an artistic whole, all twelve are bound together by their epic theme, by the characters they have in common, and by a literary frame. Supposedly performed before a ruler, each legend includes several brief apostrophes to «my khan». The minstrel introduces most of the verse speeches with a bid for the monarch's attention: «Let us see what Kazan [or someone else] said then, my khan». At the conclusion of most of the legends, Dede Korkut closes a given episode for his Oghuz companions with his singing and his brief moralizing on the ephemeral nature of mortal life; then the minstrel, speaking in his own voice, closes the entire performance with a prayer for the welfare and salvation of «my khan». The distinction between the wise words of Dede Korkut in his day and those of the minstrel now performing is established clearly in the Prologue. Although the Prologue ends weakly on a minor key (a carping description of good and bad wives), it does serve to set the tone of the whole work and to introduce the two levels of minstrelsy as a frame for the stories.

The Book of Dede Korkut combines poetry with prose, the narration largely in prose, most of the dialogue in verse. In its present form the verse runs to some two thousand lines, or approximately 35 percent of the total wordage. The formulaic openings and conclusions of the legends, as well as the repetition of certain stylized passages of description, suggest that the proportion of verse may once have been greater. Indeed, since the legends were sung by minstrels, it is quite possible that originally the entire work, like several other epics, was in poetic form.

Throughout the verse of the epic a number of metaphorical expressions recur with regularity. One's success in life, for example, is often described in pastoral terms: a mountain on whose slopes are green pastures, running water, and shade trees. Thus, in Legend III Beyrek's parents wish him well by saying,

*May the black mountains lying out yonder
Be henceforth your pasture;
May their cold running waters provide you with drink.*

In Legend X Seghrek's mother indicates a favorable change of fortune with the same figure.

*If the mountain that lies out yonder, so dark,
Once fell, now it rises again;
If the beautiful swift-running stream
Once dried up, now it rushes again;
If the branch of the large spreading tree
Withered once, it grows green once again.*

The hero often recounts his departure upon an adventure with the observation,

I arose from my place at dawn

And mounted my black-maned Kazilik horse.

When requesting a favor, one ends one's plea with the ultimate avowal of deference.

May my poor head be a sacrifice for you.

No attempt has been made to recapture in English the sound effects so important in all Turkish verse. Because of its vowel harmony, the inflectional endings of its verbs, and its pattern of suffixes, the Turkish language is inherently more euphonious than is English. To approximate this euphony in English would require end rhyme and multiple internal rhyme, and to supply these Bugajik Melik, Kala Arslan Melik, Demir Yayla Kipchak Melik, Sunu Sandal Melik, Ak Melik Cheshme, Arshin Oghlu Direk Tekur, and Kara Tekur never come alive as characters but remain mere puppets. We are told that they lead attacks against the Oghuz beys, imprison them in castle dungeons, commit atrocities against their people, and eventually meet the deaths they have so richly earned, but they lack humanity and serve more as dramatic agents than as *dramatis personae*. Christian rulers of Greek and Georgian territories in the Middle East, they are pale substitutes for the original Kipchak foes of Central Asia. They retain only their unmistakably Turkish names and sometimes the Kipchak title *melik*.

In some ways, the most controversial character is the purported author, Dede Korkut. Within the epic he combines the roles of wise old man, religious leader, and bard—strongly suggestive of the Central Asian shaman. He provides suitable names for boys entering manhood, Bugach, for example, and Beyrek with the Gray Horse. When the Oghuz are baffled by seemingly irreconcilable problems, they call upon Dede Korkut to resolve their dilemmas. It is he who deals with the mad Delli Karchar in Legend III; it is he who arranges the terms of Oghuz tribute with the monster-man Tepegöz in Legend VIII. He has prophetic power, the ability to see into the «world beyond», and at times he can even perform miracles. At the banquet of the beys that closes each legend, he sings heroic tales, accompanying himself on the lute-like *kopuz*, but he often refers to the legend just completed as his own improvisation. «This Oghuz *namah* is for Emren, son of Begil», he says at the end of Legend IX. One is led inevitably to question whether Dede Korkut was the creator of all or part of the book named after him or whether he was its co-creation, the invention of some minstrel or redactor. As an artistic device, Dede Korkut is most effective. While serving as a character, he also contributes unity to tales otherwise only loosely connected. His recitals provide a frame for the legends.

There is ample evidence, however, for the historicity of a person named Korkut of the Bayat tribe. Sometimes he was called Dede (grandfather), and sometimes Ata (father), both honorifics for Turkish elders; at a very early time, *ata* also denoted a man of religion. Beginning with Reshid ud-din, in the early fourteenth century, historians of the Oghuz described Korkui as a competent statesman and diplomat who served several of the ninth and tenth century kings

who made Yeni Kent their capital: Inal Sir Yabgu, Kayi Inal Khan, and Tuman (whom he also named). Beyond this, the reliability of these «historians» may be questioned. Their folk sources become evident when they proceed to describe Korkut's prophetic powers and his incredible longevity (295 years). By the early~' fifteenth century Yazijioghlu could credit Korkut with the prophecy that the khanate would, in the end, pass permanently to the Kayi tribe (by then claimed by the dominant Ottomans as their ancestors), As time went on, Korkut was incorporated into Islamic hagiography as a Moslem saint, and in Central Asia he became the object of a cult. His legendary tomb existed on the lower Syr Darya, until the early twentieth century, at what is now the station of Khorkhut on the Tashkent-Kazalinsk Railroad. It is doubtful that much, if any, of The Book of Dede Korkut was composed by such a person. It is more likely that a legendary figure, deriving originally from some historical personage, came to represent the traditional bard of Turkish antiquity and the spirit of Turkish minstrelsy, Even in the epic itself one of the singers refers to «the kopuz of Dede Korkut» in this figurative fashion.

Like all truly folk epics, The Book of Dede Korkut must have been the creation of many hands over a long period of time, a matter of centuries. Numerous minstrels must have sung these leg- ends, each in his own way, either as individual stories or as units of a narrative cycle. There are clear indications that the legends were not always and everywhere presented in the same arrangement as we have them today, for instance, the fact that heroes reappear after having been killed earlier (Shokli Melik, most prominent of the infidel beys, is killed four times in four different would reduce the lines to doggerel. Instead, we have tried to render the poetic passages in free verse, with no regard to line lengths but with an effort to establish a rhythmic consistency within the individual sections.

Although vestiges of The Book of Dede Korkut remain to this day in the oral tradition, these fragments have invariably been narratives derived from individual legends. The epic as a whole was for a long while «lost», only to be rediscovered in the early nineteenth century. The single complete manuscript of the epic was found in the Dresden Library, from which Heinrich Friedrich von Diez made an imperfect copy for the Berlin Library. In the second volume of *Denkwürdigkeiten von Asien...* (1815) Diez published the first modern study of the epic, along with a German translation of the Tepegoz story, Legend VIII. Working from this Berlin copy, V.V.Barthold produced several studies of the work between 1894 and 1910 and included in them excerpts of the legends themselves. The first complete transcription of the work did not appear in print until 1916 when Kilisli Rifat published, at Istanbul, *Kitab-i Dede Korkut Ala Lisan-i Ta'ife Oghuzan*. Printed in Arabic script and written in Ottoman Turkish, it, too, was based exclusively on the Berlin manuscript. Finally, in 1938, Orhan Shaik Gokyay produced the first transliteration of the work from the Arabic to the Latin alphabet that had been adopted as one of the Ataturk

Reforms a decade earlier. In the process of making the text accessible to modern Turkish scholars, Gokyay also corrected many of the errors in the Rifat edition by checking the Berlin copy against its original at Dresden. At the time of the present writing, Gokyay has a new Turkish edition in preparation.

On the foundations laid by Rifat and Gokyay a modern school of Dede Korkut scholarship has been built. Among its leaders have been Fuad Koprulu, Abdulkadir Inan, Pertev N. Boratov, Hamid Arasli, Fahreddin Kirzioghlu, Ettore Rossi, Faruk Sumer, and Muharrem Ergin.

In 1950 Ettore Rossi discovered at the Vatican Library a second manuscript copy of the epic, which he published in facsimile and in an Italian translation. Although it was incomplete, containing only Legends I, II, III, IV, VII, and part of XII, it proved invaluable as a means of explicating a number of obscure passages in the complete Dresden manuscript.

Within the past fifteen years Muharrem Ergin has published three editions of The Book of Dede Korkut. His variorum edition appeared in two volumes, the text in 1955 and Index and Grammar in 1963, both published by the Turkish Language Association in Ankara. His one-volume edition, including a glossary of medieval Turkish, was published by the Turkish Cultural Research Institute in 1964. It has become the most widely used text in Turkey today. A popular version of this text, omitting all scholarly apparatus, was released in 1969 under the imprint of the Turkish National Ministry of Education. The foreword was written by Suleyman Demirel, then Prime Minister of Turkey.

Besides Rossi's Italian edition, there are two other note worthy translations in European languages. Joachim Hein published a German translation at Zurich in 1958. In 1962, a Russian edition, based largely on Barthold's work, was compiled by Victor Zhirmunsky and published at Moscow.

Needless to say, the present text, the first in English, is indebted to the whole succession of scholars of the past two centuries. We have consulted all the texts mentioned above, including microfilm copies of the Vatican and Dresden manuscripts. Besides benefiting from the efforts of our predecessors in literary study, we have also had the immense advantage of recent historical and archeological evidence.

II. Who is Dede Korkut?

Dede Korkut, this Great Grandfather, is a splendid figure in the epic adventure on which we are about to embark. Clad in his caftan, carrying his kopuz (lute), our «author» seems as complex as the legends he has composed and sung. In the first legend, it is said that Dede Korkut composed, arranged and sung this legend: «Dedem Korkut destan soyledi deyish dedi, bu Oguznameyi duzdu koshtu..». «My Dede Korkut told this legend, said this folk-song (deyish), he composed, arranged this Oghuzbook». Is our Dede Korkut then a wandering minstrel (ozan), a troubadour (ashik)? Is he the herald, the harbinger

of the Oghuz tribesmen? Does he disseminate the accounts of their victories, their defeats, their trials and tribulations during a period in which the Turkic peoples were struggling for a political and cultural existence? The twelve legends in this book of or by Dede Korkut follow an historical pattern of a nomad people becoming more and more sedentarized, whose bards sung their spoils and sorrows a means of propaganda. At first glance, this seems to be Dede's role: «Dedem Korkut geldi, nesheli havalar chaldi,...» «My Dede Korkut came, he played joyful tunes,..».

If we could then consider Dede as a bard, «his» legends handed down from generation to generation, it's obvious that he is not the sole author: he represents only one voice, perhaps the voice that the Ottoman scribe of the XVI century «used» to write the words we read today. The written form of our legends may be Dede's voice, the final one in a long chain of poets, storytellers, acrobats, bards, etc, from the Altai Mountains in Mongolian to the plains of Anatolia! Dede may not have been the most famous of bards, nor the most talented, but it's the only name that has survived! And unlike Turol, in the last line of the Song of Roland, the references to Dede Korkut in our legends are not mere «topos»; he seems really to be one of the oral producers of this book...his book! The Song of Roland is not Turol's book...

The «holder of the kopuz», the «legend-teller», the «wandering poet», these are indeed Dede's roles, yet they are not his only roles: he is also the name-giver! He is not only «named» in the legends, more important still, he names those whose names have become legendary. Dede Korkut defines the «object» of a legend by giving a name to those who will -carry it further than his own song, beyond the present Time and Space of its delivery. Name-giving in our legends reflects a conscious effort on the poet's part not to fossilize an oral production, confine it to a limited space (theatre, village square, field, etc.), but to immortalize it, create what we may call a Monumental Present. The monument personifies... the present locks the personification into a time slot: the name which is given personifies the hero who accomplished an heroic feat, and renders this personification «present» in the minds of all those who «witnessed» the event «orally» In legend one, Bogach receives his name from Dede after killing the bull from which his name is derived: boga means bull in Turkish! In legend eight, the «stamper of horses», the «horse-stamper» Basat, is given his name by Dede after throwing a horse to the ground: basmak means «to stomp», overpower, etc. and at means horse! These names are not metaphorical; they are heroic deeds «verbalized», «said», «sung», a sort of [deed-hero-word] structure or pattern that must be perpetuated by the bard in order to perpetuate the deed (or story) again and again, englobing the past and future in this Monumental Present. Dede Korkut, by giving a name, gives an origin, a source of life: the name explains and preserves this Oghuz ancestry, the hero's blood-line. «Preserver of origins», «keeper of the source», Dede Korkut watches over his people; he is a «shepherd»! If his name-giving links

this source with the present, his advice to Khans and princes helps solve problems in the present for the future. As a shepherd of his people he must advise them, he must be a «state-advisor». He is called in to settle the monstrous situation between Tepegöz and the Oghuz people in legend eight; he is asked to «exorcise» a jealous brother whose sister is to marry a prince in legend three; he is sent for to settle the Khan's bad conscience concerning his warriors in legend ten. His advice is taken seriously, and his invocations to God make him an intermediary between the Khan and his people and God. This interesting position seems to reveal a more profound side to Dede Korkut; a more religious side is Dede Korkut a Shamanist priest or an Islamic prophet?

Dede's declamations juxtapose two Oghuz cultures: Shamanist and Islamic! He invokes the figures of a Shamanist cult, for example in legend three:

*«Karshi yatan kara dagin ashmaga gelmishim
Akintili guzel suyunu gechmege gelmishim
Genish etegine dar koltuguna siginmaga gelmishim»*

*«I have come to cross your mountain that lies askew.
I have come to ford your beautiful flowing water,
I have come to take shelter in your narrow hidden spaces, in your
wide skirts».*

Dede says «your mountain» «dagin» ...the Cosmic Mountain which rears up to the Heavens, intermediary between God, or the Gods and the Earth, written as such in the Shamanist list rites which the Oghuz practiced in Central Asia. The myriad references to the Great Black Mountain «Kara koca Dag» and the Great Shady Tree «Golgeli buyuk agach» are not mere Shamanist «signs», but rather links which connect all our legends into one literary structure. The Mountain, Tree, flowing Water, Earth, etc., are the twelve legends» Shamanist narrative architecture! They are the «spaces» in and on which the twelve legends derive their historical and literary balance. Dede Korkut comes to the Mountain to his people, to his Khan... he interprets puzzling dreams, as Shamanist priests; would do for their sovereigns. Is he then a Shamanist priest? Or can he be an Islamic prophet preaching Muhammad's Word to a people ripe for conversion, invoking Koranic figures in his declamations, praying for the heroes and their princes? His prayers are plentiful, his Koranic figures abound! His final formulae in each legend reflect a profound Islamic culture: «Ak alında besh kelime dua kıldık, kabul olsun. Allahın verdigi umidin kesilmesin. Derlesin toplasın gunahınız adi guzel Muhammed Mustafa yuzu suyuna bagishlasın hanım bey..». «Gather your sins for the sake of Muhammad Mustafa of beautiful name».

He constantly mentions the «ari iman», «the pure belief» or the «sonu art iman», «the last pure belief», In spite of these formulae and figures there is no clear discourse of anyone type of religion... Dede, like his people, is caught between two religious cultures at a very precise historical moment: Dede's discourse, like the discourse of his book, is two-fold, hybride, two dimensional! Now he will speak of the Khan as a tip of a bird's wing, «kanatlarinin ucu», invoking thus Shamanist ornithological rites, now he will pray to God (Allah) for the souls of the Khan's mother and father! Dede's complex character reflects the complexity of these legends, for there is no «clear-cut» analysis to be made, there is no unambiguous statement to be said: Dede Korkut is the great Actor whose Mask does not reveal what he acts, but what the other believes he is acting! Masked as a bard, an advisor, a priest, a prophet, even a warrior, his role is universal, indispensable to all spheres and phantasies of nomadic life. As a shepherd he maintains an economic pastoral life-cycle, as a keeper of the secrets of Nature, he maintains the vital link between the Sky and the Earth, and finally as a keeper of language, he maintains man's most precious gift, the possibility to «declaim», to name, to tell and tell over and over again a story until this retelling becomes a legend, that is, universal, an embodiment of a million voices under one given name... Clad as he might be, the great Mask-Wearer appeared on the Oghuz Stage as they wanted him to appear, for indeed his appearances never surprised anyone, however different they might have been!

For the feudal world was based upon a «just word», this word broken, an entire friendship (or feudal link), no matter how profound could end in bloodshed. For this reason we read in Dede Korkut Kitabi, legend three: «Oghuz Beyler ichinde yalan yoktu», «At that time Oghuz noblemen did not lie». The bard emphasizes this moral code for it is leit-motif of the Bamsi Beyrek legend. Yaltacuk tells a lie (he makes people believe that Bamsi Beyrek legend. Yaltacuk tells a lie (he makes people believe that Bamsi is dead in order to marry the hero's fiancée) and almost dies for it when Bamsi returns!

In legend one Dirse Khan's warriors lie to him about his son's designs upon the throne. The Khan almost kills his son Bogac because of this lie. When the Khan discovers the truth, he and his son put to death the «forty cowards», «kirk namertler»! A lie is a breach of personal trust, in order to maintain social cohesion all men had to show faith and confidence in their superiors. Indeed, lies, as innocent as they may seem, could lead to harsh insults and treason! In this world of passion and pathos insulting someone took on exaggerated forms: sons insult their mothers and fathers in Dede Korkut Kitabi, although it never leads to bloodshed. They call one another «pimps» (kavat); they threaten to spill each other's blood!

In a society in which war is an art combats abound. From these we can develop a «combat motif». These combat motifs generally occur in block structures of fixed formulae. In Dede Korkut Kitabi these formulae seem to follow two different patterns: the first has no religious connotations... jumping

on a horse, arms seized, the charge, the confrontation, the spear-thrust (or other arm used) knocked to the ground, head cut off. Here are few examples:

«*Kazanin uzerine at surdu. Alti kanatli gurzununu eline alip, kazanin vurdu*», «*He drove his horse upon Kazan. He took his six-edged mace in his hand and struck Kazan*».

«*mizragin eline alip at surdu.*

«*He took his spear in his and and drove his horse*».

«*Aruz Koca meydana at tepti.../Kazan kalkan tutu, mizragini eline aldi,...*»

«*Aruz Koca spurred his horse into the battlefield:.../Kazan seized his shield, he took his spear in his hand*».

The second motif is religious and is as formulaic as the non-religious motif. For example:

«*Ari sudan abdest aldilar, ak alinlarini, yere kodular, iki rekat namaz kildilar. Adi guzel Muhammede salavat getirdiler, derhal kafire ar saldilar, kilich chaldilar. Gumbur gumbur davullar dovuldu burmasi altin tunch borular chalindi. O gun bir kiyamet savash oldu, meydan dolu bash oldu...*»

«*They performed ablutions in pure water. They placed their white foreheads to the earth; they performed the two rek'at of the prayer. They uttered blessings upon the beautiful name of Muhammad. Immediately they attacked the infidels on horseback; they wielded their swords. Boom! The drums were beat; gold-spiraled silver horns were played. On that day there was a doomsday war: the battlefield was full of heads*» (*The second legend*).

We find the same motif in legend three:

«*Ari sudan abdest aldilar, ak alinlarini, yere kodular, iki rekat namaz kildilar. Adi guzel Muhammed yad ettiler. Gumbur gumbur davullar dovuldu. Bir kiyamet savash oldu, meydan dolu bash oldu...*»

Again in legend four:

«*Ari sudan abdest aldilar, iki rekat namaz kildilar. Adi guzel Muhammede salavat getirdiler, Bir kiyamet savash oldu, meydan dolu bash oldu...*»

This motif is not repeated after legend four, although many formulae from the motifs are found scattered in the other legends. For example we find «*gumbur gumbur davullar dovuldu*» in legend ten and twelve. Or «*mizragini eline ald*» in all of the legends except legend eight.

These motifs play two roles in our Oral-Culture koine: first they aid the story-teller to situate certain «essential» parts of his tale. These memorized motifs, comprised of fixed formulae, provide him with reference points round which he can develop the thousands and thousands of verses he must recite. The motifs are the skeleton of his tale: solid, unchanging; they are the core of his tale, and for this reason they have altered very little, although as we have seen, there are slight variations of these motifs due to the bard's talents, or his fatigue! Secondly they constitute an historical pattern and show the audience

that the bard is not «making-up» his tale! They are the core of an eventful battle, or war or escape, memorized from generation to generation. They have become like a monumental stone on which are engraved the glories of the peoples who accomplished them. This fact separates the poets' tale from a fairy-tale or a myth. The poet indeed can elaborate, he can employ as many tropes as he likes, however these motifs must remain «unchanged»; as unchanged as the historical event itself. These motifs too must remain unchanged in the minds of those who listen to them; the audience, active participant in this reciprocal theatre, will bear these «engravings» forever in the collective memory of a people's history. This is Oral-Culture, like Druid philosophy, the rod engraved within the memory like upon a stone!

The formulae within the motifs reflect those objects which were omnipresent in these medieval societies. Let us examine these objects within their formulae one by one, beginning with the most important, the sword was the best companion of the nomad warrior. It was more than a weapon, it was part of his body, his being! an extension of man's personal force. This is evident when we look at Dede Korkut Kitabi: «*Kara chelik oz kilichlar*», «*Pure black steal swords*». This formula is repeated at least fifteen times in our book. The adjectives appear to be more than just the bards' subjective point of view. Pure (oz) because its steel has been forged by those whose occupation is to make only swords. Black (kara) like the mountain from which they are wrought. The hits of the swords had the names of their owners engraved in them; silver-plated and ornamented with filigree. Some swords had curved blades, others with double cutting edges, many had central blood grooves. Swords were even given names, for example Muhammad's sword was called «Zulfikar» which was given to Ali as a present. It was in fact a two-bladed sword.

War will either bring feast or sorrow: both can be considered as motifs. Sorrow is described in terms of great «weeping» or «crying» along with theatrical gesticulations like hair-pulling and face-shredding. In Dede Korkut Kitabi both men and women weep profusely, a woman's eyes will even fill with bloody tears:

«*Kara suzme gozlerini kan yai doldu*»

«*Her black slanty eyes with with bloody tears*».

or

«*dedi: feryat figan eyledi agladi*»

«*She said: weeping and wailing*»

III. The Wisdom of Dede Korkut

Close to the time of the Prophet, on whom be peace, there appeared in the tribe of Bayat a man called Korkut Ata. He was the consummate soothsayer of the Oghuz. Whatever he said, happened. He used to bring all kinds of news of things unseen. God Most High used to inspire his heart. Korkut Ata said, 'In time to come the sovereignty will again light on the Kayi and none shall take it

from their hands until time stops and the resurrection dawns'. This of which he spoke is the House of Osman and behold it continues yet. And many similar things beside did he say. Korkut Ata used to solve the difficulties of the Oghuz people. Whatever matter arose, they would never act without consulting Korkut Ata. Whatever he ordered they would accept. They would abide by his words and bring them to fruition.

Dede Korkut came to the boil one day and declaimed among the Oghuz nobles; he declaimed to them by way of advice. Now let us see, my Khan, what he said.

'Unless one calls on God, no work prospers; unless God grants, no man grows rich.

'If it is not written from all eternity, no disaster befalls any mortal's head; until the appointed time comes, no man dies.

'The man who dies is not brought to life, the soul which goes out does not come back, until the resurrection.

'When a man has wealth as massive as the black mountain, he piles it up and gathers it in and seeks more, but he can eat no more than his portion.

'Though the rivers rage and overflow, the sea is not filled.

'God does not love the conceited; prosperity does not abide in the vainglorious.

'Though you take care of the son of a stranger he will not become your own son. When he grows he will leave you and go, and never say «I have seen you».

'The lake cannot be a hill, the son-in-law cannot be a son.

'Though you throw a bridle over the black ass's head he does not become a mule; though you dress a captive girl in a robe she does not become a lady.

'Though the snow falls in huge flakes it does not last till summer; the fleecy green grass does not last till autumn.

'Worn cotton does not become cloth; the old enemy does not become a friend.

'If you do not mount the horse, the journey will not be done; if you do not wield the pure black steel sword, the enemy will not turn back; if a man does not spend his wealth, his fame will not go forth.

'A daughter does not take advice except from her mother's example; a son does not become hospitable except from his father's example.

'A son is all a father needs; he is one of his two eyes.

'If a man has a lucky son he is an arrow in his quiver; if he has an unlucky son he is a cinder on his hearth.

'What should the son do if his father dies and no wealth remains? But what profit in a father's wealth if there be no luck on his head? God save you, my Khan, from the evil of the unlucky.

'When going over broken ground the unmanly cannot ride the Kazilik horse; if he does ride him it were better that he did not.

‘Better that none should wield the pure sword which strikes and cuts than that the unmanly should wield it.

‘To the warrior who knows how to wield it, a club is better than arrow and sword.

‘The black tents to which no guest comes were better destroyed.

‘Better that the bitter grass the horses will not eat did not grow; better that the bitter water man will not drink did not well forth.

‘Better that the loutish son who does not maintain the good name of his father should never come down from his father’s loins; if he falls into his mother’s womb, better that he be not born. Best is the fortunate son when he maintains his father’s good name.

‘Better that there should be no falsehood in the world; better that the truth should live thrice thirty years and ten. May your life be full thrice thirty years and ten; may God bring you no evil, may your felicity be perpetual, O my Khan!’

Again Dede Korkut declaimed; let us see, my Khan, what he declaimed.

‘The deer as it wanders knows the pasturelands of the earth. The wild ass knows the meadows of the blue-green land. The camel knows the tracks of all the different roads. The fox knows the scents of seven valleys. The lark knows that the caravan moves off by night. The mother knows who sired the son. The horse knows the heavy man and the light man. The mule knows the weariness of the heavy loads. The sufferer knows where the pains are. The brain knows the ache of the heedless head. The bard roams from land to land, from prince to prince, carrying his arm-long lute; the bard knows the generous man and the stingy man. Let him who plays and recites before you be a bard. May God ward off the ill-chance that comes raging, O my Khan’.

Yet again did Dede Korkut declaim; let us see, my Khan, what he declaimed.

‘When I open my mouth and give praise, the God above us is beautiful. Muhammad the Friend of God, the Prince of the Faith, is beautiful. Abu Bakr the Veracious, who prayed at the right hand of Muhammad, is beautiful. The Sura of the Tidings, which begins the last portion, is beautiful. The Sura Ya Sin, when recited correctly, syllable by syllable, is beautiful. Ali, who wielded the sword and gave victory to the Faith, is beautiful. Hasan and Huseyn, the sons of Ali, tow brothers together, the choice gifts of the Prophet, who were martyred on the plain of Kerbela at the hands of the Yezidis, are beautiful. The Koran, the knowledge of God, which was written and set in order and came down from heaven, is beautiful. Othman son of Affan, Prince of Scholars, who wrote down the Koran and set it in order, and who then, when the Ulema had learned it, burned it and cut it. is beautiful. Built in the lowlands, God’s house of Mecca is beautiful. The pilgrim. who has faithfully discharged his duty when Mecca safely and returns in good health, is beautiful. Friday on the Day of Reckoning is beautiful. The sermon that is delivered on Friday is beautiful. The

congregation that gives ear and listens is beautiful. The wise man who calls from the minaret is beautiful. The lawful wife when she kneels and sits is beautiful. The father when his temples go grey is beautiful. The mother who gives her white milk in full measure is beautiful. The black camel-stallion when he approaches and takes the road is beautiful. The dear brother is beautiful. The marriage-bower when it is set up by the mottled tent is beautiful, and beautiful its long ropes. The son is beautiful. God who created all the worlds and resembles none is beautiful'. May the High God I praise be your Friend and give you aid, O my Khan.

The bard speaks, from the tongue of Dede Korkut: 'Women are of four kinds. One is the pillar that upholds the house, one is a withering scourge, one is an ever-rolling ball; and one, whatever you say to her it makes no difference.

'First comes she who is the pillar that upholds the house. If a respected guest comes to the house when her husband is not there, she gives him food and drink, she entertains him and honours him and sends him on his way. She is of the breed of Ayesha -and Fatima, O my Khan! May her babies grow up, may such a wife come to your hearth!

'The second is the withering scourge. At break of dawn she rises from her bed and, without washing her hands and face, seeks out nine barley-cakes and a bucket of yoghurt, and stuffs herself full to bursting. Then she clutches her ribs and says, «Since I married this man - may his house fall in ruins! - my belly has never been full, my face has never smiled, my foot has seen no shoe, my face has seen no yashmak. If only he would die, and I could marry someone else and my life could be a good life!» May such a woman's babies never grow up, my Khan, may such a wife never Come to your hearth!

'Third is the ever-rolling ball. Early in the morning she wakes and gets up. Without washing her bands and face she scurries round the camp from end to end and back again, gossiping and eavesdropping. She is abroad till noon. Then she comes home and sees that a thieving dog and a calf on the rampage have turned her house upside down, so that it looks like a chicken-run or a cowshed. She screams at the neighbours, «Zeliha, Zubeyde, Uruveyde, Eyne Melek, Kutlu Melek! I hadn't gone out to die and vanish for ever, you know! I still have to sleep in this ruin! Would it have hurt you to keep an eye on my home for an instant? They say the neighbour's due is God's due!» May such a woman's babies never grow up, may such a wife never come to your hearth, O my Khan !

'Fourth is she who whatever you say to her it makes no difference. When a respected guest comes from the plain and the wilds, and her husband is at home and says to her, «Up and bring bread, so that we and this guest may eat; the leftover bread won't do; we must have some proper food», the wife says, «What do you expect me to do? There's no flour and no sieve in this cursed house, and the camel hasn't come back from the mill. Whatever comes, let it' come to my' rump», and she claps her hand on her behind, turns her side away

and her rump towards her husband. If you tell her a thousand things she will not accept one of them; she will not permit her husband's words to enter her ears. She is of the same breed as the Prophet Noah's donkey. May God protect you from her also, my Khan; may such a wife never come to your hearth'.

Özet: “Kitab-Dede Korkud” Türk tarihi, edebiyatı, kimliği, ilmi ve ruhu hakkında çok önemli bir kaynaktır. Aslında Türk halkının tarihi de onun kaderine benzemektedir. Azerbaycan Türklerine şimdiye kadar bu anlamda yanlış bilgiler aktarıldı. Dilleri ve tarihlerinin temelinde Manna, Mıdya ve İran'ın olduğu anlatıldı. İskitler ve Hunlar yok sayıldı. Kafkasya'nın eski halklarından olduğu inkâr edildi. Hatta bazı durumlarda Azerbaycan Türklerinin Oğuz Boyu'na mensubiyetine dahi şüphe ile yaklaşıldı.

Türk Milletinin ve özellikle Azerbaycan Türklerinin göçebe ve yerleşik hayatının öğrenilmesinde, milli hafızasının oluşumunda “Kitab-Dede Korkud”un çok önemli bir rolü bulunmaktadır. “Kitab-ı Dede Korkud”, Türk tarihinin 1300 yıllık dönemini yansıması ve tasdik etmesi açısından da önemli olup, zengin Türk kültürünü ve Oğuz kökenini Dünya'ya göstermektedir. Aynı zamanda bu eser, Türk Milletinin geleceğine ışık tutması açısından da önemlidir.

Anahtar Kelime: Dede Korkut

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