

Faith Dimension and Rituals of Alevism-Bektashism

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Abstract

Today, there are many different views on the nature of Alevism-Bektashism. There are those who consider these groups as a religion, a sect, a cult or a way of life. In this study, an evaluation will be made based on the criteria put forward by some historians of Islamic sects in order to understand the nature of these structures. In addition, research on what Alevism-Bektashism is and its current status will be discussed and the reasons for the differences between the hearths in the rituals performed will be tried to be revealed. In Alevism-Bektashism, where oral culture is intensely experienced, it seems difficult and complex to classify or define the customs and rituals in a systematic way. This article will examine the methods that have been tried to overcome these complexities. In this respect, research on Alevism-Bektashism will be analyzed and data on the beliefs and rituals of these communities will be presented. The effects of ancient Turkish beliefs, Sunnite-Hanafi-Mâturîdî tradition and Shi'ism on the Alevî-Bektashî beliefs of Hak-Muhammad-Ali, the four gates and forty maqams, prayer, fasting and the Holy Qur'an will be analyzed. Thus, it will contribute to eliminating negative opinions about Alevism-Bektashism.

Keywords: İslam Mezhepleri Tarihi 1, Alevism-Bektashi 2, Faith 3, Rituals 4, Cemevi 5

Introduction

Many studies have been conducted on the nature of Alevism-Bektashism (Fığlalı, 1990; Melikoff, 2009; Kutlu, 2008; Sarıkaya, 2016; Kaplan, 2019, etc.). These studies are actually important for the recognition of Alevi-Bektashism. However, these studies have brought about many debates in defining these concepts. The fact that the rituals of Alevi-Bektashism, which is based on oral culture rather than scriptural culture, differ according to the hearths has led to the formation of different opinions about its nature. Noyan, who tried to create a literature on this subject, endeavored to establish unity in the rituals of Alevism-Bektashism (Noyan, 1995).

Due to the complexity of the subject, studies on Alevism-Bektashism in the field of the history of Islamic sects have led to the emergence of different opinions about whether this structure is a religion, sect or tariqa. Kutlu has elaborated in detail on what this formation is and has shown a path for those working in this field by evaluating these structures within the framework of certain criteria (theological dimension, written literature dimension, social dimension) (Kutlu, 2012, pp. 585-586).

The differences in the rituals of Alevism-Bektashism make it difficult to define these two concepts. These differences are based on the fact that the oral culture is kept alive more intensely and the introduction of Islam to the Turks has a significant impact. Turks were unable to abandon some of the

beliefs, traditions and cultures of their pre-Islamic religion and somehow transferred them to their new religion. This can also be seen in the beliefs and rituals of Alevism-Bektashism (Sarıkaya, 2016, pp. 59-80). Considering the religious beliefs and traditions of the Turks before they became Muslims and the new beliefs they encountered while they were nomads, there will be no difficulty in understanding the concepts of Alevism-Bektashism.

The Essence of Alevism-Bektashism

Both Alevi-Bektashis and those working in this field are confused about whether Alevism-Bektashism is a religion, a sect, a cult or a way of life. Kutlu presents criteria such as “theological dimension”, “written literature dimension” and “social dimension”, which will be especially useful for those working in the field of History of Islamic Sects. If these criteria are taken as a basis, it will be easier to understand the nature of Alevi-Bektashism.

Is Alevism-Bektashism a Religion, Sect, Tariqa or a Way of Life? : When we look at the studies, it is difficult to determine the position of Alevism-Bektashism since it does not have a unity within itself and does not have a theology of its own. Today, conflicting concepts such as “heterodox Islam”, “the essence of Islam”, “a sect showing devotion to Hazrat Ali and Ahl al-Bayt”, “a religion separate from Islam”, “Anatolian interpretation of Islam”, “a culture”, “a sect within the Islamic religion” are used for this formation (Sinanoğlu, 2008, p. 116).

Researchers who emphasize the unnecessary of discussions on religion for Alevism-Bektashism see Alevî-Bektashîs within the circle of Islam. The prevailing view is that everyone who believes in the existence and unity of God (Ulûhiyet), accepting the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) as God's messenger and what he brought from God (Nubuwwet), resurrection after death and being held accountable (Ahiret) is a “believer”, “Muslim” and “Ahl-i Qibla” (Kutlu, 2008, p. 28).

Alevî-Bektashî Dedebaba Noyan classifies Muslims into four classes and places Alevî-Bektashîs in the fourth class. He describes them as a group with different beliefs in terms of beliefs and methods. He does not see Alevî-Bektaşîs as a separate religion outside Islam (Noyan, 1995, p. 9). Noyan states that any religion is influenced by its predecessors and the religions and traditions in its surroundings or in the regions where it spreads, and sees Alevîlik-Bektaşî within Islam (Noyan, 1995, pp. 9-10; for more information see Eröz, 1992). He defines Alevî-Bektaşîs as “those who follow the Book of Allah and His Prophet, control their ego and believe in the hereafter, accident and destiny, and love Allah, His Prophet, Hazrat Ali and Ahl al-Bayt from the heart” (Noyan, 1995, p. 10).

It is not right to see Alevi-Bektashis as un-Islamic and to isolate them from Islam. Because they state that Allah is one, the Book is one, and the Messenger is one. Alevism and Bektashism include prayer, fasting and similar acts of worship (Bolay, 1995, pp. 2-3). In the research conducted in the Tokat region, Alevis stated that “almost all of them and other Alevi-Bektashis accept Islam and that Alevism is not a religion separate from Islam”. When this research is analyzed, it will be seen that Alevis are within the circle of Islam and cannot accept a religion different from Islam (Üçer, 2005a, p. 40). In another study, it is seen that Alevism-Bektashism includes the understanding of God, prophet, book, hereafter, accident-destiny and imamah (guardianship) and some regional differences (Sinanoğlu, 2008, p. 155). In the research conducted in Yakaören (İlavus) Village, Bektashis stated that Bektashism is not a religion separate from Islam (Tanış, 2023, pp. 124-133).

Can we see Alevism-Bektashism as a sect? Denomination, which means the way, the time to go or going, is defined as religious groups formed by the institutionalization of the differences that arise in understanding and applying the main sources of religion in the social environment in which people live (Sarıkaya, 2011, p. 15).

Human beings have an important influence on the differences that arise in understanding and practicing the main sources of religion. Historical, political-religious factors also have an impact on the emergence of sects. People's cultural levels, their understanding and perspectives on an event have also revealed differences in understanding and applying the main sources of religion. People made use of verses and hadiths to support their own thoughts. Thus, they tried to find solutions to the problems of their own times and to meet their religious needs. From this point of view, it would be wrong to say that the view of any sect will represent Islam completely and that this view will continue until the Day of Judgment (Kutlu, 2008, p. 29).

It would also be wrong to consider every political and theological understanding as a sect. Because, according to Kutlu, ideas that are accepted as sects should have features such as “theological dimension”, “written literature dimension” and “social dimension”. From this point of view, Alevism-Bektashism does not have a systematic and consistent theological dimension in the deep-rooted problems related to belief found in political and theological sects. For example, the Shi'a have put forward different views on imāmah, the Mu'tazilites on tawhid and justice, the Murjites on faith, and the Khāricīs on faith and caliphate. In the Alevi-Bektashīs, on the other hand, there is no theological basis for ideas such as the innocence of the twelve imams, tawella and teberra, etc. as in Shia. The four gates and forty maqams in Alevism and Bektashism should be evaluated morally (Kutlu, 2012, p. 585).

Kutlu states that theologies are transmitted through written sources and certain institutional spaces. For this reason, for a political or theological view to be accepted as a sect, the views of the leader of that sect and its followers must be discussed. For this purpose, a written literature has an important effect on the presentation of the sect's views and their accuracy and the elimination of dissenting views. From this point of view, Alevi-Bektashi literature or works are more in the nature of mystical or mystical works than sectarian works. Therefore, Alevism-Bektashism should not be seen as a sect (Kutlu, 2012, pp. 585-586).

In order for us to recognize political and theological schools of thought as sects, their literature alone is not enough. It is also important that their views are accepted by a society. One can join a sect regardless of one's lineage. At the same time, there is no hierarchy in sects and there is no need for a certain ceremony or ritual at any given time to enter a sect. However, although there is a social structure in Alevism-Bektashism, not everyone can become an Alevi-Bektashi. Moreover, in these structures, there is a hierarchy such as murshid and talib, and rituals and ceremonies at certain times and places. Therefore, it would be more accurate to consider Alevism-Bektashism as a Sufi organization similar to a sect rather than a sect (Kutlu, 2003, pp. 36-38).

Practical and practical issues are important for sects. In these matters, the followers of the sect act according to what their sect determines (Kutlu, 2008, pp. 32-33). Although the Alevi-Bektashis claim that they act according to the Ca'fari sect, this is only a matter of being a sect leader and path founder. This is because, except for the Ahl al-Bayt Foundation, the others have elements of Hanafi-Mâturîdî fiqh (Sarıkaya, 2003, pp. 157-161; Turan-Üçer, 2005, p. 44).

In view of all these, it can be said that Alevism-Bektashism does not have the characteristics of a sect when the scientific criteria of the History of Islamic Denominations pointed out by Kutlu are taken into

consideration. Moreover, in political and theological sects, there is no such thing as lineage passed down from father to son, or a situation in which the lineage changes hands through elections. While Bektashism is considered a sect because it has completed its institutionalization, Alevism is a Sufi organization similar to a sect (Kutlu, 2008, p. 34). However, Noyan recognizes Alevism-Bektashism as a sect (Noyan, 1995, p. 13).

In a study in Muğla, a person named Ali Taş expresses his thoughts on Alevism as "a sect that is secular-minded, respectful of human rights, whose book is based on the Qur'an, whose sect is Imam al-Jafari, whose prophet is Prophet Muhammad, whose pirs are Hacı Bektâş-ı Velî and whose foundation is based on Ahmet Yesevi" (Türkdoğan, 1995, p. 66)

In fact, it may be that those who define Alevism-Bektashi as a sect position themselves with anti-Sunni sentiment in the background of their thoughts (Yıldırım, 2013: 135-159). It would be appropriate to evaluate their acceptance of Alevism-Bektashi as a sect in this context.

Can we see Alevism-Bektashi as a sect? As a word, the meaning of tarîkat, which means "the way to go, the procedure to be followed, the state and the way to go", is "the custom, state and behavior reserved for those who want to reach Allah" (Öngören, 2011, p. 95).

In the research conducted in Tokat, Alevism-Bektashi is considered as a sect due to its material elements such as dhikr and seyru leech, humanitarian elements such as pir sheikhs and dervishes, lodges and lodges (Üçer, 2005a, p. 69). There are also those who do not see these structures as cults. Gölpınarlı says that in order to be an Alevi, one must come from an Alevi father and a mother or an Alevi father. According to him, not every Alawite can be a grandfather and must be a descendant of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in order to become a grandfather. However, he states that there is no such situation in Bektashi, and that anyone who loves Bektashi can enter this sect and become a sheikh of the sect by passing through various levels (Gölpınarlı, 1992, p. 4-5).

After all these explanations, it would not be appropriate to see Alevism-Bektashi as a religion, sect or sect. Perhaps we can talk about a structure in the form of a sect for Bektashi, but it has also lost this feature today. Because urbanization and modernization have also affected them. Today, the Alevi-Bektashi people have difficulties in fulfilling their own rituals. There are Alevi-Bektashi people who complain about this situation. Today, there is no question of strict adherence to their pirs and sheikhs in the Alevi-Bektashi communities, as in the sects and communities. In this regard, the competence of most grandfathers is also questioned. This situation has become more visible, especially among Alevi-Bektashi youth. Research shows that even cem ceremonies cannot be held on time. (Bozkurt, 2000, 144; Dedekargınoğlu, 2013, p. 338-339; Tashgin, 2010, 31-32). Therefore, the authority of the grandfathers is also questioned. Considering this situation of the grandfathers, it will be seen that Alevism-Bektashi has lost its sectarian characteristics (Bozkurt, 2000).

Especially in the Bektashi, it is not possible to go through certain stages in order to reach a certain position. The opinion leader, who is elected through the elections, manages the situation as much as he can. Because the new generation is now beginning to question the wing leaders. With the effect of urbanization and modernization, the Alevi-Bektashi people living in the cities try to continue their routine cems in the form of meeting at infrequent intervals or once a month and asking about the situation. The Alevi-Bektashi, who try to keep the traditions alive in this way, actually complain about this situation themselves. In fact, they have limited areas where they can perform cem ceremonies in cities. On the other hand, the cems, which were tried to be held in closed halls, took the form of

ceremonies in which the participants became spectators rather than a religious ceremony (Bozkurt, 2000, p. 147-148; Meet, 2023, p. 124-133).

It is not enough for Alevism-Bektashi to be seen as a sect today. For the reasons listed above, these structures now appear as a tradition, a culture or a way of life, and in this way they try to protect themselves. On this subject, Yakaören Village İsmail Baba Tekke opinion leader (grandfather) Hasan Yelmer, former opinion leader (grandfather) Turan Oduncu (d. 2021) and Aslan Baba tomb opinion leader (grandfather) Muharrem Köylü see Alevism-Bektashi as the essence of Islam. In Alevism-Bektashi, which is seen as a way of life, age alone is not effective in becoming a grandfather. It is necessary to have sufficient knowledge and prestige in the society by passing through certain stages (Tanis, 2023, p. 124-133; Tufan, accessed 04.11.2024).

Alevism and Bektashi are generally evaluated separately. For this reason, it is seen that Bektashi was accepted as a sect, but it lost its sect feature due to some features of Alevism. It is also seen that there are reasons such as the fact that today's Alevi and Bektashi do not see themselves as sects, such as their adherence to the principles of the Republic and the official prohibition of sect activities (Subaşı, 2010: 90-92).

Alevi-Bektashi Belief Dimension

Since oral culture, traditions and customs are at the forefront in Alevism-Bektashi, it is not based on a single basis in terms of etiquette and authority. Therefore, it is difficult and complex to classify and define Alevism-Bektashi in a systematic way (Fırlı, 1995, p. 215). The fact that there are differences in the rituals of these groups, where oral culture and tradition are experienced rather than book culture, in terms of hearths, creates problems in defining them. For this reason, it is seen that Noyan made an effort to ensure that the Alevi-Bektashi had access to the right information (Noyan, 1995).

In Alevi-Bektashi, the principles of ways and continuities based on traditions, customs and spiritual culture are learned from grandfathers, guides and other experienced people from the elders in the community to which they are subject. Breaths, also called sayings or verses, are recited orally or by playing instruments in various meetings, and the principles of the path and continuity are learned and taught in this way. In this respect, the people who learn all these things in the Alevi community and who grow up are extremely important (Öz, 2011, p. 771).

Therefore, we can say that Alevi-Bektashi rituals are based on oral tradition rather than a written source. A situation that should not be forgotten here is that the road and its continuums, that is, the situation of the grandfathers who passed on their Alevi beliefs, is also important. Because grandfathers are now questioned by young people in transferring oral culture to the next generation in the best way. A knowledgeable and well-equipped grandfather can be taken as an example for young people, but grandfathers who do not have knowledge and lose their reputation because of it lead young people in different directions. Grandfathers need to renew themselves and increase their level of education according to the requirements of the age. Thus, grandfathers who are able to answer the questions and problems of young people can be seen as role models for young people.

Many sectarian elements are seen in the Alevi-Bektashi (Teber, 2008, p. 123-163; Kutlu, 2008, p. 35). The reason for this is the traditions, cultures and beliefs that Turks encounter in the regions where they live and migrate. In particular, elements such as old Turkish beliefs, Sunni-Hanafî-Mâturîdî tradition and Shiism come to the fore (Sarıkaya, 2003, p. 157-161; Kutlu, 2012, p. 585-586). In addition to these, beliefs such as "Hak-Muhammad-Ali", "Four Gates, Forty Offices" and "Three Sunnahs" and "Seven

Fard", which are believed to have been put by Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq in the Alevi community, stand out (Kaplan, 2019, 307-312).

Haq-Muhammad-Ali: In our country, the vast majority of Alevi-Bektashi people believe in the existence, unity, greatness and attributes of God. However, there is a difference in interpretation between the understanding of God and Islam's understanding of God. In them, God, as a creative being, is not completely separate from man, but is in constant connection with man. For this reason, it is believed that there is a divine essence in human beings, and this is in the essence of human beings (Turan-Bozkuş, 2007, p. 14). Although there is a belief in monotheism in these communities, it is accepted that the Prophet was sent by Allah as a messenger. In these groups, there are also important principles such as the guardianship of Hazrat Ali, love for Hazrat Ali and loyalty to Hazrat Ali. The trio of Haq-Muhammad-Ali is central to their beliefs. Although there are different evaluations on this subject (Öz, 2011, p. 771-772), the understanding of Hak-Muhammad-Ali represents the belief in "tawhid", "nubuwwat" and "imam". Loving all three is considered the highest of loves and the condition of Islam. Salvation is through this love, and love and faith that does not begin with Haq-Muhammad-Ali is incomplete. By adhering to these three names and obeying their commandments, man will achieve salvation in the hereafter (Kaya, 1993, p. 70).

The Haq-Muhammad-Ali trinity has nothing to do with the "father", "son" or "holy spirit" found in Christians. The mother, father and ancestors of the Prophet and Hazrat Ali are known. They have expressed themselves as servants of God. Therefore, we cannot talk about such a situation as nationhood. This trinity in Bektashi stems from the fact that they commemorate "Allah" and "Prophet Muhammad" and "Hazrat Ali", who are very close to Him in terms of maturity and perfection. The only thing that looks like Christians is the number three. Alevi-Bektashi people remember Allah (c.c.), Prophet Muhammad and Hazrat Ali together because they love them very much (Noyan, 1995: 62-63). The belief in monotheism is expressed by both Alevi-Bektashi and Sunnis. In other words, the Sunnis do not bring a different interpretation to the ideas of the Alevi-Bektashi in terms of faith in Allah. As far as can be seen in the research in Sivas and its surroundings, the difference between Sunni and Alevi in terms of belief in Allah, which is valid for the general Alevi-Bektashi, is only in terms of whether evil can be compared to Allah in terms of believing in the Creed (Turan-Bozkuş, 2007, p. 15).

Four Gates, Forty Makams: It is seen that four gates and forty maqams have an important place in Alevi-Bektashi communities. These rules to be followed in moral and Sufi jihad are as follows;

The first gate is the gate of Sharia and the authorities of this gate are; -to believe -to learn knowledge -to pay zakat, fast, pray and receive ghusul -to earn halal -to marry -prohibition of sexual intercourse in case of hayiz and nifas -sunnah that is, to follow the sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him) -to be compassionate -to dress cleanly and eat cleanly -to command good and avoid evil (Wali, pp. 14-15; Veli, 2013, pp. 68-81; Bozkurt, 2005, p. 165-180).

The second door is the gate of the sect and the authorities of this gate are; -to repent -to be a disciple -to shave one's head and wear clothes suitable for the sect -to burn with the love of jihad -to serve -to fear Allah -to live with hope -to carry a cardigan, zambil, scissors, prayer rug, rosary and to take a lesson from everything and live according to guidance -to have advice and affection -love, enthusiasm and poverty (Wali-a, pp. 14-15; Veli, 2013, pp. 68-81; Bozkurt, 2005, p. 165-180).

The third door is the gate of ingenuity and the authorities of this door are; -decency -fear -limiting excessive desires -patience -shame -generosity -knowledge -sluggishness -ingenuity -self-knowledge (Wali-a, pp. 14-15; Veli, 2013, pp. 68-81; Bozkurt, 2005, p. 165-180).

The fourth door is the door of Truth, and the authorities of this door are; -To be a land -Not to reproach seventy-two nations -Not to forbid what one can -To give confidence -To find reputation -It is a conversation, to tell the secrets of truth -To be a spiritual journey -To the secret -To invoke Allah -To reach Allah (Wali-a, pp. 14-15; Veli, 2013, pp. 68-81; Bozkurt, 2005, p. 165-180).

The four doors listed are actually the best qualities that Muslims should have, if the contents of the forty maqams can be made. However, among the Alevi-Bektashi, there is a perception that they worship only by having their hands, tongue and waist and emphasizing the love of humanity. In particular, if the four doors and forty maqams are taught not only to the Alevi-Bektashi but also to the Sunni youth, there will be no such thing as an Alawite-Sunni separation or conflict in the future.

Afterlife: It is observed in the researches that the understanding of the afterlife is accepted in the Alevi communities in general. The understanding of the hereafter that exists in the Alevi-Bektashi groups is that it is believed that the account of all the acts committed in the world will be given to Allah and that people will go to heaven or hell according to the behaviors performed. The love of the Ahl al-Bayt and the twelve Imams also has an important place in them. Alevî-Bektashis, who believe that those who love them will be helped in the hereafter (Yıldız, 2004, p. 120-121.), reconcile and halal the resentful people in the cems they perform, and the power of degrading the deceased is due to their beliefs about the hereafter. On this subject, *in his work called Mâkâlat*, Haji Bektâş-ı Velî shows the bringing of faith in the first position of the Shari'a by saying, "It is your belief in Allah, His angels, His books, His prophets and the Last Day" (Wali, p. 68). Based on verses and hadiths, Wali refers to verse 24 of Surah al-Baqarah (beware of fire, the fuel of which is people and stones) and states that those who have their souls in this world will attain falah in the Hereafter and will not be punished (Wali, p. 47; Sarıkaya-Ceylan, 2018, p. 186-187; Aksoy-Güngör, 2013, p. 258-265).

Good and Bad: Alevî-Bektashis, who believe in the principles of the creed, differ from the Sunnis and do not mention the concept of evil in the Amentu (evil), which contains basic beliefs. What they say is "Hayrihi wa hayrihi min Allahi Taala", goodness and goodness belong to Almighty Allah. They believe that evil does not come from Almighty Allah and they think that the evil that befalls man is caused by him (Yıldız, 2004, p. 123-124). In the research in the Sivas region, the Alevis emphasize that evil cannot be attributed to Allah (Sarıkaya-Ceylan, 2018, p. 176; Turan-Bozkuş, 2007, p. 14-15).

The three sunnahs and seven obligatory prayers, which are believed to have been established by Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq, are also seen in Alawite communities.

The three circumcisions are:

- To say the word of Allah and the word of God at all times, to throw away enmity from the heart, to fulfill all kinds of powers of the way. There are three circumcisions that must be followed (Bozkurt, 2005, p. 181-186; Fiğlalı, 1995, p. 296; Honey, 2004, p. 71; Kaplan, 2019, 307-312; Grape, 2001, pp. 157-171).

The Seven Fards are:

The rules to be followed in the seven Fards are; -The suitor's faith is in the form of avoiding the hypocrite, -passing through the soul and not passing through the truth, not valuing the world, repenting from the caliph, getting along with the musahibi, wearing a cardigan from the caliph, wearing a crown from the caliph (Bozkurt, 2005, p. 181-186; Fiğlalı, 1995, p. 296; Honey, 2004, p. 71; Kaplan, 2019, 307-312; Grape, 2001, pp. 157-171).

As far as can be seen, it is understood that the three sunnahs and seven obligatory rules accepted in the Alevi communities are related to the internal structure of the groups.

Alevi-Bektashi thoughts on the Holy Quran, Prayer and Fasting

For the Alevi-Bektashis, who accept that the Qur'an came to the Prophet through Gabriel (a.s.), there are also claims that some verses from the Qur'an have been removed or changed. On this subject, Sarıkaya states that under the influence of Safavid Shiism, it has passed through their understanding since the XVIth century. In the work called *Şerhu Khutbeti'l-Bayân*, which is still accepted as one of the basic books of the Alevis today, the Qur'an is mentioned as 114 surahs, 6666 verses and 70387 words (Sarıkaya, 2003, p. 158; Gaybi, 2004, p. 9).

Turan Oduncu states that the 35th verse of Surah Nur is recited while the cherag is awakened in the rituals. According to him, there is no question of falsification of the Holy Quran or removal of some of its verses. If there was such a situation about the Qur'an, which was memorized by Hazrat Ali and many of his companions, it would have been discussed during the time of Hazrat Ali. Therefore, discussions about the falsification of verses in the Holy Quran and the issue of removing some verses are unnecessary. The important thing is to be aware of what the Holy Quran wants to tell us. (Meet, 2023, p. 124-133).

It is obvious that there is a situation about the falsification of the Qur'an or the removal of some verses of the Qur'an, which is actually contrary to history. Because Hazrat Ali was alive when it was made into a book during the time of Hazrat Abu Bakr and reproduced during the time of Hazrat Uthman. Hazrat Ali, who later came to the caliphate, did not have any savings regarding the current Mushaf. There is no objection to this issue (Turan-Bozkuş, 2007, p. 21-22; Cerrahoğlu, 2014, p. 69-88).

In the researches, it is stated that some Alevi-Bektashi do not pray. Among the reasons for not praying, they usually explain that they are in the position of "sect". According to them, the fact that Sunnis pray is because they are in the position of "sharia" (Üçer, 2005b, p. 171)

Some Alevi-Bektashi cite the martyrdom of Hazrat Ali on his way to the mosque, and some Alevi-Bektashi cite the meaning of the word "salat" in the Qur'an as prayer. It is also possible to mention the existence of those who accept that there are not five daily prayers but three daily prayers (Üçer, 2005b, p. 177; Grape, 1997; Zelyut, 1992; Yuner, p. 382).

Regarding prayer, he said, "Since the Alevî-Bektashi understand worship as prayer, there is no need to comply with prayers. Worship is the first step for man to find the truth, to avoid evil and shortcomings, and to mature. As a matter of fact, the Sharia gate, which is the first of the four gates in Bektashi, is a stage. It is the first step of education. For a person who is mature enough and free from all deficiencies, there is no need to comply with all the conditions of the Sharia based on its appearance." reflect the thoughts of the Alevi-Bektashi regarding prayer (Eyuboğlu, 1990, p. 363).

In fact, Haji Bektâş-ı Veli supported the worship with verses in the third office of the "shari'ah", giving information about "prayer", "fasting" and "zakat" (Veli, p. 72). However, the fact that it is difficult to perform ablution and prayer due to the geography and environment they live in, especially among nomadic Turkmens since they accepted Islam, and therefore not being able to get used to this worship, has revealed different perceptions for today's Alevi-Bektashi (Fıglalı, 1990, p. 288).

On the subject of fasting, the Bektashi people living in Yakaören Village observe a ten-day mourning fast due to the painful memory of the brutal martyrdom of Hazrat Hussein. The Bektashis, who state that they keep this fast like the Sunnis, state that they are cautious, especially when drinking water. They think differently about Ramadan fasting. The Alevi-Bektashis, who see themselves at the gate of the sect, think that the Ramadan fast is valid for those at the gate of Sharia. They exempt themselves from the provisions of the shari'a gate (Tanis, 2023, p. 124-133).

The phrase "You will make the Sharia strong, the one who does not have the Sharia will not have a sect" in the Commandment is important (Bakır-Sadık, 2011, p. 81). This statement is actually to show that the gate of the sect should be understood as a complement to the door of Sharia.

As far as can be seen, it is understood that the three sunnahs and seven obligatory rules accepted in the Alevi communities are related to the internal structure of the groups.

Alevi-Bektashi Rituals

Cemevi and Cem Worship: Cemevi are the places where the cem ceremonies, which they accept as a worship for the Alevi-Bektashi, are performed. For this reason, Alevi-Bektashi people try to make their cems in cemevis (cemev). They attribute their refusal to pray in mosques to the martyrdom of Hazrat Ali on his way to the mosque. There are Bektashi people who come to Friday and Eid prayers (Üçer, 2005b, p. 177; Grape, 1997; Zelyut, 1992; Yuner, p. 382).

The opinion leader in Yakaören Village explains the difference between a mosque and a cemevi by saying, "I can take my wife, my job and my instrument to the cemevi". They state that they are trying to solve all kinds of problems in the cemevi by coming together. Here, they both worship and chat. Declaring that these cannot be done in the mosque, the opinion leader sees the mosque as worship. Due to the ease of the heavy workload of the villagers in winter, they usually perform their cems every year, usually in winter. In addition, for economic reasons, suitors sometimes fulfill their cems by slaughtering their sacrifices, sometimes alone and sometimes together with several suitors (Tanis, 2023, p. 124-133).

Suitors are responsible for their actions throughout the year. These cems are an indication that the suitors are aware of this responsibility. The relationships of the suitors with other suitors are also important. Because if there is a wrong behavior against other suitors in the cems, they are interrogated here and become halal with the suitors. In addition, if there are bad behaviors that the suitors themselves know about in this interrogation, they prostrate themselves in front of the grandfather in order not to make the same mistake again by passing them through a self-accounting. This prostration is actually an oath. Thus, suitors who go through a purification will never get involved in evil deeds and will have their hands, tongues, waists and will not follow their own souls (Tanis, 2023, p. 124-133).

In the cemevi, a narrowing authority is also made for the deceased Bektashis. There is no specific day for this, but it is appropriate to do it at a convenient time without delay. The heirs must share their inheritance in order to fulfill the power of the dardan. Because there may be problems during the sharing of the inheritance. Until these are resolved, the power of lowering from the narrow cannot be fulfilled. In this case, the heirs are asked whether there is any problem in the inheritance and they are made halal and made an erkan (Tanis, 2023, p. 124-133).

Brewing and Drinking: Alevi-Bektashi people take dem in "ayin-i cem". The reason for this is shown as the incident in the "Assembly of the Forties". (Sarıkaya-Ceylan, 2018, p. 181-183; Ersal, 2016, p. 128-129). This event is depicted as follows:

"The Prophet (peace be upon him) was given a grape by Salman al-Fârisî in the Assembly of Forty and asked to divide it into forty. Forty people in the assembly, the Prophet crushed the grape grain and made the water drink by sharing it among forty people. After that, the forty people who drink of this grape juice will be overjoyed and overjoyed, and they will be happy." Eyuboğlu sees this incident as the source of drinking and gatherings with alcohol and concludes that drinking is not haram. He states this with expressions such as "Drinking is allowed in Bektashi, it is not forbidden, it is not prohibited and it is not "haram" (Eyuboğlu, 1990, p. 323).

However, in the case of the Forty Assembly, there are no references to alcohol or wine. There are statements that the Prophet crushed the grape and turned it into "sherbet" and that it was drunk (Sadik, 1993: 18-19; Ahmed Rifat, 2007, p. 226-227). Many men and manners in the XIIIth century Ahi tradition (Kırklar cem, sedd dressing, cardigan, crown, road ancestor and road brother-ownership, etc.) It is continued by the Alevi-Bektashis. In this respect, Sarıkaya quotes the Kırklar Cem as "When the Prophet (peace be upon him) reached the forties, he crushed a grape, sprinkled it, and after the forties had nûd him, they drew a gulbank with a bulend avaz." When we look at these statements, sherbet was drunk, not liquor or wine, in the ceremonies held in the early periods (Sarıkaya-b, 2003, p. 197-198; Melikoff, 2009, p. 165).

Today, in some Alevi-Bektashi communities, liquor is preferred in cems, not sherbet (Bal, 1997, p. 265). However, it is seen that this preference has recently been replaced by sherbet or fruit juice with the proliferation of Alevi-Sunni marriages (Bal, 1997, p. 265). The Bektashi opinion leader of Yakaören Village İsmail Baba tekke states that the new generation now prefers fruit juice, cola, and honey syrup as brew in cems, and that there is no obligation to drink in cems and that intention is important, and that drinking water and brewing can be fulfilled (Tanis, 2023, p. 124-133).

A number of foreign customs began to enter Bektashi under the name of Balim Sultan (Balim Yolu) in Bektashi, which was founded by Hacı Bektâş. One of them is to drink wine instead of sherbet (Şapolyo, 1964, p. 322). Balim Sultan is considered one of the important names in the institutionalization of the Hacı Bektâş lodge. It is stated that "teachings" such as the understanding of twelve imams, twelve imam ceremonies, twelve cherags, twelve hides, the rule of unmarried (mujarret) paternity, hail (wine instead of sherbet), and the influence of Hurufism entered Bektashi with Balim Sultan (Saraç, 2011, p. 39; Öztürk, 1992, p. 172-180).

A different idea is that some of the rituals found in Alevism-Bektashi originate from pre-Islamic beliefs. In addition, it is possible that the drinking that existed in previous beliefs continues today. According to this idea, when we look at the plain form of the verses in the Qur'an, some events are shown as the reason why alcohol is not prohibited and the prohibited situations (Birdoğan, 1995, p. 349).

R. Zelyut, who interprets the verses from the Qur'an differently and states that alcohol is not prohibited in Islam, states that there is information that wine entered the Alevi communities at the end of the XV century in Rumelia during the reign of Akyazı Sultan, and that before that, sherbet was drunk instead of wine. He also says that the Alawites believe that the wine they drink is the wine to be drunk in heaven based on the incident that took place in the Assembly of the Forty (Zelyut, 1992, pp. 77-81; January, 2010, p. 127).

A situation that is different from what is described is the conquest movements. The Janissaries, who were affiliated with the Bektashi lodges, expanded the field of activity of the Bektashi lodges with the conquests in Rumelia. The Bektashi dervishes in the lodges started to convey tolerance and humanity to the local Christian people by living. Influenced by these dervishes, the local Christian people preferred to become Muslims. However, those who were new to Islam could not quickly abandon their old customs and habits. The issue of drinking, which is among these traditions and habits, was not opposed to the new Muslims because of the tolerance in the order. According to this idea, the issue of drinking in Alevism-Bektashi was passed down from the Christians who became newly Muslims. A different view is that behind the popularization of alcohol in our country, the occupation forces brought alcohol to our country after the First World War, thus aiming to collapse our nation and destroy it from within (Sezgin, 1990, p. 79-80). Within the framework of the information given, it is seen that the Alevi-Bektashi are

confused about the basic worship and drinking issue. Research shows that the opinions of researchers are only efforts to understand this situation. The elimination of confusion will be possible through a good education.

Conclusions

The differences that arise in understanding and applying the main sources of religion also apply to Alevism and Bektashi. It is seen that when the Turks became Muslims, they transferred new religions to Islam, which they could not completely abandon after they became Muslims, due to some of their beliefs in their previous religions and their nomadic nature. This situation, which is especially evident in Alevism-Bektashi, makes it difficult to define them. Based on the researches in this field and the views of the Bektashi people in Yakaören Village, the study enables us to understand the nature of Alevism-Bektashi and to have information about their beliefs.

The content of the researches we examined and the thoughts of the Bektashi we interviewed show that oral culture is at the forefront in Alevism-Bektashi. This makes it difficult to identify them. It is a fact that the evaluations of the researchers, who put forward certain criteria on this subject, do not fully reflect the nature of Alevism-Bektashi, even if they draw certain frameworks. However, when we take the criteria of the researchers as a basis, we can say that Alevism-Bektashi is not a religion or sect.

Especially today, the increase in the level of education, the effect of urbanization and modernization has led to the reshaping of their beliefs. Another effect of urbanization and modernization has caused difficulties in fulfilling their traditions and worship. From this point of view, it seems possible to see Alevism-Bektashi as a way of life. The people interviewed in the field researches and the Bektashi opinion leaders in Yakaören Village and the Bektashi people here see Alevism-Bektashi as a way of life. The majority of researchers consider Bektashi to be a sect. However, it is not appropriate to say that Bektashi preserves its sectarian structure today. Because, with the effect of urbanization and modernization, even the cemris made in cemris cannot be fulfilled on time. In fact, the cem ceremonies have taken the form of a show rather than a worship. The level of education of Alevi-Bektashi opinion leaders is questioned by today's youth. Loyalty to opinion leaders with a low level of education is not as much as loyalty to cult leaders. As such, it is not possible to see Bektashi as a sect by looking at the fact that certain rituals are not performed at certain times in Bektashi as in the sects, and that there are great differences between the loyalty to the sheikh in the sects and the loyalty to the Bektashi opinion leaders. When we look at the belief dimension of Alevism-Bektashi, there are no major differences in terms of Hak-Muhammad-Ali, four doors and forty maqams, three sunnahs and seven obligatories. These are issues that all Alevi-Bektashi generally agree on.

It is a fact that there are different opinions among the Alevi-Bektashi about the Qur'an, prayer and fasting. The fact that there are different views about the Qur'an among the Alevi-Bektashi can be explained by the Shiite influence. Nomadism in prayer and fasting, and heavy steppe climatic conditions caused the Turks to attach importance to the moral aspect rather than prayer and fasting. This situation is also reflected in the thoughts of the Alevi-Bektashi about prayer and fasting.

Alevi-Bektashi, who see cemris as a place of worship, perform their worship with the cemris they build here. At the same time, cemris, which is seen as a social area, are places where the problems that arise among themselves are discussed and solutions are produced. Brewing, which is one of the rituals performed in cemris is performed with different drinks, not wine, etc. In addition to the proliferation of Alevi-Bektashi and Sunni marriages today, Alevi-Bektashi young people whose education level is

increasing and questioning have an important effect on the formation of this situation. For this reason, today, the Alevi-Bektashi perform the ritual of brewing by drinking sherbet, fruit juice or just water. Research and studies on Alevism-Bektashi will help us better understand the depths and subtleties of these groups. In our study, universal values such as tolerance, justice and fraternity come to the fore in these structures and appear as a lifestyle that encourages them.

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