

# Folk Medicine, Folk Healing\*

## Halk Tıbbı, Halk Hekimliği

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### Abstract

*Folk medicine and folk healing may be defined codified, regulated, taught openly and practised widely, and benefit from thousands of years of experience. On the other hand, it may be highly secretive, mystical and extremely localized, with knowledge of its practices passed on orally. Folk medicine and traditional medical practices emerged as a result of the reactions of primitive men against natural events and their ways of comparing and exchanging the medical practices of relevant communities with their own practices. Magic played an important role in shaping the practices. Folk medicine is the solutions developed by societies against material and moral disorders starting from the mythic period until today. Folk healer, on the other hand, is the wisest and the most respectable person in the society, in terms of materiality and morale. This person has the power of identifying and curing the diseases, disorders, consequently the origin of these diseases and disorders, and the skill of using various drugs for the treatment of the diseases and disorders or applying the practices with the help of information and practices acquired from the tradition.*

*The Turks having rich and deep rooted culture. The Turkish folk medicine and folk healing that contain rich cultural structure in themselves survive until today by being fed by different sources. Before Islam, the Turks used to believe that there were white and black possessors, ancestors' spirits (arvaks) and their healthy and peaceful life depended on getting on with these spirits. They also believed that diseases were caused when they could no more keep in with possessors and spirits, or when they offended and annoyed them. In such an environment of belief, the visible diseases caused by material reasons were generally cured with products obtained from plants, mines and animals in the region or drugs that were made out of their combinations. On the other hand, in invisible diseases associated with spirits and possessors, on the other hand, the treatment was undertaken by kams and they removed the disorder with the help of practices called "kamla-", which involved various magics and bewitcheries. These features of kams occasionally coincide with the features of people known as "ocak" or "ocakli" in many regions of Anatolia. According to the information given by ocak/ocakli people whom we met in various regions, an ocak or ocakli person does not demand a certain fee after or before her/his practices and treatments; thus, there is no bargain between the patient and the ocakli.*

*In this study, folk medicine and folk healing in Turkish culture will be introduced and evaluated.*

**Keywords:** Folk medicine, folk healing, healer, oral culture, old Turks

### Öz

*Halk tıbbı ve halk hekimliği, binlerce yıldır tecrübe edilerek geniş ve açık şekilde öğrenilmiş, yararlanılmış ve sözlü aktarım yoluyla sonraki nesillere bilgisi ve uygulamaları aktarılmış, düzenlenmiş bir*

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In this study, we used our doctoral thesis titled "Folk Beliefs and Folk Medicine in Mersin and Their Surroundings", which was conducted in 2001 at Hacettepe Uni. Social Sciences Inst. Dept. of Turkish Folklore under the counseling of Prof. Dr. Ozkul Cobanoglu. severm@gazi.edu.tr

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sistem olarak tanımlanabilir. Diğer yandan hayli gizli, mistik ve son derece mahalli de olabilir. Halk tababeti, geleneksel hekimlik uygulamaları, ilk insanların tabiat olayları karşısındaki reaksiyonları ve ilişki halinde oldukları toplulukların hekimlik uygulamalarıyla kendi uygulamalarını karşılaştırma, alış-veriş şeklinden doğmuştur. Uygulamaların şekillenmesinde sihrin (büyü) rolü büyük olmuştur. Halk hekimliği, toplumların mitik dönemden başlayarak günümüze kadarki süreçte maddî ve manevî rahatsızlıklara karşı geliştirdikleri çözümler bütünüdür. Halk hekimi ise, toplumun bu yönde maddî ve manevî yönden en bilgilisi ve kendisine en fazla saygı duyulanıdır. Bu kişi, hastalıkları, rahatsızlıkları, dolayısıyla bu rahatsızlık ve hastalıkların kökenini teşhis etme ve tedavi önerme iktidarında ve gelenekten edindiği bilgi ve uygulamalarla rahatsızlığın, hastalığın tedavisine yönelik çeşitli ilaçları kullanma veya pratikleri uygulama becerisine sahiptir.

Türkler, zengin ve derin kökleri olan bir kültüre sahiptir. Türk halk tıbbı ve halk hekimliği, değişik kültürel kaynaklardan beslenerek günümüze kadar gelmiş zengin bir yapıyı içerir. İslâmiyet öncesinde Türkler, hastalıkların ak ve kara iyelerle, ruhlarla aralarının bozulmasından, onları gücendirdiklerinden veya kızdırdıklarından ileri geldiğine inanıyorlardı. Böylesi bir inanç ortamında göz ile görülebilen, maddî sebeplerle meydana gelen hastalıklar, genel olarak yöredeki bitki, maden ve hayvanlardan elde edilen ürünlerden veya bunların terkihiyle meydana getirilen ilaçlarla tedavi ediliyordu. Diğer yandan gözle görülemeyen ve sebebi ruhlara, iyelere bağlanan rahatsızlıklarda ise, kamlar tedaviyi üstleniyor; uyguladıkları çeşitli sihir ve büyülerle rahatsızlığı gideriyorlardı. Kamların bu özellikleri, Anadolu'nun pek çok yerinde "ocak" veya "ocaklı" adıyla bilinen insanların özellikleriyle kimi noktalarda örtüşmektedir. Çeşitli yörelerde gördüğümüz ocak/ocaklı insanların verdikleri bilgilere göre, ocak veya ocaklı olan insan, yaptığı uygulamalar, tedaviler öncesinde veya sonrasında belli bir ücret talep etmemekte, dolayısıyla da hasta ve ocaklı arasında herhangi bir pazarlık söz konusu edilmemektedir.

*Bu çalışmada Türk kültüründeki halk tıbbı ve halk hekimliği tanıtılacak ve değerlendirilecektir.*

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Halk tıbbı, halk hekimliği, hekimler, sözlü kültür, eski Türkler

## Folk Medicine Folk Healing

Folk medicine could be defined as the entire processes and practices adopted by the public in order to identify and cure various diseases with their own efforts. Folk medicine is the solutions developed by societies against material and moral disorders starting from the mythic period (childhood of societies) until today. Folk healer, on the other hand, is the wisest and the most respectable person in the society, in terms of materiality and morale. This person has the power of identifying and curing the diseases, disorders, consequently the origin of these diseases and disorders, and the skill of using various drugs for the treatment of the diseases and disorders or applying the practices with the help of information and practices acquired from the tradition. According to P. N. Boratav<sup>1</sup>, folk medicine is the entire methods and processes adopted by the public in order to identify and cure their diseases when they are unable to go to a doctor due to various reasons. In this respect, the term 'disease' implies a broader meaning than usual. It implies not only the malfunctions in an individual's medical condition, but also various disorders like infertility, ill effects that may come from other people such as evil eye and disabilities that may be

1 Pertev N. Boratav, *100 Soruda Türk Folkloru*, Gerçek Yayınevi, İstanbul 1984, s. 123.

caused by supernatural creatures (such as demons, fairies). Traditional cure practices that are called folk medicine emerge as a consensus between the people in a certain region or the sum of knowledge and practices of a person concerning health<sup>2</sup> Don Yoder asserts that<sup>3</sup> folk medicine has organically been originated from the beliefs, morals, thoughts, lives and speeches of the public and it is the sum of curing methods being applied against diseases among people, as well as the traditional views about diseases, and he separates folk medicine into two parts as natural folk medicine and religious - magic folk medicine. According to Yoder, the natural folk medicine represents the first reactions of man against the nature and involves using various plants, metallic and animal substances in curing the disease. Traditional folk medicine is generally encountered in mountainsides that have a limited connection with the outer world and among women rather than men. On the other hand, it is possible to encounter with the religious-magic folk medicine in almost every layer of society.

Within the frame of the interaction and relationship between man and nature and other people; the individual with wounds, headache, sickness, walking failure, pain, a tied tongue and a difficult birth has always hoped for help from creatures in the nature and sought a cure for his disease from trees, rocks, animals and flowers. Man, which has survived by trying and learning what plants, animal products or combinations to use in order to remove his material or moral disorders and problems with the help of both his own experiences and the knowledge inherited by the old through traditions, has always used his experiences in protecting his health and the health of other people and animals.

Basic perceptions, attitudes, thoughts and practices of people in any geographical environment regarding material and moral disorders, diseases and treatment of these disorders and diseases reflect the character of their cultural environment. How people perceive and evaluate the disease, question the reasons of the disease and disorder, as well as the practices that have been applied as a method of treatment for thousands of years are associated with the belief system of the society and are interpreted according to this belief system. Religious structure of the society and its relations in the organization as the social structure (such as family, affinity, neighborhood, friendship, hostility) determine the diagnosis and treatment of diseases and disorders.

2 David Hufford, "*Halk Hekimleri*", (Ed. R. M. Dorson, Handbook of American Folklore, Indiana University Pres, Bloomington 1986 içinde "Folk Healers", p. 306-313, (Çev. Mustafa Sever), Milli Folklor, sayı 73, 2007, 74.

3 Don Yoder, "*Halk Tıbbı*", Folklor Doğru, sayı 43, 1975, s. 23.

## Perception of Folk Medicine in the Old Turks

Before Islam, the Turks used to believe that there were white and black possessors, ancestors' spirits (arvaks) and their healthy and peaceful life depended on getting on with these spirits. They also believed that diseases were caused when they could no more keep in with possessors and spirits, or when they offended and annoyed them. In such an environment of belief, the visible diseases caused by material reasons were generally cured with products obtained from plants, mines and animals in the region or drugs that were made out of their combinations. Atebetü'l Hakayık<sup>4</sup> involves the term "otala-(=make cure)", which apparently signifies that the Turks made drugs out of herbs, plants and used them in the treatment of various diseases. In invisible diseases associated with spirits and possessors, on the other hand, the treatment was undertaken by kams and they removed the disorder with the help of practices called "kamla-", which involved various magics and bewitcheries. Similarly, in "Kutadgu Bilig" (1070, A.D.) that was written during the acceptance of Islam, Yusuf Has Hacip asserts that while all diseases and pains could be cured by healers, other diseases caused by demons and fairies could be cured by magicians:

"One of them is the healers; they cure all diseases and pains. They are followed by magicians; these magicians cure diseases caused by demons and fairies. It is required to also see them and make them say a prayer for diseases caused by demons and fairies"<sup>5</sup> The "magicians" mentioned by Yusuf Has Hacip are the kams that used to cure many material and moral disorders with their skills in the old Turkish culture. According to the information given by A. İnan<sup>6</sup>, kams could be both male and female. She/he is a natural member of the society and could be superior to or different from other people only when she/he conducts a religious ceremony, gives up God, possessors and spirits, and experiences an ecstasy. Once the state of ecstasy is over, the kam is no more different from ordinary people. Some tribesmen provide an annual income for their kams, whereas some others pay a fee for each ceremony. Kams never bargain; they receive whatever is given. Real kams are not generally addicted to earthly things. Legends about kams suggest that real kams are obliged to be poor. They make themselves believe in this.

4 Reşit Rahmeti Arat, *Atebetü'l Hakayık*, Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, Ankara 1992, s. L.

5 Reşit Rahmeti Arat, *Kutadgu Bilig I*, Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, Ankara 1991, s. 315.

4356 - Olarda birisi otacı turur

Kamug ig togaka bu emçi erür

4361 - Bularda basa keldi afsunçılar

Bu yi yeklig igke bu ol emçiler

4362 - Bularka yime ök katılgı kerek

Bu yil yeklig igke okıgu kerek

6 Abdülkadir İnan, *Tarihte ve Bugün Şamanizm-Materyaller ve Araştırmalar*, Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, Ankara 1972, s.80.

These features of kams occasionally coincide with the features of people known as “ocak” or “ocakli” in many regions of Anatolia. According to the information given by ocak/ocakli people whom we met in various regions (such as Mersin, Kayseri, Kırşehir, Ankara), an ocak or ocakli person does not demand a certain fee after or before her/his practices and treatments; thus, there is no bargain between the patient and the ocakli. However, a person who goes to the ocak due to a certain problem or disease gives a certain amount of money (whatever her heart desires) to the ocakli as a “weight/innocence” in order to remove the “hand weight” of the ocakli or disable her/him to be influenced by the disease during the treatment/practice, which is sustained as a procedural application. Unless the aforementioned weight/innocence is given to the ocak, it is believed that the ocakli will be influenced by that patient’s disease and get sick.

### **Folk Medicine in the Present Process**

According to our compilations, the reasons of majority of diseases are related with the traditional belief system. The reasons of diseases that are shortly separated into two parts as material and moral reasons are diversified as the impairment of the cold-hot balance, evil powers and evil eye. In the folk belief, the diseases are thought to be caused by natural and supernatural beings. Being affected by evil eyes, haunted by evil spirits, eating a harmful substance or carrying evil spirits within the body are also considered among the reasons of diseases. Such diseases are cured with plants, animal products, “parpilama”, inspirations like saying a prayer, magics and bewitcheries, visiting holy places and tombs, carrying an amulet. Beliefs and practices like visiting holy places, applying to tombs, making hodjas write amulets and shoulder belts, hoping for help from ocaks, which are among the treatment methods, are based on the cultural values and beliefs of the society.

The evaluation of the disease by the society, as well as the protection activities and beliefs against the disease are in parallel with the cultural environment. Indeed, the determination of the sick and non-sick changes according to cultures, which is observed in accepting a psychologically disturbed person as insane in a place and saint in the other. Proceedings aimed at identifying, naming and consequently curing the disease are evaluated within the social life and even the culture of that society. The culture and social structure of each society develop the health and disease problems according to their own cultural values. Protection and treatment methods of diseases make sense according to the cultural structure.

Folk medicine and traditional medical practices emerged as a result of the reactions of primitive men against natural events and their ways of comparing and exchanging the medical practices of relevant communities with

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their own practices. Magic played an important role in shaping the practices. "In this thought of enginedriver universe, the impairment or reestablishment of the eternal harmony was associated with the idea of evil or two forces"<sup>7</sup> According to the old Turkish belief system, magicians and kams used to establish relationships with supernatural powers and spirits when good or evil powers bothered the people. In this entire practice that was directed by religious beliefs and magic, diseases were explained with strange and supernatural elements within the human body and the evil done by them in either the human or animal body. People thought about some solutions in order to be protected from these evil powers and avoid their effects, which ended up laying the foundations of folk medicine with the help of practices that were shaped by the agreement of community members on these solutions.

Considering from this aspect, if the treatment that starts with the diagnosis of the disease among the folk cures the patient, other people adopt and sustain this treatment method, as well. On the other hand, if the treatment fails and results in the damage or death of the patient, that treatment method is replaced by another treatment method. Since the objective is to cure the patient, all religious-magical ways are tried. By the way, modern medicine methods are not ignored, either. For instance, eating or drinking lemon in case of flu is a well-known treatment method in folk medicine. On the other hand, melting aspirin within the lemon juice and drinking it signifies the combination of folk medicine with modern medicine by the public. According to the determinations of O. Türkdöğän<sup>8</sup>, there is an important separation between the scientific medicine and traditional medicine. While scientific medicine requires the precise information within the restraint of causality based on cause-effect relationship, traditional medicine emphasizes beliefs and some experienced empirical (experimental) knowledge rather than such a logical restraint. Thus, the traditional medicine is not a random alignment of beliefs and practices; instead, it reveals the sample of a perfectly organized medical theory. Consisting of a system of some knowledge and beliefs, the traditional medicine involves the nature of man, as well as his relationships with the supernatural order and the environment. In reality, these knowledge and beliefs are a part of the social culture and they create it. "The connections of the folk medicine system enable it to survive in the face of modern medicine and prevent the decrease of its significance. Regular connections between the treatment methods and problems enable us to resist the change with the help of the weight of the entire system. For instance, "Vance Randolph cites from a person selling herbs: The mighty Allah sent no irremediable disease to earth". Such a statement shows us the connection between belief and herbs and regaining health based on the divine

7 Orhan Türkdöğän, "Tıbbî Folklor Açısından Sağlık-Hastalık Sistemi.", III. Milletlerarası Türk Folklor Kongresi Bildirileri IV, Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, Ankara 1987, s. 406.

8 Orhan Türkdöğän, "Bir Kasabada Geleneksel Tıp ve Modern Tıp Sürekliliği." I. Uluslararası Türk Folklor Semineri Bildirileri, Başbakanlık Basımevi, Ankara 1974, s. 42; agm.,1987, s. 407.

power. This ordinary type of connection provides a balance for the tradition of healing with herbs in such a sceptical way that the evidences presented by modern medicine are unable to reach these relationships. As a result of this connection, while a person that heals may become a weak protector of the tradition with the great knowledge of healing in traditional ways, another person may be much more efficient through making or carrying a better connection with a very little part of these knowledge"<sup>9</sup>

Today, patients or patient relatives prefer either the modern medicine or the traditional medicine in the treatment of diseases in many regions. However, this fact should not signify that they apply to the traditional medicine in diseases that can not be cured by the modern medicine. Because modern medicine is generally preferred when the traditional medical methods are tried and no positive result is obtained. When the treatment of modern medicine gives no result at all, the patient is generally consoled and a remedy is sought for her/his pain by applying to the sacred. From this point of view, there are no precise boundaries between the traditional medicine and the modern medicine. People behave more pragmatically at this point. Traditional medicine displays a completely different and irreconcilable attitude compared to the modern medicine; however, it may also compromise with the modern medicine from time to time. Instead of seeking a possible cause-effect relationship between the events and conditions causing the disease, the folk medicine emphasizes "some magical, supernatural and unexplainable mystical senses"<sup>10</sup> However, in spite of this fact, both the folk medicine and modern medicine include various treatment methods. It is possible to determine the relational elements between the traditional medicine and the modern medicine only through determining the similarities between them.

In spite of the fact that the modern medicine has made a significant progress and the traditional folk medicine has dwindled today, the present oaks, bonesetters, herbalists and herborists show the opposite in reality. Both the modern medicine and the traditional medicine coexist and have dealings with one another today; because the modern medicine "emerged in the most advanced stage of the medical folklore and developed the medical folklore as well"<sup>11</sup> While the modern medicine sustains its relations with the rationalist aspects of the traditional folk medicine, the folk medicine uses the methods of attainable and applicable methods of the modern medicine in its own ways.

Today, the diseases and their treatment methods are handled according to the classification of cold – hot in the folk medicine of many regions. For instance, in the treatment of both people and animals that are believed to have

9 , David Hufford, agm., s. 74.

10 OrhanTürkdoğan 1974, agm., s. 46.

11 İkbalsucu, "Ege Bölgesi Halk İlaçları", Türk Halk Hekimliği Sempozyumu Bildirileri, Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, Ankara 1989, s. 211.

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caught cold, the patient is given stuff (like honey, honey juice, pepper honey, molasses) that would warm up in order to heal her/him. The patient is also made sweat with the help of a blanket, which is commonly believed to “remove many diseases”<sup>12</sup> Paying attention to the stuff being given, such as honey and molasses, it is observed that they directly mix with blood and increase the body temperature. Pepper, on the other hand, is a strong spice. Spice has long been known with its effect of working up the appetite and easing the digestion. On the other hand, “when a lot of chili foods are consumed, the faster function of internal secretion organs increases the sweat secretion, which results in sweating the toxins out”<sup>13</sup>

The main objective of these proceedings and applications is to protect the health and fertility of people and animals with both material and moral beliefs and practices. Turks have always considered animals important. The old Turkish lifestyle was based on sheep, goat, horse, ox and camel herds, in other words stockbreeding. Animals provided food such as “milk, cream, butter, yoghurt, kumis, kimran” for them. The skins of animals were used in saddlery.<sup>14</sup> The Turks that primarily lived on stockbreeding gave a great importance to animals and thus, the animal health. They applied their diagnosis and treatment methods also on animals. For instance, in *Divanü Lûgat-İt-Türk*<sup>15</sup>, the term “anğduz” is explained as a root extracted out of soil, used as a drug for stomach ache and also as a drug that would be used for sick horses by blowing its powder form through their noses. Thus, just like other societies, the Turks also “kneaded the human and animal medicine together for a long time and the people applied their own treatment methods on animals, as well.”<sup>16</sup> Those who identify and cure the diseases of both humans and animals are primarily called “ocak” or “ocaklı”. In times and places where ocak or ocaklı is not available, the diseases are identified and cured by hodjas, magicians, wizards that are allowed by the ocaklı to do these practices and are trusted in the vicinity. These people that are considered folk healers are believed to have inherited their skills from their ancestors and fathers as they have reliable knowledge and manners. Their experience enables them to write out prescriptions for some diseases by using the plants in the environment that apparently had worked out in their own or other people’s experiences so far. Rather than working as a professional, they recommend some plants and thus drugs by combining the statements like “My midwife or mother used to do it like...” or “My grandfather used to tell...” with their own knowledge and manners in order to

12 Hamza Orhan, “*Halk Hekimliği*”, *Halk Bilgisi Haberleri Dergisi*, sayı 68, 1937, s. 169.

13 Nevin Tanker “*Baharatın Halk İlacı Olarak Değerlendirilmesi*”, *Türk Halk Hekimliği Sempozyumu Bildirileri*, Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, Ankara 1989, s. 246.

14 Ziya Gökalp, *Türk Uygarlığı Tarihi*, İnkılâp Kitabevi Yay., İstanbul 1991, s. 287.

15 Besim ATALAY, *Divanü Lûgat-İt-Türk Tercümesi*, Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, Ankara 1985, s. 116.

16 Erden Sedat Arslan, “*Ege Bölgesi Folklorunda Veteriner Hekimliği ve Hayvancılık Üzerine Araştırmalar*.” Ankara Üniversitesi, Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü, Ankara 1998, s. 5, (Yayımlanmamış Doktora tezi). s. 5



help their neighbors. These people that use the tradition have some content formulas. Folk healers, midwives, ocaklis or whatever; they roughly keep the treatment methods or plants and other substances to be used in mind; however, they add new substances or replace them with others in each practice. In other words, plants and other substances that are used in every practice are composed again. Once the practice works out and is appreciated and approved by the society, the treatment method or the substances that are used in the treatment are placed in the memory of the society. If the practice fails, it is forgotten together with the person (such as ocakli, midwife) who conducts it.

Such people who dominate the diagnosis of the disease based on the complaints of the patient recommend treatment methods by developing the practices performed on patients who had applied with similar complaints before. In other words, they determine the disease by interpreting and evaluating the pain or ache complained by the patient according to their experience. They never use an examination tool during the diagnosis. Such people use various treatment methods according to the course or the type of diseases. Sometimes they cure the disease by obtaining a mixture from the leaves, flowers or roots of one or a few plants. And sometimes they try to cure the patient and remove her/his pain by rubbing, squeezing some body parts, holding the nerves or veins, scratching some parts, or taking blood through cutting and bleeding some veins. Some of these people “only take care of patients whom they believe to be convenient for treatment”<sup>17</sup> and recommend doctors for those whom they believe not to be convenient for treatment. And some of them (who generally attract attention with their religious identities and are considered to be closer to Allah due to their reliable spiritual personality) cure the patient by saying a prayer for the patient, making her/him drink a sacred water, carry an amulet or drink its water rather than using any plants, drugs, etc. These healing methods include religious-magical methods and are culturally or traditionally used by ocaklis, imams, in other words the folk healers in order to cure the diseases with the help of some material and moral instruments and practices. In such treatments, the patient is generally believed to be haunted by demons. People who arrive in the places of demons without permission, pass water or wastes in these places and consequently disturb the demons are haunted by demons. According to the folk belief, “it is possible to encounter with demons in obscure, dirty, shadowy and dark places like toilets, mills, lofts, wasteyards, desolate places, wild places, hammams, all kinds of ruins, forests, quiet places, swamps and tandouris”<sup>18</sup> These superhuman creatures that are also accepted by Islam and are separated into two as good and evil actually live under ground; however, these creatures also “like going out

17 Gülnaz Savran, “Adana’dan Derlenen Bazı Halk Hekimliği ve Halk Veterinerliği Uygulamalarının Karşılaştırılması.” II. Türk Halk Kültürü Araştırma Sonuçları Sempozyumu Bildirileri, Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, Ankara 2000, s. 343.

18 Nuri Taner, “Halk İnanmalarında CİN ve CİN Tutma” Türk Folkloru Dergisi, sayı 43, 1983, s. 12.

of the ground very much. One of the places they frequently gather is the door sills.<sup>19</sup> Thus, sitting on door sills is not approved. While talking about demons and fairies, people avoid calling their names; instead, they say “things”, “those in good health”, “three letters”. Since the treatment of the patient aimed at removing the evil of demons generally addresses to her/his belief and psychology, the patient is observed to have a positive morale. The very same people cure the patients bitten by snakes or scorpions by bewitching the aching area and saying a prayer.

In the process of making drugs and curing with drugs, people generally use plants that exist in their geographical environment. In addition to this, they also use animal products like milk, butter and honey. People use available plants and products in the environment, which shows the effect of the environmental factor upon the determination of drugs. For instance, while lemon, grapefruit juice is used in killing the kidney pain and helping pass a kidney stone in fruit growing places, blackberry root or madder is used for the treatment of the same disease in high plateaus where it is not possible to grow fruits. In the treatment of diseases, it is observed that as well as plants and animal products, people also use substances like cologne, sugar, soap instead of some useful substances under the changing life conditions. For instance, since it is difficult to find honey today, this substance is replaced by sugar, molasses and even jam in the composition of a drug to be made with honey. While people used to put a mixture of butter and honey on the bleeding head of a child who fell off a tree or a wall, they use drugs and practices required by the modern medicine today; however, in case of failing to attain these drugs, they put a chewed loaf of bread dipped in jam on the bleeding area.

### Conclusion

In the present process, it is a primary problem to go to a doctor or a hospital due to economic troubles and insufficiencies. In addition to this, our people generally ignore their diseases. They are negligent in going to a doctor or a hospital with the thought, “It will somehow be okay” or the inducements of other people, such as “That person had a pain and drank something” or “He did so and got better”. On the other hand, in case that a female patient coming from a village or a town is examined by a male doctor, or a male patient is examined by a female doctor, she/he experiences a great shyness, feels strange and finds the traditional ocakli or midwife closer. In diseases that develop in private areas of body, either men or women refuse to see a doctor literally until it is not bearable anymore. As the patient and her/his relatives apply to the hospital at an advanced stage and thus are unable to heal there, they start making negative evaluations about the hospital and the doctor for justifiable reasons, which is yet another reason for the public to direct towards the folk medicine instead of the modern medicine. The folk medicine applications that

19 Burhan Oğuz, *Türkiye Halkının Kültür Kökenleri II*, Doğu-Batı Yayınları, İstanbul 1980, s. 707.

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are preferred by women at a greater rate compared to men “are replaced by the modern medicine applications in parallel with the increase of people’s educational level and getting closer to the city center”<sup>20</sup> Diseases that can not be handled by the modern medicine are cured with the diagnosis and treatment methods of the folk medicine. Even if there is no physical treatment, the folk medicine tries to morally strengthen the patient and increase her/his resistance against the disease, which is one of its positive aspects. However, one point to be emphasized here is that folk medicine is highly open to misuse. Fake physicians, magicians and amulet writers who make use of this condition of patients and their relatives seeking a remedy for their diseases and intrigue or deceive them delay the treatment of the disease, detain the patients and derive an improper personal benefit. The so-called “hope mongers practise magic and make amulets regarding the moon stroke, binding the monsters, being smooth-tongued, giving birth to a beautiful babygirl, making the sun rise, undressing a beautiful woman and making love with fairies”<sup>21</sup> Hope mongers that deceive many people including those who are unable to have a child, as well as those who have a mental disorder, are done with conflicts in the family and want to rise in business conduct their activities by using the innocent religious feelings of people.

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