

ARE LULLABIES TO SLEEP?

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ABSTRACT: In terms of lullabies, the strongest and the prior perception in the human mind is to set the relation between sleep and lullaby. The Lullaby is of course related to sleep, but not limited to it. In this paper, while taking into account the features of both the performance and the content of lullabies, we would like to draw attention to the functions of lullabies apart from sleep.

The lullaby, which carries not only individual feelings and thoughts, but also collective feelings and ideals, is a literary genre which also has a practical side; namely, putting children to sleep. Key words: lullaby, individual feelings, collective feelings, to raise awareness, social function.

NİNNİLER UYUMAK İÇİN MİDİR?

ÖZET: Ninniler söz konusu olduğunda insan zihnindeki en kuvvetli ve öncelikli algı ninni ile uyku ilişkisini kurmak olagelmıştır. Ninni, tabii ki uyku ile ilgilidir, fakat uyku ile sınırlı değildir. Biz bu bildirimizde ninnilerin muhteva ve icra özelliklerini dikkate alarak uyutmak dışındaki işlevlerine de dikkat çekmek istiyoruz.

Ninni gerek bireysel duygular ve düşünceleri, gerekse de milli his ve idealleri anlatmada da etkili bir iletişim fonksiyonu yüklenen bir edebi türdür. Anahtar kelimeler: ninni, ferdi hisler, milli hisler, uyandırmak, sosyal fonksiyon.

Introduction

Lullaby is sung mostly by the mother and is produced between the mother and baby/child as a product of oral culture. It can not be said that lullabies are studied enough because of lacking of compiling and publishing of lullabies. Lullabies which contain both language material and folkloric aspects, are available to handle a rich and intact issue with different methods and approaches¹.

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¹ Bess Lomax Hawes took into account the functions of the processed American lullabies in putting children to sleep by making comparisons with examples of Spain and Japan and by taking into consideration physical activities. See: Bess Lomax Hawes, "Folksongs and Function: Some Thoughts on the American Lullaby", The Journal of American Folklore, volume: 87, Issue: 334, p. 140-148. Semeiologic functions of lullabies were studied by Zeki Karakaya. In this study, lullabies were analyzed in point of structure, layers of meaning and functions and have been handled more in terms of linguistics. See: Zeki Karakaya, "Göstergebilimsel İşlevler Açısından Ninniler", Milli Folklor, Issue: 61, Spring 2004, p. 44-57. Dr. Suat Urgan examined lullabies in terms of comfortably sleeping of children and development of their language and sociability taking into account music with a functional approach. See: Dr. Suat Urgan, İşlevsel Yönleriyle Ninniler, Ankara, Pegem Akademi, 2009. With feminist approach, Meric Kurtulmus examined the lullabies. She assessed that lullabies reflect women's world in a feminine voice and can able to discuss in context of women style of lullaby type. See: Meriç Kurtuluş, "Ninnilerde Kadın Sorununa Bakış", Milli Folklor,

Our purpose in study to understand whether lullabies have functions other than visible functions. We'll try to find out to some extent, is lullaby's inforcement and impact area a limited kind of communication relationship between mother and baby? Turkish lullabies held in a limited study are tested in a functional approach. While lullabies as melodies and statements are studied in two separate respects, each of them should separately be considered in function space. The results of study show that melodic structure, musical sound, text content and statement are requirements for both individual and national feelings and needs².

A. Lullabies to Put Babies to Sleep

A. 1. Lullaby-Sleep Relation: Lullabies are a kind of folk's songs that appear within a stanza of four lines. They are sung with a special rhythm. A lullaby might reflect the mood of the mother. Lullabies are often sung swinging the baby in the lap or in the crib, either to put the baby of three months to three or four years to sleep or to pacify it or to stop its crying.³ Within Çelebioğlu's comprehensive definition, the functions of putting to sleep and pacifying are realized upon the child, whereas, on the mother's part, the lullaby serves to reflect her mood.

Üçer-Tan, while naming the lullabies as "the folk songs of mothers," emphasized the soporific aspect of lullabies.⁴ In addition, Üçer suggests that the child recognizes the familiar, reassuring and comforting sound of the mother's voice. This alone might be sufficient to put the child to sleep.⁵

In a piece of writing⁶ on Soviet Communism called "The End of Lullabies," Revel describes how the Western people purposely closed their eyes in response to Soviet expansion. Throughout this essay, the words 'sleep' and 'lullaby' are used interchangeably. This illustrates the powerful

Issue: 88, Winter 2010, p. 44-52. See: Belde Aka with the backing of Freud's views, interpreted lullabies in the psychoanalytic context. She emphasized effect of the mother's state of mind in formation and changing of texts. Belde Aka, "Ninnileri Psikanalitik Yaklaşımla Yeniden Okuma Denemesi", Milli Folklor, Issue: 88, Winter 2010, p. 38- 43.

² This article with the title "Are Lullabies to sleep?" is made with the extension of our paper which presented in **Turkologist Omelyan Pritsak International Symposium** on 22 May 2009 in Ukraine.

³ Âmil Çelebioğlu, *Türk Ninniler Hazinesi*, Kitabevi, İstanbul 1995, p. 9.

⁴ Müjgan Üçer, "Sivas'ta Doğum Folkloru", *Sivas Folkloru*, Issue: 47, Sivas 1976, p. 8, Nail Tan, "Ninnilerimiz", *Çocuklarımıza Folklor Hazinesimizden Seçmeler*, Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, Ankara 1986, p. 38.

⁵ Üçer, *Ibid*, p. 8.

⁶ Jean-François Revel, "Ninnilerin Sonu", terc. Kur. Bnb. Ziya Burcuoğlu, *Silahlı Kuvvetler Dergisi*, Issue : 99/276, 1980, p. 69-71.

link between the concepts of ‘sleep’ and ‘lullaby.’ Lullaby is the name of a hotel in Kırklareli, Babaeski. This is an obvious sign of the relation between sleep and lullaby.⁷

A. 2. Lullaby-Music Relation: The word Lullaby calls to mind the adjectives: simple, monotonous, slow, and floaty. One imagines the lullaby giving feeling of tranquility and of sleep, all which may be accompanied by a small musical instrument, but mostly occurs to be only vocal, a short musical piece that is sung in order to put children into sleep.⁸

During the pre-school years, children's first encounter with music is through lullabies and folk songs.⁹ For example, when Turkish mothers put babies to sleep say like this:

Lover of the lullabies
Lovely bedtime melodies
A bunch of rosebuds smelling sweet
Ninni my sweetheart, *ninni*.¹⁰

“melody of the sleep times,” as having been used in the stanza, is interesting in terms of conveying mothers being aware of the positive effect of lullaby in sleeping.

Turkish women in the past made no effort to memorize lullabies, or what might pass for a lullaby. To put it shortly, the lullaby, in the musical sense of the word, did not exist. To illustrate, rather than sing what is today called a lullaby, a mother sang her own interpretation of a song that she had heard from somewhere. This lullaby, if we may call it such, was unique in that it did not conform to any standard interpretation; therefore, it was an individual, sometimes improvised, composition.¹¹

What we hear and learn during childhood has a profound and lifelong influence on us, more than things learned during other phases of life.

Famous composer Gounod states “My mother, who also happened to be my wet nurse, fed me with songs just as much as she did with milk. She

⁷ Serves as the boutique hotel business in Babaeski its name was selected as a “Lullaby Hotel”. See. : <http://hotelninni.com/index-F.html>

⁸ Yılmaz Öztuna, “Ninni”, *Türk Musikisi Ansiklopedesi*, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, Volume: II, İstanbul 1974, p. 91.

⁹ Ahmet Borcaklı, “Çocuk ve Müzik İlişkileri”, *Türk Folklor Araştırmaları*, Issue: XVI/ 315, İstanbul 1975, p. 7451.

¹⁰ Âmil Çelebioğlu, *Türk Ninniler Hazinesi*, Kitabevi, İstanbul 1990, p. 264.

¹¹ Münir Süleyman Çapanoğlu, “Eski İstanbul’dan Enstantaneler Eski Ninniler”, *Yeni Türk*, Issue: 10/113-114, İstanbul 1942, p. 13.

would not even breastfeed me until she had sung me a song. These songs represented my first lessons in music. It is very difficult to teach young people this sort of lesson at any time other than early childhood. I was therefore able to learn them easily, without placing a burden on my parents”.¹²

The style with which a lullaby is sung depends on the situation the child is in. If a child happens to be crying, the singer starts by singing at a treble pitch and then deepens into a bass pitch. Once the child is pacified, the singer should sing bass notes until the child falls asleep.¹³

The lullabies that Turkish mothers have sung for ages and continue to sing utilize the Hedjaz makam or melody system and the Sofian rhythm. (Şirin, 1990: 27). Mother have also been known to sing lullabies in the sabazemzeme makam which utilizes a Huseyni tuning, and the Bayati makam, in addition to the Hedjaz makam.¹⁴

Just as some lullabies were anonymously composed, others represent the work of well-known composers. Among the composers of Western music are Webber, Schubert, Chopin, Schumann, Brahms, Manuel de Falla, and Stravinsky. Among the lullaby composers who adopt the song form and style of Turkish Classical Music are Tanbûri Cemil Bey, Şerif İçli, Münir Nureddin Selçuk, Timuçin Tanrıkorur. Turkish musicians who have composed lullabies according to the style of Western music include: Nuri Sami Koral, Erdoğan Çaplı, Saip Egüz, Muammer Sun, İlhan Baran, Cenan Akın, and Yalçın Turan.¹⁵

B. The Non-Sleep-Inducing Functions of Lullabies

In the lines of verse that follow, let us observe the exhortation, “Wake up!”:

Mommy cooked rice that tastes rather bland
Lullaby lullaby lullaby
Add chopped onions to the rice in the pan
Lullaby lullaby lullaby
I shake the cradle
Lullaby lullaby lullaby
Wake up, little baby wake up,

¹² Borcaklı, Ibid, p. 7451.

¹³ Ali Emir Dursun, *Folklorumuzda Ninniler, Sevmelikler, Okşamalıklar*, Önder Matbaa ve Gazetecilik, Sivas 1992, p. 6.

¹⁴ Haydar Sanal, “İstanbul’da Derlenen Ninniler”, *İstanbul Enstitüsü Dergisi*, Issue : 3, İstanbul 1957, p. 147.

¹⁵ Çelebioğlu, Ibid, p. 38-39.

Lullaby lullaby lullaby.¹⁶

As the lullaby above demonstrates, putting the child to sleep is only one use for lullabies; in fact, the full range of functions that lullabies serve is much broader. For example, women who have never given birth sing lullabies, as do mothers whose children have died. Lullabies give expression to solitary or communal suffering, express hopes and dreams, and serve to pass values and principles down from generation to generation.

Borcaklı classifies lullabies according to their functions thus:

“Dandan” or Dandini” lullabies, which are sung when dandling the baby or holding it in one’s lap.

“Baby dirges” sung at funerals.

“Humorous baby Folk songs” sung by the father, mother other family members or friends.

“Baby Folk Songs in the form of Appeals or Wishes,” a variety that gives expression to the desire that the baby should grow up to become an adult.¹⁷

Lullabies are not likely to be associated with their melody, but rather with their lyrical content; that is, the individual or communal desires that are expressed in their lyrics.

Âmil Çelebioglu provides us with an exhaustive classification scheme of the lyrical content of lullabies:

1. Lyrics of religious, holy or narrative nature
2. Epic lullabies or those which eulogize
3. Those expressing an appeal or a heartfelt wish
4. Those expressing love in or interest for another individual
5. Satirical lullabies or lullabies expressing praise
6. Lullabies expressing a complaint or sorrow
7. Lullabies to express the pain of separation or of homesickness
8. Lullabies of the variety that promise fidelity
9. Lullabies to threaten or to frighten.¹⁸

We will now address the topics of “individual hopes and feelings” and “nationalist sentiment and ideals” as they apply to lullabies.

¹⁶ Dursun, *Ibid*, p. 32.

¹⁷ Borcaklı, *Ibid*, p. 7451.

¹⁸ Çelebioğlu, *Ibid*, p. 20.

B.1. Lullabies having to do with individual hopes and dreams

B.1.1. Lullabies sung by those who are childless: The following lullaby was sung by a childless woman: One must tread down the path to Istanbul to meet the incoming rider mothers who don't bear children should be shot full of lead give me the object of my desire or take my life like this is not worth living.¹⁹

The following example is sung by a woman whose husband has divorced her and plans to remarry because of her inability to conceive. She expresses the torture of not being able to sing lullabies to her child:

Supper cooking in the tin-coated pan
I see a vision of a child playing
My husband found another wife and now he's leaving me
I did not sing a lullaby and now my dreams are blasted.²⁰

We commonly find references to the "Stone baby" legend in lullabies sung by Anatolian women who are unable to conceive. The "Stone Baby" legend, which has many different local varieties, more or less relates the following: A couple marries, and their inability to conceive is blamed on the woman. As the couple grows older, the male takes a second wife. The wife, who is already vexed with the absence of a child in the household, grows even more despondent when a second wife is added to that same household. To summarize, the husband has taken a second wife, and the first wife, weighed down with sorrow, creates a baby out of stone. She prays day and night that the stone baby be brought to life. She sings her prayers in the form of a lullaby. She beseeches God, the Prophet, the four caliphs, and the saints for assistance. At dawn, the lifeless rock turns into a living baby of real flesh and blood.

Example:

Grapes are found in the grocery lullaby lullaby
Tears of blood my two eyes shed
Cry, little baby made of stone
Let these wild herbs give you life. lullaby lullaby.²¹

¹⁹ Çelebioğlu, *Ibid*, p. 99.

²⁰ Ali Emir Dursun, *Folklorumuzda Ninniler, Sevmelikler, Okşamalıklar*, Önder Matbaa ve Gazetecilik, Sivas 1992, p. 6.

²¹ Nasih Güngör, "Taş Bebek Efsanesi", *Yeni Görüş*, Issue: 1/5, 1939, p. 14.

B.1.2. Lullabies sung to little children

Lullabies have not traditionally been sung to newborn children, but only after about two months, when the child's acuity of hearing has developed to a certain point.²²

There is a difference between lullabies sung during the period of childhood that precedes speech production and those that are sung to children between the ages of 2 to 5. As for pre-speech childhood, the mother sings of her own circumstances, family members, daily problems, joys, daily chores and even the particular chore she happens to be doing at the moment of singing.²³

Âmil Çelebioğlu, in an interview about lullaby as a literary genre proposes that between the ages three-four, the feelings of anger, promise, disappointment becomes more effective.²⁴ Although lullabies are addressed to babies, mothers tend to express their daily problems, the mood that they are in and their expectation for the future and many more personal feelings and hopes through lullabies.

Examples:

These mountains are high and high my sweetheart ninni
Who knows your troubles my sweetheart ninni
Were all the trees pencils and all the seas ink my sweetheart ninni
My troubles couldn't be written down my sweetheart ninni.²⁵

Swing swing the swing
My son will be a king
His father was killed
He will take the revenge.²⁶

Let my sweetheart sleep
Let her sleep and spring
And let her be a teacher
And teach the kids.²⁷

The pebbles of the creeks
The lashes lay like sticks

²² Çapanoğlu, Ibid, p. 13.

²³ Sanal, Ibid, p. 145.

²⁴ Mustafa Ruhi Şirin, "Prof. Dr. Âmil Çelebioğlu ile 'Ninni Edebiyatı' Üzerine", *Türk Edebiyatı*, Issue: 205, İstanbul 1990, p. 30.

²⁵ Müjgan Üçer, "Sivas'ta Doğum Folkloru", *Sivas Folkloru*, Ibid : 47, Sivas 1976, p. 8.

²⁶ Çelebioğlu, Ibid, p. 94.

²⁷ Çelebioğlu, Ibid, p. 167.

My son will grow and become
a king
Nen, nen, nen, nen!²⁸

B.2. Lullabies About Patriotism and Ideals: Apart from individual feelings and wishes, lullabies can contain patriotic feelings and ideals. The affective aspect becomes predominant in these types of lullabies, while the source may be either anonymous or known.

Mothers also succeed to reach the society through the lullabies that she recites. They have the dream of the future with their babies on their laps and reveal the secrets of the existence; they talk to the trees, mountains, birds, they make the stones speak and grab the stars with their hands.²⁹

Rather than putting the babies to sleep, the lullabies being recited with patriotic feelings and concerns become effective on the grown-ups who listen to them and who will listen to them in the future. Mostly these lullabies are addressed to the boys.

In one of Greek lullabies, the child is motivated to conquer and dominate Istanbul.³⁰ This objective can be considered as a national one not only for the kids of the time but also for the entire generations until the city is conquered.

As well as in the times of peace, the effect of the lullabies have made their impact during the times of war. Çapanoğlu illustrates the role of the lullabies at the end of the Balkans War, “This important way of nurturing should not be ignored. Let's not forget the fact that what caused the Bulgarians, Greeks, Serbians and Montenegrins to win the war is the lullabies and poems that cry out the hatred against Turks”.³¹

Examples:

Armenian Lullaby
Ninni my sweetheart sleep
Don't hear the cries of wounded father
It is not milk but poison from my breasts
These sacred places flooded with blood
You never escape, stay on your land and cherish it always
Never be slave on your native land, always ascend and dominate
If I am not falled on your father

²⁸ Çelebioğlu, Ibid, p. 168.

²⁹ Şirin, Ibid, p. 28.

³⁰ Çelebioğlu, Ibid, p. 36-37.

³¹ Çapanoğlu, Ibid, p. 14.

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That's why I want to raise a female wolf of Rome like Romülüs³²
My arms are tied, my legs are tied
Oh they cut my breasts as well!
Suck my blood from wound my sweetheart
I now die and leave Armania as your mother
I also leave you this sword that smells your
Father's warm blood on.³³

Long live German!
Don't give the time,
Bombed
and burned down the city and the port
Oh my God,
Triumph over the Moskof (Russians)
E, e, e, e...
Wish your father could be back soon
E, e, e, e...
Could be back my sweetheart,
E, e, e, e.³⁴

A lullaby that was recited to a boy in a brave manner.

Ninni ninni sleep my baby
Be as tall as a willow
Sleep, sleep and grow

³² Romulus and Remus are the traditional founders of Rome, appearing in Roman mythology as the twin sons of the Vestal Virgin Rhea Silvia, fathered by the god of war, Mars. According to the tradition recorded as history by Plutarch and Livy, Romulus served as the first King of Rome. Romulus slew Remus over a dispute about which one of the two brothers had the support of the local deities to rule the new city and give it his name. The name they gave the city was Rome. In the legendary First Augury, Romulus stood on one hill and Remus another, a circle of birds flew over Romulus, signifying that he should be king. After founding Rome, Romulus not only created the Roman Legions and the Roman Senate, but also added citizens to his new city by abducting the women of the neighboring Sabine tribes, which resulted in the mixture of the Sabines and Romans into one people, ruled jointly by Romulus and Titus Tatius (the Sabine king). The euhemeral figure of the city, Romulus would become pre-republican Rome's greatest conqueror, adding large amounts of territory and people to the dominion of Rome. See : Gerhard Fink, *Who is Who in Ancient Mythology?*, (Translated from German: Ümit Öztürk), İstanbul, 1997, p. 291.

³³ Çelebioğlu, Ibid, p. 436.

³⁴The aforementioned lullaby is about the First World War, particularly between Ottomans and Russians. It was compiled near Kars. The Ottoman army was allied with Germans due to the weakness at the time. For more information , please consult to.: Kâzım Karabekir, *Cihan Harbine Neden Girdik, Nasıl Girdik, Nasıl İdare Ettik, Kitap 1*, İstanbul, Tecelli Basımevi, 1938, p.: 62-87; Fahri Belen, *Askerî, Siyasal ve Sosyal Yönleriyle Türk Kurtuluş Savaşı*, Ankara, Başbakanlık Basımevi, 1973, p.: 249-253. (Çelebioğlu, Ibid, p. 116).

Let your height be courageous
Let your swords be steel
And your arrows be beech.

His swaddle of satin
Embroidered my son
Looks like a ram
My brave son
And the cheeks
Smells like roses.³⁵

I say ninni to cradle
Hızır be with you
And you be the head of the land
Sleep my sweetheart ninni.³⁶

Let it begin with dandini dandini
Let God forgive you
Let the crown be on your side
Let you be full of sherbet and sugar
Ninni ninni.³⁷

Nihad Sâmi Banarlı, in Nezihe Araz's poem review called “Şehzade Mehmed’e Ninni”, proposes that only within this lullaby the imagination about Fatih solidifies:

He will sleep and sprout
He will march to Istanbul
Either Muslim or non
Will see what justice is
Ninni my sweet-looking heart
Arc-nosed and belted-brow.³⁸

Conclusion

Lullabies are both perceived and understood with sleep. If the addressee of a lullaby is a living child then it is most likely that the lullaby is about falling asleep. Melody carries an important function in lullabies to put the

³⁵ Gocul, Basri, “Büyük Türk Destanı Oğuzlama’dan: Boğaç İçin Ninni”, *Erciyes*, Issue : 73, 1949, p. 6.

³⁶ Tan, *Ibid*, p. 43.

³⁷ Şenkaya, Mehmet-Mehmet Saadettin Aygen, *Afyon’da Söylenen Ninniler*, Türkeli Matbaası, Afyon 1980.

³⁸ Banarlı, N. Sami, “Fatih’e Söylenen Ninni”, *Türk Folklor Araştırmaları*, Issue: 4/ 78, İstanbul 1956, p. 1234.

baby to sleep. The anonymous composition of lullabies are usually monotonous, simple and sleep-giving. Many of the composers, both European and Turkish, used to compose some pieces in lullaby form.

Besides for functions such as putting the babies to sleep, lullabies often carry other functions. Lullabies tend to be an instrument to capture the despair of the past, the conditions of the current day and the dreams of tomorrow. Both personal and national feelings are expressed through lullabies. Mothers who recite lullabies or who write down lullabies not only used to reach her child but also the entire community around her to convey her feelings and thoughts. In lullabies of patriotic feelings or ideals, it is often observed that the addressee is the baby boy.

While the melody and the voice of the mother are effective components of lullabies, some of the lullabies with their content are understood to carry the function of maintaining so-called "individual and collective awakening"

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<http://hotelninni.com/index-F.html>

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Appendix: 1

KİMDEN ALINDIĞI
SELAHATTİN SARIKAYA

AKTAŞ DIYE BELLEDİĞİM

NOTAYA ALAN
ATEŞ KOYOĞLU

SÜRESİ :
♩ : 54

AK TAŞ DI YE BEL LE Dİ ĞİM TÜL BEN Dİ ME DO LA Dİ ĞİM
TAR LA LAR DA O LUR VA BA SA YU RUR -LAR- HA BA KA BA
YOL DAN GE ÇEN YOL CU GAR DAS BEN KİM LE RE O LA -M SIR DAS
BE BEK SİZ ZİL DUM Dİ VA NE HE PAĞ LA RI -M YA NE VA NE
YÜKSEK TE SA HİN YU VA Sİ AL ÇAK TA A -V SA RO VA Sİ

TAN RI DAN Dİ LEK Dİ LE Dİ ĞİM MEV LAM ŞU TA ŞA BİR CAN VER
MER - Zİ FON - DA PI RI BA BA " " " " " " " "
KIR - SE HİR - DE HACI BEK TAS " " " " " " " "
KON - YA DA U LU MEV LA NE " " " " " " " "
GEL SİN YAV RU MUN BA BA Sİ EM Zİ RE YİM NEN Nİ NEN Nİ

-1-

AKTAŞ DIYE BELLEDİĞİM
TULBENDİME DOLADIĞİM
TANRIDAN DİLEK DİLEDİĞİM
MEVLAM ŞU TAŞA BİR CAN VER

-4-

BEBEKSİZ OLDUM DİVANE
HEP AĞLARIM YANE YANE
KONYADA ULU MEVLANE
MEVLAM ŞU TAŞA BİR CAN VER

-2-

TARLALARDA OLUR YABA
SAVURURLAR GABA GABA
MERZİFONDA PİRİ BABA
MEVLAM ŞU TAŞA BİR CAN VER

-5-

YÜKSEKTE SAHİN YUVASI
ALÇAKTA AVŞAR OVASI
GELSİN YAVRUMUN BABAŞI
EMZİREYİM NEN NEN NEN NEN

-3-

YOLDAN GEÇEN YOLCU GARDAS
BEN KİMLERE OLAM SIRDAS
KİRŞEHİRDE HACI BEKTAS
MEVLAM ŞU TAŞA BİR CAN VER

-6-

BEBEK UYANDI BAKIYOR
SEYİNCİ İÇİM BAKIYOR
GÖZLERİMDEN YAŞ AKIYOR
EMZİREYİM NEN NEN NEN NEN

