

САКРАЛЬНІ ТЕКСТИ СХОДУ

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LIVING QURAN OF TURKISH ALEVIS IN THE CONDITIONS OF MODERN SOCIETY*

Alevis are a cultural community identified mainly because of their religious and social doctrine. In Turkey there are a few ethnic groups called Alevi: Turks and Turkmens, Kurds, Zazas and Arabs known as Alawis (Nusayris). In this text I will only focus on ethnic Turks who live in contemporary Turkey and are Alevis. As a religious system Alevism reminds a kind of syncretic combination of many traditions and influences coming from the nations and peoples with which Turks had contact in the past. The elements of preislamic traditions of Central Asia, Buddhism, Zarathustraism, different ideas of Christianity, Judaism may be easily recognized in its philosophy and structure. The most important part of nowadays Alevi ideology is based on Islam especially in its Shiah version with an addition of many elements of different Sufi ideas. What is more in Anatolia many Alevi groups were created in the past, and because of numerous persecutions and oppressions in the past they have put much effort into hiding and keeping low profile. In consequence as the communication between different groups was very difficult and even the transfer of knowledge within some of them was broken, Alevis became extremely heterogeneous which may be observed especially in the case of their religious ideas.

Their ideas, world-view, philosophy of life and spiritual world are so different that describing or even defining the basis of Alevi religious and social doctrine became very complicated. The most important texts pointed by Alevis themselves as the basic description of their philosophy, religion and ceremonies are *Buyruk* – the commandments of imam Jaffar al-Saadiq, and writings by Hadji Bektash Veli as well as the story of his life called *Malakat* and *Velayetname*. All of these texts were published in printing many times. In handwriting however, they are very rare and not really usable even by the people who sometimes still possess them, as nowadays none of them knows the old Turkish language and alphabet¹. What is more many religious leaders in different communities have rewritten the texts adding some remarks, comments and notes. With time new generations were not able to recognize the original basis and additions. Due to this fact printed and published versions are very different, and though they do not stand in opposition to each other; they rather give different information on the basic religious and social rules². Very often the knowledge one may find in some *Buyruk* differs from the popular standard obtained from his/her parents who in turn were taught by their parents... In such cases the corpus of knowledge given by the book must give way to the oral transfer³.

The oral texts may be listened during a *cem* ceremony, being a gathering of all the community organized in an *ocak* system⁴. *Ocak* is a kind of clan-tribe religious brotherhood. Any member of the group must be born from both Alevi parents and at least his/her father should be the member of the *ocak*. In the past *cems* took place once a year, nowadays they are organized more often, sometimes even once a week. But then not only the *ocak* members take part in them, but any Alevi, as the *cem* is arranged to educate a new generation and to strengthen the Alevi identity of the young men. Everything that is said

* The text is based on the author's research in Turkey, Germany and Poland in the years 2005–2014.

and recited during the ceremony is a part of the Alevi oral tradition, but it is rather transferred in a lecto-oral than oral way⁵. The topic of the speech of the group leader *dede* being a descendent of one of the twelve imams, is chosen by himself and may be different on every ceremony, like in the case of a priest sermon. But the prayers recited and sang by *zakir*, who also plays *saz*⁶, are usually poems written by the most illustrious Turkish poets, for example the most popular Pir Sultan Abdal, Şah Hatayi, Dertli Divani, Kul Himmet, Kaygusuz Abdal, and in 20th century Âşık Veysel. The truth is that, as not many people read about their religion anything more than what is said and recited during the *cem* ceremony or some TV programmes – although without any commentaries – is the most important and in many cases the only information source one may reach.

What is considered to be less important, sometimes even absent on the *cem* ceremony, is the Quran. As a matter of fact the question if Alevism is a part of Islam doctrine or perhaps reminds out of it is still argued and some leaders recognize themselves as descendants of pre-Turkish shamanist traditions with a strong influence – but nothing more than the influence! – of Islam. Others however, accept Alevism as a part of Islam in the scope of Sunni and Sufi traditions, usually denying their Shiah origin. But even for them the Quran is falsified by the enemies of the first imam Ali and his sons imam Hasan and imam Huseyin, to prevent them from taking over the leadership of the Muslims. The Quran is usually not read during the *cem*s, but the *zakir* who recites all prayer-poems is called *canlı Kuran* – a ‘Living Quran’. And if the *zakir* is the living Quran or the Quran alive, than it may be concluded that all his recitations are the text of the Quran.

To be a leader *dede* in Alevi group, it is not enough to be a descendent from the line of the prophet Muhammad and imam Ali, or to be born from Alevi mother and father. The *Dede* should possess a great knowledge and experience in religious and spiritual matters and on the live and everyday problems of a common member of the community. He should also be a man of a certain moral advantages. Before some member of the *dede* line becomes the *dede* with all his rights and duties he needs to be accepted by the older members of his family and line, as well as by the community of their pupils (Tur. *talip*, *talipler*) who do not come from any line of *dede* but for generations have remained under their spiritual care and supervision. Without this acceptance no *dede* is allowed to conduct any *cem* or other ceremony, nor can he make decisions in any matter considering the community. He is just a man though member of a very special family and with special opportunities.

The *Zakir* does not need to come from the line of the prophet Muhammad. In the past he came from the family of the *talips* – the students of some line of the *dedes*. The most important is that he must be a very well educated and very talented person. In spite of being a reciter-singer and a musician the *zakirs* are often poets. Usually a young *zakir* is prepared to conduct his duty by someone from his family who is a *zakir* too. There are no courses or classes they attend, but teaching is a part of an everyday family and home life, especially in the evenings or at night when family gathers around a table or fire and one of its members starts to recite some *düvaz* – poems being prayers. The most skilful and talented young boys, and even girls, are prepared to the role of the *zakir* during the *cem* ceremonies under supervision of the older *zakir* and *dede*. In the future it will be expected from them not only to recite the prayers but also to conduct the *cem* with *dede*, and if the *dede* is too old and too sick to conduct it in his place. If a very young *zakir*, accompanies an experienced *dede* it sometimes happens that it is the *dede* who recites the prayers instead of the *zakir*. In the most comfortable situation both the *dede* and *zakir* are well-educated and experienced in their duties, and have been working together for years. Then we may easily talk about a full co-conducting of the ceremony. But the number of well-educated *zakirs* is so small that the old *dedes* have to arrange some cooperation with young people, full of skill and enthusiastic but unexperienced and not so well educated in their duty. It is much more difficult than the situation in which we speak about the full cooperation between the *dede* and *zakir* or about a support given by them to each other.

The short-staff situation affects not only the group of *zakirs* but also *dedes*. It is a consequence of disintegration of the traditional social and religious structures. Especially in the 20th century, the modernization and laicisation reforms held in the Republic of Turkey made the *ocak*-line-tribe system slowly fall into decay. The migration of big groups of people was known in the Ottoman Empire, sometimes relocation was used as an act of punishment for unsubordinated subjects of the sultans. In modern times the migration became a new phenomenon as exceptionally big groups, but also much smaller numbers of community members, and sometimes even just singular families or people started to migrate from the lands to the cities or even abroad. All the traditional connections were exposed to a risk of weakening or even breaking down. People being afraid of intolerance experienced so many times in the past, tried to hide their Alevi roots and religion. Not going to the mosque or even not knowing the Quran and prayers in the country where a laic model of life was promoted by official authorities was relatively easy. In this situation loosing the knowledge about Alevi culture and identity was rather easy. Due to this fact even if a young man wanted to find a teacher to become the *zakir*, or some experienced *dede* or *zakir* tried to find a talented and dedicated to this duty young man, it was not an easy task.

Moreover nowadays being the *zakir* is not an easy work. There are not many young people who want to be the *zakir*, someone deeply dedicated to serve the community, sacrificing his or her time to learn and practise necessary skills and knowledge. And as it is not a profession, and one must at the same time earn money to provide a family, sometimes to support poorer members of the community. In return the *zakir* or *dede* may expect only expressions of gratitude and respect. Being the *zakir* or *dede* means to serve, not to earn, which is rather unpopular and to the families of young people it looks like a very unpractical attitude in the nowadays world.

A course of a *cem* may be very different depending of the type of ceremony and its purpose. One of the most traditional *cem*s were arranged once a year in winter, when every shepherd and farmer had a lot of free time, and when all economic calculations could be done. It was also a time for managing and solving all problems in little society or for making plans for the next year. These meetings, and sometimes other *cem*s, were also dedicated to arrange a ceremony of rite de passage to initiate new members to the group. In this case all the ceremony could last even few days; nowadays it may take at least few hours. Such a ceremony is usually unavailable for strangers, the people out of the group, who had not passed the ritual and had not been bowed in a relation of *musahiplik*. The *musahiplik* it is an institution of a fictive kinship connecting two men and their wives. They become spiritual brothers and sisters of the way (Tur. *yol kardeşleri*). They must support themselves and be responsible for each other in every situation of their social, economic and spiritual life. For themselves and their surrounding they become one soul in four bodies⁷. Much more popular are *cem*s arranged to educate new generations and people who had lost contact with their traditional group and to support their Alevi identity. They are called “education *cem*s” (Tur. *eğitim cemi*) and are much more available for those who do not have their *musahip* or even for outsiders, if only they declare to be Alevi. It means that those who attend this ceremony are not initiated and do not possess a deep religious knowledge. These ceremonies last a couple of hours, two sometimes three, but no more, not to make the people intimidated.

There are no two exactly same *cem* ceremonies, even in the case of a very simple education *cem* which will be taken to a closer consideration in this paper. The human factor is so strong that it makes it impossible even to a very disciplined and well trained *dede* and *zakir* to conduct one ceremony in the hundred percent same way as another one. Every member of the community may do something wrong, may ask an unexpected question and then an answer should be given, sometimes some modifications must be done for some unforeseen reasons. Even the *dede* and *zakir* themselves may change some detail or

just make a mistake. And if some *cem*s are conducted by different leaders, members of different *ocak* traditions, no one should expect that the ceremony and the prayers will be just repeated. Despite all of that, in every *cem* some elements and parts are repeated, even if in different order.

At appointed hour people gather in *cem evi* – the house of *cem*. The *Dede* and *zakir* should be already there. The *dede* may talk with people, and *zakir* may start to recite some prayers. To take part in the ceremony everyone should come with a clean mind and heart, and should not be conflicted with anyone else. So the *dede* asks people if everyone is consentient to each other (Tur. *razılık*), and they answer “yes” which is symbolically expressed by the way they sit facing each other, in the circle. Another way of a symbolic cleaning is sweeping the floor where every ritual of the ceremony takes part. Everyone who comes should bring something to eat as a kind of offer. The food is blessed by the *dede*, and sometimes just before the ceremony starts those who are to prepare a ritual meal bring the bread, meat or fruits brought by the community to let *dede* to bless all products. Now the ceremony may start. The masters of twelve duties (Tur. *on iki hizmet sahipleri*) are called to start their service. They are people, men and women, who have to play certain role during the ceremony, or who play important role in the group in general. The call is a prayer-poem recited by the *zakir*. A water for symbolic ablution is brought by the master of ablution water (Tur. *tazekar* or *sakkacı*) and everyone may rinse their hands. Then the most important part of the ceremony starts with “waking up the Light” (Tur. *çerağ uyandırması*). One of the twelve masters (Tur. *çerağcı* or *delilci*) lights a candle or an electric lamp when *zakir* recites a special prayer-poem. Also *dede* or the master of light recites the 35th verse of “The Light” surah (Tur. *Nur*), the XXIVth chapter of the Quran⁸. Then after some other *dede*’s prayers for success of the evening and the prosperity for all the community, the *zakir* may recite other prayer-poems expressing the love for God, Twelve Imams and the House of the prophet Muhammad and imam Ali. The most important part here is a recitation of *miraçlama* – describing prophet Muhammad’s journey to the Heaven, his meeting with God, and joining the first in *cem* in the history called “Cem of the Forty” (Tur. *Kırklar Cemi*), as it was attended by forty great heroes and heroines of Alevism. Certain behaviors of Muhammad are repeated by the gathered people and in the end of the story, when the Forty stand up to the ritual dance the gathered people start to whirl a ritual *semah* dance. All of that is accompanied by the *zakir*’s recitation. After the *semah* the *tevhid* being an expression of the monotheistic doctrine is recited. Then the time for the mysterium of water comes (Tur. *sakka suyu*). The master responsible for this duty (Tur. *sakkacı*) brings little cups of water for everyone to drink. Some water is also spread over the peoples’ heads, as well as in the direction of the ground, air, fire and to all the directions of the universe. The water is drunk and spread in the honour of the third imam Hüseyin who had suffered thirst before his battle at Kerbela (680 a.d.). He is a symbol of righteousness, honesty and honour, a man who had fought with all evil of the world and who sacrificed himself to protect next generations of those who will search for the path of the God. Next the *zakir* intonates *mersiye*, a lamentation concerning especially the martyrdom of imam Hüseyin but also all other imams, his father and brother and his successors. Usually the *dede* also recalls all the Alevi victims, murdered, burned and persecuted by all governments since the Ottoman times until today. Then the ritual food (Tur. *lokma*) may be brought. The *dede* blesses the food, and afterwards it is given to everyone in absolutely equal portions, and when everyone has obtained his or her *lokma* he gives the permission to eat. Sometimes the *lokma* is served at the end of the gathering, and before that the masters of twelve duties are called again so that the community can thank them for their service. The *cem* ends with the *dede*’s prayer for prosperity, happiness and good health for all the Alevi and Turkish community as well as for all the good people in the world. Usually at the beginning of

the *cem*, and sometimes in the middle of the ceremony the *dede* preaches a kind of sermon, or even a few sermons in the course of whole the evening. They resemble religious lessons or discussions on the actual problems of the world. And both the recitations and the conversations on the religious and spiritual topics are treated by the community as the best possible opportunity to learn⁹.

Although certain parts of the ritual may take place in different order, they all should be conducted. Also, even though the *dede* may talk on very various topics, he should talk and teach the people. Respectively the *zakir* may choose very different poems or very different versions of some prayers, but all of them need to be recited and every kind of prayer should be repeated three times. Yet sometimes an old and sick or just not well prepared for his duty *dede* is not able to guide a young and unexperienced *zakir*. The *zakir* whose recitations I will use as an example was a young enthusiast of his duty. He had no *musahip*, which suggests that he was uninitiated as a full member of an *ocak* community, and accordingly his knowledge on Alevism, its doctrine, philosophy and theology was very imperfect. He learnt mainly himself from books, sometimes from older *zakirs* who were very careful about giving him the knowledge restricted for the initiated ones. But he tried to take part in every meeting of the *zakirs*, and in every possible *cem* conducted by other *dedes* and *zakirs*. So he also learned orally. And as he believed rather in the “living Quran” than in texts written and printed with many mistakes and failures, poem-prayers recited by him were just repeated as listened and understood. Sometimes he asked for explanation, but also not every older *zakir* knew the meaning of the declaimed text, or even not exactly knew the text itself. So a mistake was repeated an mistaken over again and gave birth to even bigger mistakes at a geometrical rate. The young *zakir* was not considered to be a very good and well qualified one. But there was no one else. So his recitations along with the *dedes* sermons constituted the basic knowledge for those who take part in the *cem* ceremony, especially given that the *zakir*, as mentioned above, has the symbolic status of the “Living Quran”¹⁰.

What then may or should be given in the course of one education *cem*? Certainly the poem-prayer when masters of twelve duties are called being a kind of a list accompanied with a short description of their responsibilities. They should be called in the order of their appearance during the ceremony. So the first one should be the *dede* here called a *halife* what suggests some connections with Sunni Islam or with the Bektashi order, and Alevism and Bektashism are not the same both on the level of their philosophy and ceremonial life. The next to be called is a *rehber* – who cares for the community when the *dede* is absent and who supervises the candidates for the *musahips*; then a *kapıcı* – a person who guards the door of *cem evi*, and in the past in the villages used to watch the neighbourhood; *gözcü* – responsible for observing the order and proper behaviour of the participants during the ceremony; *sakkacı* – already mentioned above, gives the symbolic water to drink and spreads it; *kurbanacı* – a person who kills an animal for the sacrifice and prepares its meat; *tazekar* – also mentioned above, serves the water for ablution; *peyik* – a person who informs everyone that the *cem* will be held; *delilci* – a person who lights the Light; the *zakir* – recites prayer-poems; *niyazcı* – described as if he were the *zakir* but sometimes this term is used for *kurbanacı* or *lokmacı*; *süpürgeci* – a person who cleans the place of ceremony; *lokmacı* – a person who prepares and serves ceremonial food, especially when it is not the sacrificed animal’s meat; *iznikci* – a person who cares for cleaning and preparing the *cem evi* to the ceremony¹¹.

It is very easy to count that among those masters of twelve duties fourteen positions are mentioned. Sometimes the *dede-halife* is not accepted as one of the duties. Anyway thirteen is not twelve. Some of the duties may be joined together, for instance the *kurbanacı* and *lokmacı*; *süpürgeci* and *iznikci*; *tazekar* and *sakkacı*. But if these duties may be joined why are they mentioned separately? And again the calculation will not give the number of twelve. The *kurbanacı* called accordingly to the list is needed when the animal

is going to be sacrificed, which did not happen during the *cem* when this prayer was recited. This text does not suit neither the rule nor the course of not only a general *cem* ceremony but even this particular one¹².

The “counting problem” appears also in the recitation of *taclama*, the litany of twelve imams. They are as follows: Ali, Hasan, Hüseyin, Zeynel Abidin, Muhammad Bakır, Cafer Sadık, Musa Kazim, Ali Rıza, Muhammad Taki, Ali Naki, Hasan Askeri, Muhammad Mehdi¹³. There are many poems and prayers calling their names on the occasion of the martyrdom of imam Hüseyin (Tur. *mersiye*), lighting the Light (Tur. *çerağ düvazı*) and expressing the love and devotion to the God (Tur. *tevhid*). If we try to compile the prayers recited during one ceremony we may get few different lists. For example imams Hasan and Husain may be absent in the line¹⁴. Sometimes instead of imam Ali, his wife and prophet Muhammad’s daughter may appear¹⁵. The number then is completed, but the list is not the same. And the consequences of such a list may be very serious indeed. Firstly the knowledge about imams, and especially about imam Ali and imam Hüseyin is treated like a proof of being Alevi. The Alevi identity may be questioned if one does not know the list of the twelve imams or is not able to quote it¹⁶. And how a young man may learn it, if he or she does not read anything, and the knowledge passed during the *cem* ceremony varies so much in the case of almost every prayer? The implications of losing some name, changing the order in line or just replacing imams by someone only connected to them may be very important too. Just imagine a feminist revolution with Fatma as the first of imams! And what about imam Ali and his potential divinity which is still discussed? One mistake may overthrow all the doctrine or may very effectively prevent defining it¹⁷.

The recitation of *miraçlama* and *semah* exposes the problem of changing the text and its meaning as well. It is a story about Muhammad’s journey to Heaven, meeting the God and about the first *cem*. Depending on its exact text one may speculate about unification of imam Ali with the God, sometimes with both the God and the prophet Muhammad and in consequence about the divinity of imam Ali. There is great difference between a sentence “*Dedi Saddaksın Murtezar!*” what may mean “He said you are archer’s quiver” or most probably “He said you are alms” and “*Dedi saddarsın yâ Ali!*” or “*Dedi saddarsın Murtezar!*” which means “He said you are the God Oh! Ali” or “He said you are the God Murtezar” (“Murtezar” being another name of imam Ali here). The question if Ali is recognized as the God and if so – in what meaning? is still discussed among the Alevi themselves and among their opponents, adversaries and even enemies¹⁸. So the exact, proper pronunciation, clear form and transfer of the text is very important. Nevertheless as the young *zakir* was not able to hear the text properly, no printed version helped him to resolve his doubts and the older *zakirs* stuck to their “only proper” versions, the only thing he could do was to repeat some texts with mistakes without even fully understanding them¹⁹.

From the doctrinal point of view the most important prayer-poem is probably *tevhid* – the explanation and declaration of the love for the God, the Unity of the God and monotheistic doctrine. But even here some expressions may be surprising and in the light of everything that was said above – questioned. Usually shahada (Tur. *şahada*) “the testimony” is a part of the recitations. It is rather similar to the testimony of the Shiites as the name of imam Ali is mentioned. But tiny changes of some words make this sentence surprising for a statistical Sunni or Shii Muslim. The basic shahada sounds “there is no God but God, and Muhammad is the Messenger of God”, in Shiah version a phrase “and Ali is the wali/governor of God” is added. But listening the *tevhid* we may hear:

İl Allah il Allah Şah il Allah (There is no God but Şah)
Ali Mürşid güzel Şahım (Ali Mürşid my beautiful Şah)
Şahım Eyvallah Eyvallah (Thanks to You my Şah)²⁰

What is more, the author of the poem was suggested to be the God too. And a corresponding phrase of a similar or even the same poem, written by the same author may present the popularly known *shahada*²¹.

The knowledge of Alevi doctrine and ideology presented during *cems* is very controversial and far from being complete. It is also unexplained and even not noticed by the participants. This is very strange and uncomfortable situation for someone expecting a firm, strict and explicit information from the “living Quran”. Instead of that a careful participant gets a peculiar mixture of strange and variable components. One may be given some information about the course of the *cem* ceremony and how it came to existence. The twelve duties, *musahiplik* obligation, rules regarding celebration of certain holidays and special events are also given. The participants are also instructed on the special position of imam Ali and other imams. Amongst the basic rules of Alevi spiritual and social life we can distinguish the love for the family and clan of imams as an idea of love for everyone and everything what is right and noble in the world (Tur. *tevella*) along with aversion towards and duty of fighting injustice and oppression against people (Tur. *teber-ra*). These two attitudes as well as respect for every human being and esteem for women as partners and sisters of the way are strongly promoted in the context of all the ceremony. Historical and mythological knowledge about all the persecutions that Alevi groups suffered is always explained and repeated over and over again. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk is mentioned in this context as a man of great integrity, who protected all right people. The laic Republic of Turkey therefore becomes a tool for realising this ideal.

Those questions are usually explained by *dede* in direct words. Some questions connected to the ideas of initiations, the institution of *musahiplik*, and even the path of four gates are discussed too²². Though especially the idea of four gates is so complicated that only a very general impression may be given by comparison, for example, to the contemporary education system. I have never heard any *dede* talking during a ceremony about Ali being the God, or explaining the doctrine of secret and unity with the God, which is reserved for those who understand the last gate. But however the subject is not discussed it is recited by *zakir* in a very controversial way. *Zakir* rather does not talk for himself, he declaims and sings. During an educational *cem* there is no chance for any discussion with the ideas he expressed or mistakes he did. Even later the older members of the community may say something about the mistakes but they do not explain doctrinal implications of some careless words. Many of them are not even able to see any problem as their knowledge is not broad enough to find one²³.

What the Quran gives us is a firm text: canonical and dogmatic. It is believed that it is unchanged. *Zakir*, the “Living Quran”, is a part of a very important institution in both ways: sacred and profane. *Zakir* himself should be a part of both these spheres. But in nowadays world where old and traditional ways of transferring knowledge were almost completely destroyed the community must find a way to survive. Everyday life conditions, its continuing modernization and pragmatism lead to a practice of preserving the old by changing it into something rather new. I suppose that we have here a rare opportunity to watch this change in acting. Every *zakir* – the living Quran – serving because of a calling and vocation and not for his own fame or popularity is a part of this change, no matter how well (or bad) educated and prepared for his duty he is. The problem that the community faces is lack of the possibility to understand the message of the prayer-poems. Great diversification of the texts makes it even more difficult. But the majority of people do not complain as they have no idea about those failures. And they hear what they want to hear, what they are familiar with and what they were told by their parents and grandfathers. Some Alevi organizations try to create some standard for the course of the *cem* ceremony and define strict texts for recitations. But for the moment these initiatives are not welcomed very warmly for they are perceived as something against tradition and the message of *cem*.

¹ 1928 according to the modernization and laicization programme of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk new alphabet was introduced to the people. Instead of Arab letters, Turks had to use Latin ones. One of the consequences of this act was a damage of religious knowledge and transfer process. Old teachers educated in the old system lost their position, and the new generation was not even able to read the old texts.

² The most popular editions are: İmam Cafer Sadık, Buyruk, Sefer AYTEKİN (ed.), Ankara 1958; İmam Cafer Sadık, Buyruk. İmam Cafer-i Sadık Buyruğu, Fuat Bozkurt (ed.), İstanbul 1982; İmam Cafer Sadık, Yorumlu İmam Cafer Buyruğu, Esat Korkmaz (ed.), İstanbul 1997; İmam Cafer Sadık, Buyruk. İmam Cafer Buyruğu. Hakiki Din Yolu, Kerbela Faciasından Evvel Şam'a Halifeliliğini İlan Eden Muaviyeden Kaser Rum'n Kuran-ı Kerim'den Sorduğu Muaviyenin Cevap Veremediği 100 Soru Ayetleri ve Cevapları, Bektaş Ayyıldız (ed.), Hasan Ayyıldız (intr.), Ayyıldız Yayınları, İstanbul, 1962.

³ See the interviews in the author's archive: AB-409-2014, R1, R2; AB-418-2014.

⁴ *Ocak* in Turkish may also mean a fire place, a fire circle, a home or a home circle, a family, or a clan.

⁵ For more information on the problem of the oral and lecto-oral transfer of knowledge see: Goody Jack, *Mith, Ritual and the Oral*, Cambridge, 2010.

⁶ *Saz*, called also *bağlama* is a stringed musical instrument known in many cultures of Euroasia, especially South and Easter Mediterranean, Near and Middle East, Central Asia, etc.

⁷ Korkmaz Esat, 2003, *Ansiklopedik Alevilik-Bektaşilik Sözlüğü*, İstanbul, 2003, pp. 304–314; Metin Hüseyin Gazi Metin Dede, 2008, *Dinim Sevgi Kabem İnsan*, Antalya, 2008, pp. 52; Yaman Mehmet (dede), *Alevilik. İnanç-Edep-Erkan*, İstanbul, 2013, pp. 220–223.

⁸ See: Üçlü Kuran, Ehlîbeyt Muhibler'ne Kelam-ı Kadim Kur'an-ı Hakim ve Öz Tğrkçe Meali, (no editor, no translator), Ankara (no year of printing), XXIV. 35.

⁹ For the description of the *cem* ceremony see inter alia: Godzińska Marzena, Cem alewicki – obrzęd religijny, instytucja życia społecznego czy folklorizm, [in:] T. Majda (ed.), *Studia z dziejów i kultury ludów tureckich*, Warszawa, 2013, pp. 101–119; Dedekargınoğlu Hüseyin, Dede Garkın Süreğinde Cem, Ankara, 2010, pp. 121–295; Korkmaz Esat, 2003, *Ansiklopedik Alevilik-Bektaşilik Sözlüğü*, İstanbul, 2003, pp. 91–100; Metin Hüseyin Gazi Metin Dede, 2008, *Dinim Sevgi Kabem İnsan*, Antalya, 2008, pp. 92–129; Shankland David, 1993, *Alevi and Sunni in Rural Turkey: Diverse Paths of Change*, Cambridge, 1993; Shankland David, 2003, *The Alevi in Turkey. The Emergence of a Secular Islamic Tradition*, London, New York, 2003; Yaman Mehmet (dede), *Alevilik. İnanç-Edep-Erkan*, İstanbul, 2013, pp. 220–223.

¹⁰ See the interviews in the author's archive: AB-215-2008; AB-217-2008; AB-266-2009.

¹¹ The text of the *düvaz* is: *Haktan bize nida geldi / Halîfeye haber olsun / Şahtan nergüz name geldi / Rehberime haber olsun // Yola gidenler hacıdır / Erenler gardaş bacıdır / Cem kilidi kapıcıdır / Kapıcıya haber olsun // Hak kuluna kıldı nazar / Gerçek olan irfâm dizer / Galleş gelir cemi bozar / Gözcü sana haber olsun // Yola giden haslar hası / Giyimiş hakikat libası / Doldur getirin yurttası / Sakkacıya haber olsun // Mümini çekti meydana / Münkiri sürdü zındana / Tekbir verildi kurbana / Kurbancıya haber olsun // Hak kuluna kıldı rahmet / Sana niyaz olsun Ahmet / Hizmet verildi Muhammed / Tezakere haber olsun // Hak kuluna nazar eyler / Hakkın kelamını söyler / Mümin mürvetini diler / Peyik sana haber olsun // Şeydağa bülbül bağı ister / Haktan yolun sağan ister / Delil yanmaz yağın ister / Delilciye haber olsun // Ey kalp evi dolu kişi / Daim haklar onun işi / Kimdir bu Hakkın başı / Zakir sana haber olsun // Zakirin zikri saz ile / Duaz okur avaz ile / Mümin müslim niyaz ile / Niyazcıya haber olsun // Hak gelin gidelim reyhana / Temenna kıldık erkana / Hizmet verildi Selmana / Süpürgeciye haber olsun // Fatma ana cemde oturur / Gazana kepçe batırır / Canlara lokma getirir / Lokmacıya haber olsun // Hüü! / Şah Hatayım zara geldi / Hak yolunu süre geldi / Mümin müslim dara geldi İznikçiye haber olsun (AB-2008.08.21 – Ankara CD- cem a).*

¹² About problems concerning analyzing and interpretation of the prayer calling masters of twelve duties see: Godzińska Marzena, *Literatura mówiona alewitów tureckich – drobne problemy metodologiczne*, [in:] J. Georgijewa-Okoń, E. Siemieniec-Gołaś (eds.), *Od Anatolii po Syberię. Świat turecki w oczach badaczy*, Kraków, 2010, pp. 77–88.

¹³ Birge John Kingsley, *The Bektashi Order of Dervishes*, London, 1965, pp. 145–146; Momen, Moojan, *An Introduction to the Shi'i Islam*, London, 1985, pp. 23–45, 161–162.

¹⁴ *Nuru semavette okunur ayet / Hudanın aşkına yandı bu delil / Muhammed Mustafayı meth eder gayet / Alinin aşkına yandı bu delil // İmam Zeynel bu mu Hü, Hü, Hü! zındanda yaktı /*

Muhammed Bâkır bu nuruna baktı / İmami **Cafer** ilminden aldı / **Musayî Kazım** aşkına yandı bu delil // İmam **Rızaya** dayım niyazım / **Takî Nakî Askeri** kara etme yüzüm / **Muhammed Mehdiye** balıdır özüm / On iki imam aşkına yandı bu delil // Delilin piri Hü, Hü, Hü! Caburu Ensar / Cansefil Aliye gül yüzlü Haydar / Ruzu mahşer günü koyma çar açar / Erenler aşkına yandı bu delil (AB-2008.08.21 – Ankara CD- cem a).

¹⁵ McElwain Thomas, *The Turkish Alevi: Issues in the Study of Oral Tradition*, Erdemir, Aykan; Ersal, Mehmet; Taşğın, Ahmet; Yaman, Ali (eds.), II. Uluslararası Tarihten Bugüne Alevilik Sempozyumu, Ankara, 2012, pp. 282–289.

¹⁶ See in the author's archive: AB-138-2005; Dziennik badań, 8.08.2008.

¹⁷ For more on the possible list of the imams see: McElwain Thomas, *The Turkish Alevi: Issues in the Study of Oral Tradition*, Erdemir, Aykan; Ersal, Mehmet; Taşğın, Ahmet; Yaman, Ali (eds.), II. Uluslararası Tarihten Bugüne Alevilik Sempozyumu, Ankara, 2012, pp. 282–298.

¹⁸ *Miraçlama* as a confession of the divine nature of imam Ali was analysed by the author in the lecture presented during the 5th Polish Conference of Turkish Studies, 1–2.06.2011, organized by the Department of Turkish and Inner Asian Peoples, Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Warsaw. An article entitled “Miraçlama – the Confession of Divinity of Ali” is to be printed.

¹⁹ *Geldi Cebrail buyurdu / Ya Muhammed Mustafa / Hak seni Mihraç okudu / Davete kadir Hüda // Evvel emanet budur ki / Piri rehberi tutasın / Kadimi erkana yatıp / Tariki mustaki ne* (Correct version: *Tariki müstakime*) // *Muhammed sükuta vardı Hü, hü! Hü, hü! / Yoktur sende mirazis* (Correct version: *Yoktur senden aziz*) // *Şimdi sende el tutayım / Hak buyurdu vedduha // Muhammedin beli de bağladı / Anda âhiri Cebrail / İki gönül bir ediben / Yürüdüler dergaha // Vardı dergah kapusuna / Gördü bir arslan yatar / Arslan anda hamle kıldı / Başa koptu tufâne // Buyurdu sırrı kainat / “Korkma ya habibim!” dedi / Hatemin ağzına verdi ki / Aslan ister nişane // Hatemin ağzına verdi / Aslan anda oldu sakin / Yol verildi Muhammede / Aslan gitti nihana / O vardı Hakkı tevaf etti // Hü, hü, hü! // Evvela bunu söyledi / Ne şiddetli şirin varmış / Hayli cevreyledi bana! // Gördü bir çare derviş / Hemen yutmak diledi / Ali bile olaydı / Dayanaydı ol Şaha // Gel benim sırrı devletim // Aslan sana tabidir Habibim / Eğiliben secde kıldı / Kabeyin kıblegaha // Doksan bin kelam danıştı / İki gönül dostuna / Tevhidi armağan aldı / Yeryüzünde insana // Süt elmayı, baldan aldı / Hü, hü, hü! / Nuş etti Azametullaha / Muhammed secdeye koydu yüzünü / Turaba kattı özünü // Cebrail cennetten getirdi üzümü / Al git Hasan Hüseyin Şaha / Selman anda hazır idi* (Fragment difficult to understand even for my Alevi interlocutors: AB-412-2014) // *Hü, hü, hü! / Şeydullahın diledi / Bir üzüm tanesi koydu / Selmanı keşköllahına // Muhammed ayağa durdu / Hü, hü, hü! / Ümmetini diledi / Cümlesine rahmet olsun (x2) // Dedi anda Kibriya / Eğiliben secde kıldı / Eşiğinde Kiblegaha / Hoşçakal sultanım dedi // Varıp evine giderken / Yol uğrattı Kırklara / Vardı Kırklar makamına / Hü, hü, hü! / Oturuben oldu sakin // Cümlesi de niyaz etti / Hazreti Emurullaha / Muhammed hup lisana geldi // Hü, hü, hü! Hü, hü, hü! / Erilmez sırlarımız var / Hiç görmedim boyle yerler / Acep size kimler derler / Kırklardan bir nida geldi // Bize Kırklar derler / Otuz dokuz varımız / Neden noksandır bir biriniz / Selman Şeydullağa gitti // Onlar tek mildir varımız* (It should be: *Ondandır eksik birimiz*) // *Eldedir külli varımız / Cümleden ulu yolumuz / Birimize neşter vursan // Kırkıımızdan akar kanımız / Selman Şeydullahtan geldi / Hü! deyip içeri girdi / Keşkullu ortaya koydu // Bir üzüm tanesi ile / Kudretten de bir el geldi / Ezdi engür eyledi / Hatemim o elde gördü // Uğradı bir müşkül hale / Ol şerbetten biri içti / Cümlesi de oldu hayran // (semah) // Mümin Müslim üryan büryan / Hep kaldılar semaha // Muhammedim bile kalktı / Kırklar ile semaha / Muhammedim cûşa geldi / Tacı başından düştü // Şemresini Kırkla böldü / Sardı Kırklar beline / Muhabbetler kalbim oldu* (It should be: *Muhabbetler kadim oldu*) // *Yol erkan geldi aldı* (It should be: *Yol erkan yerini buldu*) // *Muhammedi gönderdiler / Hatırlar oldu sefa / Muhammed evine vardı / Alim geldi tavâf kıldı / Hatemi önüne koydu / Dedi Saddaksın Murtezar!* (Correct version: *Dedi saddarsın yâ Ali! or Dedi saddarsın Murtezar!*) // *Evveli sen ahırı sen / Zahiri sen batını sen / Cümle sırlar sana ayan sana beyan / Dedi Şah-ı Evliya // Şah Hatayi'm vakıf oldum / Bu sırrın ötesine / Hak sözünü inandıramadım / Özü çürük ervaha! / Hü, hü, hü! Hü, hü, hü! Hü, hü, hü! // Allah, Allah!* (See the materials from the cem ceremonies, in the author's archive: AB-2008.08.21 – Ankara CD- cem a; AB-215-2008; AB-217-2008).

²⁰ The full text of the declamation is:

Diz çökü ben zikr edelim / Cami bil de Allahım / Yedi ceddım yarı kılamış anınca il Allahı / Yedi ceddım yarı kılamış Şahım cahil Vallahi / İl Allah il Allah Şah il Allah / Ali Mürşid güzel Şahım, Şahım Eyvallah Eyvallah / La il Allah il Allah, Şefat ya resul ul Allah // Anda yanar hep odlar / Bunda olur heybetler / Cehennem kapusunu kilitler anınca il Allahı / İl Allah il Allah Şah il

Allah / Ali mürşid güzel Şahım, Şahım Eyvallah Eyvallah / La il Allah il Allah, Şefat ya resul ul Allah // Okumuşum dört kitabı / Ayet ayet harf be harf / Cümlesinde neftalmiş anınca il Allahu / İl Allah il Allah Şah il Allah / Ali mürşid güzel Şahım, Şahım Eyvallah Eyvallah / La il Allah il Allah, Şefat ya resul ul Allah // İndi Hakkım kapusuna / Şah Hatayım kapusuna / İndi Hakkım kapusuna / Sekiz üç matapusuna / Yazmış la il Allahu / İl Allah il Allah Şah il Allah / Ali mürşid güzel Şahım, Şahım Eyvallah Eyvallah / La il Allah il Allah, Şefat ya resul ul Allah / Şefat ya resul ul Allah (see the materials AB-2008.08.21 – Ankara CD- cem a).

²¹ AB-2009.02.14 – Ankara TCayir – Sahinkaya.

²² The four gates: *şeriat* – Muslim Quranic rules and laws, *tarikât* – with *musahib* getting to the path of the knowledge of the God during initiation *cem*, *marifet* – the mystic knowledge and *hakkât* – unity with the God (Birge John Kingsley, The Bektashi Order of Dervishes, London, 1965, pp. 102–103).

²³ AB-266-2009; AB-418-2014, R1, R2.

List of interlocutors

Number of interview	Sex Male/ Female (M/F)	Year of birth	Line: dede/ talib (D/T)	Declared religion
AB-138-2008	M	1963	D	Alevi
AB-215-2008	M	1986	T	Alevi
AB-217-2008	M	1986	T	Alevi
AB-266-2009	M	1940	T	Alevi
AB-409-2014, R1	M	1942	D	Alevi
AB-409-2014, R2	M	1950 (?)	T	Alevi
AB-412-2014	M	1942	D	Alevi
AB-418-2014, R1	M	1942	D	Alevi
AB-418-2014, R2	M	1966	D	Alevi