



Beyit (Beyıt / Beyite)

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Summary

Beyite (or Beyıt) is the general term for the poems recited during ritual worship in the belief system of Raa Haqi. These poems vary according to the type of ritual, the ritual role of the performer, and the context of the cem ceremony. In the Raa Haqi tradition, Beyite are generally classified into three main types: Kılâmê Haqiye, Beyit, and Deyiş. Kılâmê Haqiye are performed in dervish cem ceremonies, whereas Beyit and Deyiş are recited in pir cem ceremonies. Kılâmê Haqiye are spontaneous sacred utterances voiced by dervishes during ritual worship. These expressions directly address sacred *jiare* (holy visitation sites) and emerge in accordance with the emotional and spiritual atmosphere of the ritual moment. Beyit, on the other hand, are religious epics that recount miracles, disasters, or moral guidance believed to occur through the intervention of sacred *jiare*. Depending on their content, they are divided into three categories. Deyiş, by contrast, are entirely in Turkish and entered the Raa Haqi repertoire mainly from the twentieth century onward through the poetry of figures such as Pir Sultan Abdal, Hatayi, Nesimi, and the broader Bektashi literary tradition. This classification demonstrates that the Beyite tradition is not merely a poetic form of expression but also one of the principal carriers of ritual practice, collective memory, and the relationship with the sacred within the Raa Haqi belief system.

Keywords: Beyit, Deyiş, Klam, Oral History, Sözlü Kültür

Types of *Beyite* and Their Ritual Contexts [1]

Kılâmê Haqiye

Kılâmê Haqiye are sacred utterances recited spontaneously by dervishes during ritual worship, usually performed only once. In these expressions, sacred *jiare* (holy visitation sites)-especially *Duzgı* and *Xızır*-are directly addressed and called upon for assistance so that they may demonstrate their miraculous powers. The form of expression may vary between supplication, warning, or challenge. *Kılâmê Haqiye* are performed in *Kırmancki* or *Kurmanci*, usually accompanied by the *saz* or *tanbur*. No example has been found of dervishes reciting these utterances in Turkish.

Because dervishes generally do not remember these

utterances after the ritual, and due to the rapid decline in the number of dervishes after 1938 as well as the discontinuation of dervish *cem* ceremonies from the 1960s onward, it has not been possible to systematically document *Kılamê Haqiye*. As a result, many of them have largely been forgotten. Dervishes who are still alive today state that these utterances emerge from the emotional and spiritual state of the dervish and the participants present during the ritual. For this reason, they cannot be recited outside the ritual context. The limited number of *Kılamê Haqiye* that have survived to the present consist mainly of examples preserved in the memories of those who once participated in dervish *cem* ceremonies.

Asparê taye kimeti asparo
 Duzgîn rameno, mordemi neverdano
 Bêro comerdeni, no nazliyo
 Xatire xo mîn u simara nemanî
 De bê, de bê, bê hawar Wayîro
 De bê, de bê, bê hawar Wayîro

Beyit and Deyiş

Although they are often used as synonyms today, *Beyit* and *Deyiş* carry distinct meanings within the *Raa Haqi* tradition. *Beyit* are poems with the character of religious epics and are divided into three main groups according to their content.

The first group consists of *beyit* that narrate events experienced by an individual which reach a miraculous and positive outcome through the intervention of sacred *jiare* (holy visitation sites). The *beyit* of *Sîlo Feqîr* is one of the best-known and most widespread examples of this type.

“Way de wurze wurze Sîlo sodîro

Lawo no Belukbaşî ame ez berdu Mose buro

Mî niyada ke niştoro ostorê qire kimêt rameno ververê miro

Herme huyê raşyt serde mî kêmalde niyada bîra Bozatlu

Xızıro

Vake: Silo nine dest-paê to giredê to benê koyt Silo feqirro?

Mı va: Zerrê mı na kafırta terseno huske soyna mı vilê mı danê puro

Vake: Mıxenet! Horê efkar meke sata tengede lewê tode hazıro"

The second group consists of *beyit* that recount disasters believed to have occurred because sacred *jiare* (holy visitation sites) were disregarded or disrespected. Such *beyit* are recited so that these events are not forgotten and may be transmitted from generation to generation as moral lessons. The narrative of *Çığê Xane Jivan* is among the well-known examples of this type.

"Ğancıye cor yeno vana khalo hayde şime ğane cori

Khal vano mıde çien phonc qurşı pere ğani

Vano khalo mıke tora phonc qurşı gureti

Çı derde hore dermakeri

Khal vano ğanci tore nusno deftero xêr

Ğanci khal ceno beno ğane cor

Ozet xızmeta khal de niadano

Khal koye Jivanere amr keno

Çıĝ yeno bine ğane ceri vezono ser

Khal vano ğanci reye tevera niade

Kotra yeno veng u jivane

Ğanci beno tever çı niado

Koye Jivane ra çıĝ ama, bine ğane ceri vetero ser

Ganci dano zonine hore vano çığ amo

Bine gane ceri veto ser, ez sekeri laze mîno ki tey

Khal vano ğanci tore nusno deftero ğer

Mı piye bojiye laze to gurreto kerdo bine servere çever”

The third group consists of *beyit* that offer advice and moral guidance to the community. Because this is the most widespread type, the authorship of these poems is often known. The *beyit* “*dewe dewe*” by *Sey Qaji* is among the well-known examples of this category.

“Jela zeng u zerde wayire Heyderana

Harşıya murodi yegliya wayire Demenano

Khalmem Khalferat wayire Alan u Arezano

Kemere Duzgını qonağê werte Kuresano

Hewse dewa Kureş paga piy u khalıkano

Horiya Xızır’i qapiya murodano

Xızır`e denguz u deryayi sere kelek u gedigano

Çıme Muzır Bavayi wayire Avasano

Nisane Oli Mehemed`i kare uzaxano

Ewlaye Tewnaşıye wayire Bilezano

Bağıra Sıpiye mılakete des u dı koano

Gola Bugere şundore Şexsen u Desimano

Khalo Sıpe rindo wayire Çarekano

Sarre Dolu Bavayi wayire Avasano

Sarre Sulvıs Bavayi werte Xurmeçkano

Hopa Şeğank'i wayhire Şıxankano
 Şıx Delil Berxeyca wayire Pilvankano
 More şıay perskene wayike Kudano
 Sulta Padisa rındo wayite Mıruzano
 Dêse Muxındiy dêso kano wayire Seydano
 Ali Doşt perskena wayire Xırancıkano
 Çewres ospore Qelxeru baş koye sero Şexano
 Ewliyaye Kistim`i uluye uluyano
 Sey Sovin`i perskene wayire ma Qajıyano
 Dundıl`a Hezret Eli koye werte Wusıvano"

Deyiş

Deyiş are poems performed entirely in Turkish and were incorporated into the *Raa Haq* belief tradition mainly from the twentieth century onward. These poems largely draw upon the works of foundational figures of Alevi-Bektashi literature such as Pir Sultan Abdal, Hatayi, and Nesimi, as well as the broader poetic repertoire of the Bektashi tradition. Within the context of *Raa Haq*, *deyiş* emerged as a product of historical and cultural interaction with the wider Alevi-Bektashi literary sphere, differing from the locally rooted oral forms centered on language and ritual. In this respect, *deyiş* constitute an important domain of oral transmission that makes visible the relationship between continuity and transformation within the *Raa Haq* tradition.

Gulbeng / Gulvang (Gulveng)

Within the context of Dersim Alevism (*Raa Haqi*), two related yet distinct terms appear: *gulvang/gulveng* and *gulbeng*. *Gulvang* or *gulveng* literally means "a voice or echo emerging from the throat." In this usage, *gul* refers to the

throat (*gule/guli*), while *veng* directly means “voice.” The term denotes the prayers and invocations recited loudly and rhythmically by the *pir* during the *cem* ceremony.

Gulbeng, by contrast, means “to stand in a circle.” In the ritual context of the *cem*, the expression “*Cem de gulbenge vinitene*” refers to standing in a circular formation before the *pir*. In this sense, *gulvang* and *gulbeng* represent two complementary elements of the same ritual: the vocal recitation of prayers by the *pir* (*gulvang*) and the circular formation of the *talip* participants (*gulbeng*).

Because of this functional and ritual proximity, the distinction between the two terms has gradually become blurred over time. Today, the term *gulbeng* is widely used to refer to the prayers recited by the *pir* during the *cem* ritual.

Conclusion

The *Beyite / Beyit* tradition reveals the integrated relationship between ritual performance, the formation of religious authority, and the transmission of collective memory within the belief world of Dersim Alevism (*Raa Haqi*). This tradition represents not merely an aesthetic or poetic domain but a fundamental ritual mechanism through which belief is orally produced, legitimized, and transmitted across generations.

Kılamê Haqiye, with their dervish-centered character, represent the immediate, experiential dimension of ritual that establishes a direct connection with the sacred. These utterances do not rely on the transmission of a fixed textual corpus but rather emerge from the emotional state of the ritual moment and from the relationship established between the dervish and sacred entities. In this respect, ritual authority in the *Raa Haqi* tradition is shaped not through an abstract doctrine or written canon but through experiential and performative relations established during the act of worship.

Beyit, through narratives of miracles, disasters, and moral

guidance, connect religious knowledge with historical events, spatial memory, and sacred *jiare*. These narratives incorporate individual experiences into a collective memory field, ensuring the continuity of social remembrance. The narrative power of *beyit* serves to reproduce moral and religious boundaries by interpreting lived events through the lens of sacred intervention.

Deyiş, on the other hand, reflect the historical and cultural interaction established at a later stage between the *Raa Haqi* tradition and the wider Alevi-Bektashi literary sphere. Performed in Turkish, these poems represent a transitional domain between the locally rooted, language-centered oral forms of *Raa Haqi* and the broader Alevi-Bektashi repertoire. In this sense, *deyış* make visible the transformative capacity of the tradition and its continuity through external interactions.

The concepts of *gulvang/gulveng* and *gulgeng*, referring respectively to prayer, voice, and circular formation, constitute essential elements that complete the ritual performance of the *Beyite* tradition within the ceremonial space. The rhythmic vocal address of the *pir*, together with the circular formation of the *talip*, creates a ritual field in which oral expression becomes integrated with bodily and spatial organization.

This multilayered structure demonstrates that the *Beyite* / *Beyit* tradition functions within the *Raa Haqi* belief world not merely as a form of oral literature but as a central religious practice through which ritual authority, relations with the sacred, and collective memory mutually reinforce one another.

Endnotes

[1] Editorial Note: This entry is based on the relevant entry in Erdal Gezik and Hüseyin Çakmak's *Raa Haqi - Riya Haqi / Dersim Aleviliği İnanç Terimleri Sözlüğü* (Ankara: Kalan Yayınları, 2010). The present version has been reviewed and

updated by the authors of the original publication.

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