



The Social Structure of the Alevi



Alevis/Geneology/History

- What are the Alevis?
- Genealogy
- History

Beliefs

- Haqq-Muhammad-Ali

It refers to a trinity in Alevism that involves Haqq (“truth”, one of the 99 names of Allah), Muhammad and Ali.

- Four Doors

It refers to the four paths to Allah, starting with Sharia, Tarikat, Marifet and then to Hakikat(14).

Beliefs

- Insan -I Kamil

Is the Alevi concept of the prototype human being, pure consciousness, our true identity, to be contrasted with the material human who is bound by its senses and materialism. A human task is to fully realize this state while still in material human form and thus become liberated from sin.

Beliefs

- Koran

Muslims believe the Koran to be the verbal book of divine guidance and direction for mankind, and consider the original Arabic verbal text to be the final revelation of God.

- Buyruks

The Buyruks are a collection of spiritual books providing the basis of the Alevi value system. The topics in this book include spiritual brotherhood, a wide range of Alevi stories and poems.

Beliefs

- Allah Muhammed Ali

Alevis believe in the unity of Allah, Muhammad and Ali, but this is not a trinity comprising of God and the historical figures of Muhammad and Ali. Muhammad and Ali are representations of divine energies, the first of which is Allah.

More specifically :

The latent breath or Allah

The prototypal human which I made up of active and passive principles or Muhammad

The divine light or Ali.

In Christianity these three principles are called the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Likewise, in Alevi belief the father is likened to Allah, the Son to Muhammad and the Holy Spirit to Ali.

Beliefs

- The Twelve Imams

Leading figures of Shia Islam. The biological descendants / offsprings of leaders (this principle of the biological descendant you find in the biological structure of the dede) and also the symbolic meaning of becoming a “victim” for a good cause. It is believed that every Imam was killed, would die a natural death and so the other heroes of the Alevi, for example Pir Sultan and others were always suppressed.

Practices

- The Alevi spiritual path (yol) is commonly understood to take place through four major life-stages, or gates.
 - Sheriat (Sharia) (religious law)
 - Tarikat (spiritual brotherhood)
 - Marifat (spiritual knowledge)
 - Hakikat (Reality or Truth, i.e. God)

The most Alevi activity takes place in the context of the second gate (spiritual brotherhood) during which one submits to a living spiritual guide (dede, pir, mursit). The third and fourth gates is mostly theoretical,.



Practices

- The following are major crimes that cause an Alevi to be declared shunned:
 - Killing a person
 - committing adultery
 - divorcing one's wife
 - marrying a divorced woman
 - stealing

Practices

- Cem

The central Alevi corporate worship service is the cem. The ceremony's supposed prototype is the Prophet Muhammad's nocturnal ascent into heaven, where he beheld a gathering of forty saints and the Divine Reality made manifest in their leader, Ali.

Practices

- Baglama

During the cem ceremony the ashik plays the Baglama whilst singing spiritual songs, some of which are centuries old and well known amongst Alevi. Every song, called a Nefes has spiritual meaning and aims to teach the participants important lessons.



Practices

- Semah

A family of ritual dances characterized by turning and swirling, is an inseparable part of any cem. Semah is performed by men and women together, to the accompaniment of the baglama. The dances symbolize the revolution of the planets around the Sun (by man and woman turning in circles), and the putting off of one's self and uniting with God.



Practices

- Almsgiving

Alevi's almsgiving is through donating food (especially sacrificial animals) to be shared with worshippers and guests. They also donate money to the poor, to support the religion, education and cultural activities of Alevi centers and organizations.

- Sacred places

The Alevis do not recognize an obligation to go on pilgrimage, visiting ziyarats and performing dua at the tombs of Alevi-Bektashi saints or Pirs is quite common. Some Alevis make pilgrimages to mountains and other natural sites believed to be imbued with holiness.



Figures / Leadership

- Muhammad
- Ali

In Alevism, Ali-Muhammad refers to the individuals Muhammad and Ali who exist as a single entity.

- Yunus Emre
- Pir Sultan Abdal
- Hajji Bektash Wali



Figures/Leadership

- Dede

A dede is a socio-religious leader in the Alevi community. The institution of dede is the most important of all the institutions integral to the social and religious organization of the Anatolian Alevis.



Figures/Leadership

- Accordings to the books of the Buyruk which include the basic principles of the Alevi faith, and the traditions that survive among the Alevis, a dede must have the following qualifications:
- To be a descendant of the Prophet.
- To operate as an educator and a moral guide for the community.
- To be knowledgeable and exemplary in his character and manners.
- To follow the principles written in the Buyruks, as well as the established traditions of Alevism.



Figures/Leadership

- To guide and enlighten the community in social and religious matters.
- To lead the religious rituals.
- To punish the criminals, and to serve as an arbiter between conflicting sides.
- To lead ceremonies during occasions such as a wedding or a funeral.
- To fulfill certain legal and educational functions.

Conclusion

- Alevi in Turkey
- Alevi and Kemal Mustafa Atturk
- Alevi and the Directorate for Religious Affairs



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