

THOMAS MCELWAIN

## Ritual Change in a Turkish Alevi Village

### Introducing the Community

This study is a documentation and analysis of change in ritual in the village of Sarılar, on the west bank of the Euphrates River near Yavuseli, Gaziantep. It is based on material collected during the months of May and June 1989 consisting of field notes, recorded interviews, and photographs, as well as comparisons with complementary material collected on subsequent visits to Turkey. The research problem posed was identification of ritual change within the consultants' memory and some tentative ways of situating such change within the socio-economic context.

Sarılar is a pistachio farming village reachable by a daily local bus leaving from the market in the center of Gaziantep. Almost everyone living in the village cultivates the nuts as a cash crop. Other occupations include the few paid officials and school-teachers as well as one or two shopkeepers. Goats, sheep, poultry and a few cows complete the economy. Horses are far fewer than donkeys, and although there are a good many tractors that began to make an appearance in the 1970s, there were no automobiles in the village in 1989. Some families are fortunate enough to have gardens of vegetables and fruit trees on the river bank, but the climate is too arid for such agriculture in other places in the immediate vicinity. Although some land is rented, it appears that most of the land is owned by the families who cultivate it.

The social organization that Naess (1988: 175) reports to be diminishing in importance in Dereköy seems to be in very strong evidence in Sarılar. The village continues to be spatially and socially organized in well-defined groups which could be called endogamic patrilineal, patrilocal clans (*sulale*). These social groups have their own names and quarters. The western third of the village is taken up by the predominant Ali Uşağı with about 420 houses. At the very center of the village there are 32 houses belonging to the Bekir Eyli. On the east side there are 100 houses of the

Deveçili. The northeast quarter is held by about 190 houses of the Hidir Uşağı. The Cömeler have 150 houses on the southeast.

Although these numbers of households were given to me as residents of Sarılar, in fact, a high percentage of people are non-resident. My consultants suggested that about 50 families are living in Adana, from 200 to 250 in Gaziantep, 200 in Germany and about 50 in other places. Only about 400 families remain in Sarılar.

The household is enclosed by a wall with one gate. Within this area the main house is built with any additional outbuildings. Generally the one structure houses everything. In the poorest homes there is only one storey, but as soon as possible a second storey as living quarters is added and animals remain on the ground level. At least two rooms of living quarters will be found. Cupboards containing bedding and cylindrical woolen pillows are built into the wall. Furniture consists of carpets and such pillows for sitting. The houses are always scrupulously clean, having run-off vents at the juncture of wall and floor for easy washing. The family tends to sleep on a terrace or roof during the summer season when there is no rain.

Meals are served on the large trays typical of the Near East, and are eaten from common dishes, although spoons instead of fingers are used. Hospitality is common and guests are received with tea and cologne on the hands. Men and women come in close social contact as a group in the household, but one to one contact in public is brief and groups in public tend to be separated by sexes.

Marriage is within the clan if possible. Men resident in the city may marry Sunni women, but no Alevi girls from Sarılar are given to Sunni men. Marriage tends to follow the Turkish legal standard, and I noted only one case of bigamy in the village. The roles of men and women are clearly outlined, and although women have a much higher profile in the local Alevi villages than in the Sunni villages nearby, their position is obviously inferior to the men's. Upon meeting a man on the road, a woman must dismount and walk past. When a man enters a room, a seated woman must rise.

In sum, Dengler's (1978: 231) remark on the role of women in Ottoman Turkey describes the present village situation very well. "Turkish women most certainly had some role among the various heterodox Islamic groups, but never one comparable with that of males. Indeed, the women in these groups who gained importance did so because of the reputation and position of their husbands." He goes on to point out that women might attain sainthood, but there was "no institutionalized mechanism offering

a permanent life option in the religious world" (Dengler 1978: 241). It will be noted below in the ritual text (Appendix) that all of the leadership roles are taken up by men, while women are given the ritual representation of some female figures important to Shi'ism and some status in the role of celibate initiates in Bektashi lodges. Even the latter role does not appear to exist in the village.

There is electricity in the village and many homes have refrigerators, electrical cooking devices, television sets and cassette recorders and radios. On the other hand, in contrast to most of the villages around there is no running water. The residents attribute this lack to their having voted against the reigning party in elections. Water must be carried on donkeyback from a spring at the riverside three kilometers from the village. There are cisterns in the village, but this water is not used for consumption. Some of the cisterns are quasi-public and others are to be found within the household enclosure.

In contrast to the surrounding Sunni villages, there is no mosque in the village, nor in any of the three neighboring Alevi villages. There is a house of prayer, as is noted in the inscription above the door, but this *tekke* has fallen into disuse since the death of the last resident *dede*. Although the village *tekke*, which is not a convent in the Bektashi fashion, but a mere building for gathering, was used long after the disbanding of the dervish orders by Turkish law, it is no longer in a usable condition, and no rites are conducted there presently.

Although the sectarian identification of Alevi seems frustrating, it is possible to make some headway in determining the religious tradition of the people in question. Once we have faced the fact that the term is an umbrella for heterodox Islam in Turkey which presents a good deal of variety as well as some recognizable common denominators (Momen 1985: 45-60), the problem does not seem so crucial. Some of these common denominators are an Alevi identity, a certain depreciation of Sunni Muslim practices, adherence to the imamat of Ali, and a strong emotional attachment to the martyrs of Kerbala. Undoubtedly there are beliefs and practices which are peculiar and common to all Alevi, such as the avoidance of the hare, respect of the threshold, and perhaps the *müşahiplik* (ritual sibingship) and the Shi'ite emphasis on Cafer-i Sadık.

Gölpınarlı (1987: 12, 180, 189) emphasises the formative role of the Safavid era on the Kızılbaş. He also associates them with the Ahl-i Haqq (1987: 183). Noyan (1987: 13) points out the ethnic and linguistic boundaries of the sect, contrasting the Turkish-speaking Alevi with the Arabic-speaking sects. He gives the common doctrinal basis of the Alevi

as the association (*bağlılık*) of Allah, Muhammed, Ali; the celebration of the *cem*; adherence to the twelve imams; and maintenance of the Caferi school of law (Noyan, 1987: 14). Yürükoğlu (1990: 139) similarly defines the Alevi.

Perhaps the clearest placement of the Alevi among Islamic sects is to be found in Moosa. He treats them along with extremist Shi'ites in what he calls the Ghulat sects, that is, those which are extremist in their doctrines about Ali and divinity. Throughout the book he equates the Bektashi, the Kizilbash (Alawi) and to a certain extent the Shabak (Moosa 1988: 50, 120, et passim). More importantly, Moosa agrees with Gölpınarlı in equating the modern Kizilbash with the earlier Safawid order of dervishes (Moosa 1988: 21–35, 121). The fact that the ritual given here in Appendix includes so many texts from the Safawid period seems to confirm this.

A general profile of the Alevi faith of this village can be attempted. Besides the prophets common to all Islam and the imams common to all twelver Shi'ites (Momen 1985: 23–45; Tabātaba'i 1975: 190–211), the most referred to saints in Sarılar are Hacı Bektaş, a local saint Hacı Küreş and his son Saat Küreş. Although there is a high regard for Mevlana Celaleddin, I was unprepared for the high profile of this figure in Dereköy according to Naess (1988: 179, 180), especially for the use of the Mevlevi style of whirling in the *semah* that he describes. The whirling in Sarılar tradition is more like that described by Birge (1937: 199) for the Bektashi and Erseven (1990: 105–118) for the Alevi.

The institution of *müsahtiplik* (ritual sibllingship) seems to have followed the same course as that described by Naess (1988: 181) for Dereköy. I found no young people who had been initiated into it. Another similarity with Naess's community is the lack of richness of detail as compared to Birge's descriptions of the *cem*. The *cem* described later in this study is considerably simpler than Birge's descriptions, although a good many things are merely implied in it, but go undescribed, such as the appropriate blessings (*dua*) at the various steps. Again in agreement with Naess, no one in Sarılar would admit to the use of *rakı* in the *cem*, and were it not for its extensive use on the one large sacrificial occasion I observed myself, I would also have had occasion to doubt its use altogether. The general use of alcohol in Sarılar did seem less than what I observed in Hacı Bektaş Köyü. A description of its ritual use will follow.

Also in agreement with Naess (1988: 181), I found a complete ignorance of excommunication as a form of punishment. In fact, the punishment described for Dereköy seemed out of line with what I heard in Sarılar, where confession and attempts at reconciliation and restitution seem to

have been the rule. In general the traditions described for Dereköy seem closer to Sarılar than anything else found in the English literature. I suggest that this is because we are both dealing with purely village tradition without any ties to urban Bektashiism or other orders.

I would suggest that the village Alevi adhere to a fairly coherent tradition with local variety dependent on the specific configuration of saints contributing to belief and practice and other contingent circumstances.

### Alevi Traditions in Sarılar

Many things point to Sarılar as a community of Kizilbash Alevi with historical roots in the Safawid order of dervishes. In addition, I found that the Sarı Kız tradition (Şapolyo 1964: 293–297) was told in the village in justification for the name of the village. The Alevi claim that they are discriminated against by the Sunni society. On the other hand, my observation was that co-operation with Sunnis on everyday matters was consistently cordial. In that sense the discrimination is likely to be similar to that practiced against Blacks in America, and contrasts with the harsher discrimination experienced by refugees and guest workers in Europe (note Naess 1988: 194).

In order to elicit what the people themselves considered essential or particular to their faith, I asked them to explain to me how a Sunni would have to change to become an Alevi. Only three things were mentioned, the twelve-day fast of Muharrem, belief in the twelve imams, and the sitting circle prayer (*halka namazı*). It seems significant that they did not remember to mention avoidance of the hare.

When I asked the same question concerning Christians, they responded that a Christian would have to believe in one God, in Muhammad (peace upon him) and all of the prophets, all of the sacred books, in angels, in the day of judgment and in destiny. In terms of practice a Christian would have to begin fasting and praying. It was significant that mention is made of the traditionally accepted Sunni five pillars of faith and two of the pillars of practice, leaving out alms and pilgrimage. Neither was the taboo on eating pork or drinking alcohol mentioned.

When I enquired about the use of alcohol, one man quoted an ayat from the Qur'an to me to the effect that God is merciful. So although it appears that perhaps a majority of Alevi in Sarılar use alcohol, some of

them only on ritual occasions, it is not general to suggest that alcohol is permitted. Rather, it is said that God is merciful.

A contemporary Bektashi apologist, Aşur Erdoğan (s.a.: 106), notes that the prohibition of alcohol refers only to its excessive use, thus leaving room not only for the ritual use of alcohol, but the social use as well. In this he agrees with Moosa (1988: 123, 149).

One of the first points brought up spontaneously by my consultants was the matter of eating the hare. Hare avoidance is very important to all of the Alevi I have met throughout Anatolia. It was said that the hare exhibited the characteristics of nine different animals forbidden as food. In fact only four are mentioned. The hare has the loose skin of a cat, the short tail of the pig, the long ears of a donkey, and the crest of a dog. Erdoğan (s.a.: 88) makes the same comment. Other local consultants suggested that the reason for this taboo was that the female rabbit's menses is extremely bloody or that the meat of the hare when cooked turns mostly to blood.

This taboo is demonstrated by Birge (1937: 173) not to be of Asiatic origin, and thus seems to conflict with Moosa's assumption of pagan Turkish origins for the practice (Moosa 1988: 149). Birge rejects White's suggestion that the origin of the taboo against eating the hare is found in Leviticus 11,6 by pointing out that the camel is not forbidden on the same grounds. Birge's argument is weak on several accounts. Firstly, there are Alevi who state the aversion to come from the Tevrat or Leviticus 11,6. The fact is that the camel is explicitly allowed by the Qur'an, whereas the hare is not mentioned. It is perfectly consistent to continue the tradition of avoiding the hare on the basis of the Tevrat and discontinuing the taboo against the camel on the basis of the Qur'an. One need merely appeal to the principle of abrogation in both cases consistently. The emphasis of the Alevi on the four books and their use of Tevrat far beyond that found among Sunni Muslims (note for example Koç 1988) so that particular customs may well be taken from that source. Finally, other features, such as the extensive use of the star of David above springs and on kitchen utensils in Hacı Bektaş Köyü, indicate the possibility of a Jewish or occult strand in a tradition already swollen from syncretic origins.

Jewish traits are suggested by the somewhat special relationship to the Sabbath, to give another example. Sapolyo (1964: 291) notes the practice of Friday night *cem*, which in itself is not completely unusual in a number of Sufi orders, although Thursday night *dhikr* are much more common. Although the practice is completely unknown to the younger generation, older people pointed out that the Sabbath was observed by the avoidance

of sexual activity and commercial exchange on Friday night and Saturday, while field and housework were not affected. Justification for this was given from the Qur'an 62,11. "And when see they merchandise or sport, they break away unto it, and leave thee standing. Say thou, 'What is with God is better than sport and than merchandise, and God is the Best of sustainers.'" The other Qur'anic texts and the hadith literature on the subject were not alluded to.

On the other hand, assuming that Jewish traits do actually exist among the Alevi, it seems unlikely that they should have the strength and tenacity of the trait of hare avoidance. The problem remains enigmatic.

The second matter brought up by consultants was the matter of *müsa-hiplik*. This was described briefly with the formula, you share everything with the *müsahip* but your darling. The initiation rite is essentially that described below, including a sacrifice and a witness to the *dede* of the desire to be so initiated. The role of the *müsahip* is vital in the marriage ceremony, since he witnesses the marriage at the occasion of the *dede*'s blessing. When I posed the question about Shi'ite timed marriage (*mut'a*) no one had heard of such a thing. It was explained that "marriage is holy also for the Alevi people, divorce is a big shame for our morality and religion." It was suggested that this was a lie concocted by Sunni people against Alevis.

As I arrived among the Alevis at the close of Ramadhan, the matter of fasting was also brought up. Fasting during Ramadhan is not practiced. The fast of Muharrem was described as being harsher than the Sunni fast, since it was broken only for about four hours in the evening between sunset and midnight. Thirst was pointed out as being in memory of Kerbala. The fast is broken on the afternoon of the twelfth day with şerbet made of water and boiled grape juice, and the avoidance of water, milk, meat, eggs, all animal products, and onions. Three days prior to the beginning of Muharrem a non-obligatory, preliminary fast may be practiced, *karşılama orucu*. Early morning prayer is performed at the *tekke* on the twelfth or last day of the fast. The typical form of Alevi prayer is called *halka namazı*, circle prayer, and is essentially the standard Islamic erect sitting position used between and after prostration.

The following recipe for *aşure* was given, including twelve ingredients to represent the twelve imams, pistachio, walnut, water, sugar, sesame, beans, cinnamon, bakla (black beans), boiled grape juice, hulled wheat (boiled, sun-dried, and stone-hulled with water), raisins, chick peas and finally figs if one of the ingredients is unobtainable. *Aşure su* is distributed to neighbors with a pail and spoon reciprocally.

The *tekke* is the center of religious activity in the Alevi village. It is a simple, one-room structure open for daily prayers as well as the *cem*. Gathering at the *tekke* is the occasion for the transmission of religious traditions through the telling of stories, the recitation of folk poetry, singing to *saz* accompaniment, seeking the blessings of the *dede* for any and sundry occasion. The daily prayers were reported to be voluntary and conformable to Shi'ite practice, preceded nevertheless with ablutions identical to the surrounding Sunni practice. Prayers were formally offered in the Shi'ite way of combining Dhohr and 'Asr in the afternoon and Maghrib and 'Isha in the evening. Friday prayer was also performed. Since the *tekke* is no longer in use I was not able to observe this and rely on consultants' reports. I was not able to verify whether *namaz* continues to be practiced by people in private, but have the impression that it is rare if it occurs at all.

The educational aspect of the *tekke* was high in the past. The earlier generation included an elite who were capable of reading and understanding the Qur'an in Arabic, if what consultants say is true. Now tradition is carried on in evening conversations before or after the favorite television programs, and few, if any in the village are literate in Arabic.

### The Veneration of Local Saints

Naess (1988: 182, 183) describes the breakdown of Alevi rituals in Dereköy. A similar process has taken place in Sarılar. Naess attributes the breakdown to several factors. These are the rise of community factions around competing *dede*, the action of young people with radical ideas who damaged the *tekke*, Sunni pressure from without, and fear of persecution and the resulting outward conformity to majority practice.

The process of change in Sarılar can be described in similar general categories, but the actual details of events are in many ways contrasting. The first problem is the lack of a *dede*. In Sarılar this did not come about through quarrels, but from the fact that the *dede* died and his son moved away to Gaziantep for the economic advantages, leaving a leadership vacuum. There has not been a resident *dede* for decades.

The second problem was the action of radical young people in Dereköy. Young people in Sarılar have also been influenced by new ideas, but they have not led to radical behavior. Instead, there is an armchair interest in Marxist philosophy on one hand, while the actual values governing



behavior are extremely Atatürkist and conformist. This results in a superficiality in Alevi religiosity and a neglect of *cem* related rituals. The Alevi religiosity among the young includes a fascination with Turkish folk music to *bağlama* accompaniment and this has taken place of the more formal *cem*, more often than not enjoyed through cassette recordings. Finally the youth join their elders in continuing the veneration of local saints, the importance of which must have grown as it replaced many of the functions of the *cem*.

The third factor mentioned was outside Sunni pressure. The presence of a Sunni mosque in Dereköy makes this especially visible. Sarılar does not have a mosque nor is there a paid functionary, imam or other, in the community. On the other hand, the people of Sarılar are very sensitive to outside Sunni pressure. They complain that their religious tradition is breaking down precisely because they do not enjoy the same government support in the propagation of their traditions that Sunnis have, nor is there matching time in education and the media.

The final factor, fear of persecution, is a vital one in Sarılar as well. There is a strong fear of persecution and this does affect daily behavior as well as the degree of activity in pursuits perceived to be peculiarly Alevi. Naess (1988: 177) suggested accommodation to Sunni practice by women covering their heads in the nearby predominantly Sunni town. In Sarılar, on the contrary, this choice is an individual matter, the elderly tend to cover their heads, the young do not, whether they are in the village or in the town. I did not document cases of either official or unofficial persecution in the area.

The result of all of these factors is that the more organized forms of Alevi faith requiring the employ of a hierarchy or religious specialist have disappeared from Sarılar because of changes in the religiosity of the people, the direction of development in modern Turkish society the lack of a resident *dede*, and the unfavorable social climate in general. This has prepared the way for veneration of local saints requiring the employment of no religious specialists to take over most of the former functions of formal religious practice.

I have identified three local saints who are the objects of veneration in the community. I could not get a name at all for the nearest tomb, which lies on a rise to northeast of the village. The place is called merely Çıralık, the candlestand. Inquiry as to the identity of the saint was met with a story describing the advent of the last *dede* to the village. Apparently he was first met on this spot, which continues to be a place of veneration. Once a year on or about May 6 the entire village gathers

there for sacrifices. Otherwise people visit the spot in connection with private concerns.

At some distance from the village (ca. 15 km.) there are two tombs venerated by people from all of the surrounding Alevi villages. One of these is the tomb of Hacı Küreş and the other is the tomb of his son, Saat Küreş. Saat is supposed to have received the name, originally Sait, from his boyhood miracle. His father went on pilgrimage and while he was gone a funeral occurred in the community. The boy miraculously took *aşure* to his father. When the father returned home he already knew of the death, because his son had informed him of it in Mecca. The whole journey, both ways, was completed in an hour, hence the name Saat, hour. This story is just like one told about Hacı Bektaş. Note Birge (1937: 36) for the similar story. It is probable that this motif could be collected for a good many local saints in different areas.

The story most current in Sarılar about Hacı Bakteş is a different one, and perhaps a more famous one as well. That is the story of his arrival in Anatolia in the form of a bird, after having thrown the flaming mulberry branch across the miles, where it rooted in omen of his coming. Note Birge (1937: 37) as well as the Vilayetname of Hacı Bektaş (Noyan 1986).

The tree that is supposed to have grown from this firebrand is still growing in front of the supposed tomb of Balim Sultan. I do not know if people still remove bark from it for healing purposes as Birge suggests, but the tree is covered with the small strips of cloth that pilgrims coming in veneration of the saint leave there.

The following narrative is typical as an example of veneration of the local saints. Before the conception of her first-born son, Meryem saw a dream of Hacı Küreş on a horse outside the gate of their compound. The saint addressed her saying that she should have a son whom she should name after the saint. He also promised that the son would be followed with success through life if she took sand from where she saw the horse's hoofs and cleaned the new-born with it. Upon awakening she collected the sand and saved it for the occasion. She did not have occasion to use the sand, however, since it was felt necessary to name the son that was in fact born after the late husband of the father's sister, who was killed in a village quarrel about the election of the headman or *muhtar*. He was hit by a flying stone in the turmoil. The mother and aunt took an offering of two metres of green cloth to the tomb of Hacı Küreş and the grandfather sacrificed a young goat at the tomb in order to make their apologies for the change in name.

An examination of the tombs of the saints shows that such offerings

may be found there, draped over the raised sarcophagus. Similarly a tree near the tomb serves as a place to leave the strips of cloth brought in veneration. Stones in veneration are left in many places in a container for the purpose, but I observed people in Sarılar licking pebbles and attaching them to the walls of the tomb when making their wishes and vows.

### The Rites of Sacrifice in Sarılar Today

Animal sacrifice is current in Sarılar today on four types of occasions. These are the *kurban bayram*, when a sacrifice is performed at home, the sacrifice at the end of the twelve days of Muharrem, the sacrifices of *ziyaret*, veneration at the tomb of a local saint, and finally personal and family sacrifices on the occasion of weddings, funerals, and at special occurrences.

Funerary sacrifice is made for men only. At first glance this may seem to accord men a greater honor, but in fact the male sheep without blemish is to facilitate the man's passage to a comfortable place after death. The man is more susceptible to the punishment of the grave and needs this help, whereas a woman goes directly through to comfort and rests peacefully. So the sacrifice is to facilitate the lowering of the man from difficulty, *dardan indirmek*.

I was able to observe a large sacrificial occasion at the tomb of Saat Küreş. On Sunday, May 14, 1989, the Ali Uşağı portion of the village joined the people of four other villages to perform the *ziyaret*. This is done each year on the weekend nearest May 6. This year the rest of the village performed the *ziyaret* at the nearby Çıralık at the proper time on May 7, but the Ali Uşağı were not on speaking terms with the others because of a quarrel about the way the recent election of the *muhtar* had gone. So they joined the other villages.

May 6 is one of the four festivals celebrated by the Bektashi in general. Sertoğlu (1969: 206, 226) gives these as Kurban Bayram, Muharrem, Navruz (March 21) and Hıdrellez (May 6) or Hızırilyas günü as Oytan (1945: 411) writes it. Navruz, the Persian New Year and also the Bektashi New Year, is in fact the beginning of spring. Similarly May 6 is the beginning of summer. Justification for the festival is made on the basis of the birthday of the Prophet, which was three weeks earlier by the solar calendar. The festival is associated with Hızır or al-Khadir, the name given to the figure with Moses in Qur'an 18: 60-82. This character is

well-known in legend throughout the Islamic world, representing herbage, greenness, and immortality (Oytan 1945: 66).

People came from all directions in rented buses and flatbed trucks, on tractors, on horseback, donkeyback or on foot, all dressed in their best western style clothing, although they wear traditional Turkish clothing ordinarily. We got up at five o'clock in the morning to get a place on the bus. There were even people sitting on top of the bus. At one point we crossed the Kara Su River and dozens of people of all ages jumped off and drenched themselves, clothes and all, much to the annoyance of the bus-drivers.

At the cemetery we found the tomb of Saat Küreş, a stone building painted a light blue and set among the oaks. The holy area is enclosed by a stone wall. Within this enclosure the sacrifice of about four hundred animals took place, mostly young goats, but also sheep and a few poultry.

Within the tomb the sarcophagus was covered with green cloth. People attached their pebbles to the inside or outside walls of the tomb while making their vows, whereas others tied strips of cloth to the nearest tree. For a while the enclosure was full of people and animals, men with their sons performing the sacrifice while mothers and daughters supervised. There was a busied air of importance. The animals were thrown onto the ground with the neck extended. With one swift movement of the knife the neck was opened and blood spurted out freely. Many people had blood on them.

Each family found a place under the oaks. The animals were butchered in sunlit open places away from where the family activities were going on, and the meat then brought over and cooked. The fresh, raw livers were given as a delicacy to the smaller children. Families gather under their respective trees while preparing the meal. The celebration lasts until evening. Marriages are celebrated, folk dances are performed to the accompaniment of song and *bağlama*, and there are general reunions with relatives that might not have been seen for a year or more. The men sit in circles under the trees, singing folk-songs often of the Alevi tradition, sometimes dancing. They drink *rakı* (brandy) very slowly, mixed with water or coca-cola. Such non-alcoholic drinks as well as toys and souvenirs are available for sale. Everyone has brought his own supply of alcohol, which is shared freely. The mood is extremely warm, there is no quarreling or shouting. People go from group to group, enjoying different company for minutes or hours. Men offer toasts to one another and the host at the circle offers bits of meat to his friends around him, each grasping his hand in both of theirs as they accept the meat in their mouths from his

fingers. There is a good deal of physical contact, though no impropriety to be seen. A couple of loving men on occasion may sink onto the ground with their arms wrapped about one another in a drunken stupor.

It appeared that the use of alcohol was restricted to the men. The women's behavior was less ritualized as well. They just spent their time taking care of the cooking and visiting together. There was a general partition between the sexes, but not to a rigorous point.

I asked questions on the meaning of the sacrifice itself and received the following answers. It is a way of praying. It is a way of showing that we are servants of God. It is a way of giving back to God something that we own, since all things are really His and we have all things from His hand.

It is significant that all forms of sacrifice still prevalent in Sarılar can be performed by the family without recourse to a religious specialist. Even the large group occasion is really an ensemble of family ritual units.

### A Description of Ritually Specialized Sacrifice

Although it was not possible to observe a formal *cem* in Sarılar because they are non-existent, I was able to obtain a guidebook of the ritual as formerly performed from the brothers Vakkas and Ali Dönmez, who formerly served as *gözcü* or helpers and watchmen in the *tekke* in Sarılar. Mr Dönmez hoped that I would publish these as he felt it represented a tradition that was past and should be preserved for posterity. He also hoped that it might fall into the hands of such as might revive the tradition.

The ritual as presented here (see Appendix) is an English translation of the explanatory material and an English translation with the original Turkish of the liturgical texts. An appendix of what Mr Dönmez called *gazel* appropriate for use with the *cem* is not included. It should be noted that this ritual is essentially the same as that described in Sertoğlu (1969: 257-268) and Oytan (1945: 203-226), although these writers do not include so much of the poetical portions as are found here. On the other hand, they include texts for *dua* that are missing in my recordings and only alluded to in the comments. As it will be seen, the oral transmission of the ritual and the emphasis on oral performance without reference to a written text have led to a deterioration, so that the texts of the poems are often jumbled.

The difficulties of translating Turkish folk poetry in the Bektashi tradition are numberless. Despite efforts to gain the help of several well-educated Turks, some of whom should have had specialist expertise in the area, there remain some expressions in the texts that are not at all clear. In the end I must take responsibility for the quality of the translation altogether. I am indebted, however, to Prof. Erkan Türkmen of Seljuk University at Konya for his last-minute review of the material and his corrections of several errors.

It was my desire to achieve translations that could be sung to the same tunes used in the actual *cem*, rather than awkward and literal renditions. Most of the material is of a genre well described by Annemarie Schimmel (1982: 148). "The fourlined stanza in the Turkish tradition, in which the first three lines rhyme while the rhyme of the fourth line continues through the whole poem. This is related to *tarşi*' in high Persian poetry, in which the two hemistichs of a verse are split into four units, three of them with internal rhyme (a form often used by Rumi). The Turkish popular meters employ syllable counting, they are not quantitative as in the Arabo-Persian literary tradition."

The main problem in replicating Turkish rhymes comes from the fact that nothing in English corresponds to Turkish vowel harmony. This feature in Turkish lessens the monotony of the rhyme a good deal. I have tried to compensate for this by using a judicious amount of assonance and consonance, with, I think, some success in translating the flavor of the verses.

Another problem is the replication of the long meter in Turkish, which has eleven syllables. This will seem awkward to the reader who expects the sing-song quality of an English jingle. The eleventh syllable prevents this, so that the rhythm actually comes closer to free verse in English despite the rigorous line length. In any case, the whole liturgy is reproduced here in an English that corresponds to the Turkish formal requirements perfectly. Whether it succeeds in representing the spirit and content of the liturgy, I am not in a position to judge, but hope that it does so.

The content of the poems, though not beyond the grasp of an ordinary person, does present enormous problems. As Schimmel says from long experience, "sometimes, the statements of mystical folk poets defy rational explanation" (1982: 162). She goes on to enumerate several possible kinds of interpretation. These include the expression of pantheistic flights into the timeless and spaceless, the expression of drug-induced trips in some cases, mere use of the paradox that mystics so often love, the means of preserving secret doctrine from outside eyes, a pedagogical device as a form

of intellectual shock something on the order of the koan in Zen Buddhism. She sees the highest level as an expression of theopathic locutions growing out of the agitation of the innermost hearts of the ecstatic. Finally, it is a mere fact that nonsense verse is to be found in the tradition. All of these explanations are probably valid for the type poetry we are concerned with here, and I have tried to keep this in mind in the work of translation.

Insofar as the handling of the Turkish text goes, I have not attempted to standardize language or spelling, but left the material as found in Mr Dönmez's guidebook. For double checking and at the insistence of Mr Dönmez, a cassette recording of the entire book was made, which he recited from memory.

I have been able to identify about one third of the poems from published sources and found them to correspond to Dönmez' version to about 60 per cent. Discrepancies are in the order of reversals, alternate words with similar meanings, alternate words with different meanings, omissions, additions and alternate spellings. There are also additional verses in Dönmez' version, perhaps reflecting the tendency to suppress portions offensive to Sunnis in publications.

The following poems are to be found in their respective sources: "Akıl ermaz yaradannı sırrına" in Oytan 1945: 208; "Kurbanlar tığlamip gülbent çekildi" in Gölpınarlı 1963: 168; "Her sabah" by Pir Sultan in Gölpınarlı 1963: 51 and Bezirci 1986: 286; "Devredip gezersin dari fariyi" in Sertoğlu 1969: 266 and Köseoğlu 1988: 64; and "Gece gündüz arzumanım Kerbala" by Pir Sultan in Bezirci 1986: 238. None have been translated into English before, insofar as I know, and it is perhaps unfortunate that I am working with a text inferior to the published ones.

Rather than a detailed commentary on the text, I shall content myself with some remarks on the specific use of certain themes and images on one hand and the symbolism present especially as it relates to the understanding of sacrifice on the other.

A number of Turkish words have been left untranslated in most cases since a simple equivalent does not exist in English. Many of these are Turkish forms of words better known in Arabic forms, such as *Kible* (direction of prayer), *Kabe* (house of God), *Miracname* (story of the ascent of the Prophet), *meydan* (central ritual area in the dervish lodge), *mümin* (true believer), *talip* (applicant for initiation) and *mürşit* (guide into initiation). Particular jargon of the dervish lodge is to be found especially. The word *pir* is generally reserved for a saint, but in this ritual seems to refer to the officiating *dede*, while *rehber*, or guide, seems to refer to the officiating *baba*. *Meclis* refers specifically to a council of

the lodge. *Aşık* refers to uninitiated participants and *Bacı* refers to fully initiated women celibate members of the Bektashi lodge. *Eren*, *zekir* and *muhip* are words used for the initiated member of the order. It does not appear that a fourfold hierarchy is to be found in the village rite as in the urban Bektashi lodges, and the many terms overlap. The *tekke* refers to the lodge itself. The *post* is a sheepskin upon which those officiating sit or stand and which forms a focus of some ritual acts. A number of *posts* may be present.

Two instruments are mentioned, the *saz*, which is a four-stringed lute with a long neck and bound, moveable frets. The *bağlama* differs from this in being larger. Sung poems referred to by categories include the *nefes* (literally breath), the *duaz* or *düvaz*, the *şahlama* (a poem in praise of a *pir*), and the *gazel* (referring to the notable Persian form).

The twelve holy imams according to twelver Shi'ite faith are mentioned throughout in Turkish orthography (Momen 1985: 23-45; Tabātaba'i 1975: 190-211). Associated with these are three female figures, Fatma, Hadice, and Şehriban. A number of epithets are related to Hazret Ali: Döldül (also the name of a mount of the Prophet), Kamber, Haydar, Murtaza and of course *zülfiḳar*, the double-tipped sword of Ali. The term *dost* is generally applied to Hazret Ali and has as such a meaning far beyond mere friend, as it is sometimes translated. The concept is the *waliya*, divine friendship.

Some words relate to the Kerbala experience, which of course has a great deal to do with the meaning of sacrifice. The name Yezid is mentioned on occasion with a curse (Kılıç 1989: 110, 143). It is in fact the practice in the village to drink water from a glass in two swallows, pouring out the drops on the ground and cursing Yezid. This small sacrifice of water is in remembrance of the thirst at Kerbala caused by the attack on Husain and his followers. Similarly Mervan's sword is singled out for a deprecation. (Oytan 1945: 9; Sertoğlu 1969: 356, 357).

The words Yemen and Kaf do not refer to geographical places but the mystical lands attained through the *semah*. Kaf is the world-surrounding mountain, home of the mystical bird, the Simurgh, symbol of the divine in the work of Fariduddin 'Attar and later mystics. The theme of Yemen as a symbol of the intuitive knowledge of God as opposed to rationalistic means of attaining truth is mentioned by many Bektashi poets (note Öztelli 1985: 205).

I have translated the word *hak* as Truth generally, but sometimes as Reality. Neither of these words begin to express the connotation of the word *hak* in Islamic mysticism. The word seems to refer to God as



the goal of mystical practice and the self which has attained the goal of divine unity. A discussion of the Bektashi concept of God in particular is found in Eyuboğlu (1990: 251). The English literature consistently refers to a Trinity of Allah, Muhammet Ali (Birge 1937: 132). There is some justification for this in such sentences as "God is Ali and Ali is God." Nothing can be more true than the fact that Bektashi concepts of creation as divine emanation constitute a breach with those schools of theology in Islam which make a radical distinction between God and creation. Bektashi thought contains all of the layers of Islamic mysticism from the early voluntaristic to the late pantheistic and even atheistic. But to suggest a parallel between Christian concepts of the Trinity and the Bektashi juxtaposition of the names Allah and Muhammet Ali is a falsification. However, I have found evidence of variation among people with an Alevi identity. I found people of Arabic language in Adana who did say that Ali was a manifestation of God. But these people should probably be classified with the Syrian 'Alawi or Nusayri. The people in Sarılar, on the other hand, did not hint at anything that might call their belief in the absolute oneness of God into question. This could, of course, be interpreted as accommodation (Note Momen 1985: 66, 67).

Even so careful and contemporary a scholar as Moosa makes the compromised unity of God the test question for defining the Alevi and other sects. The assumption is these sects do have heterodox beliefs about the unity of God, namely in ascription of divinity to Ali or a united Muhammad Ali figure in a sort of trinity. Where this doctrine does not appear, the explanation is that it is being hidden (Moosa 1988: 41, 50-65). The texts of the ritual could extensively be interpreted as confirming that premise. Nevertheless, I was not able personally to elicit anything from anyone in Sarılar that was out of line with orthodox Shi'ite concepts of God (Note Momen 1985: 78).

The Christian influence on the formative period of the Bektashi-Alevi is undeniable. Nevertheless there has been a great deal of excess in supposition about remnants of such practices as the eucharist in the sherbet and the sign of the cross in the *niyaz*, for example. A recent work went so far as to say that "the Bektashi represent an extremist Christianizing wing of Sufism" (Baldick 1989: 170). That may be true for the Balkan area, which the author probably had in mind, but seems unwarranted in southeastern Turkey.

Many of the poems include the name of the author in the last verse. There seems to be a preponderance of poems from the Safavid period in this collection, and this may be an indication of the influences particular

to this community, which lies on the border between the Ottomans and the Safavids. The names mentioned are Teslim Abdal, Asl Shah, Shah Hata, Dervish Süleyman, Kul Hümmet, Kul Hüseyin, and Genç Abdal. Short biographies of these can be found in most of the collections referred to in the book list. The fullest biographies are found in Nüzhet (1930: 208, 232, 307), unfortunately out of print and rare. A longer biography of Teslim Abdal with a collection of poems is found in Şahin's *Kulhak*. Fuller biographies of Yunus Emre (1987: 245–304) (note Yesirgil 1963; Aktüccar 1984) and Pir Sultan (note Kudret 1965) are available.

The four books mentioned in the ritual are *Tevrat* (the books of Moses or the Tanach), *Zabur* (the Biblical Psalms or Tephilim), *Injil* (the Gospel or the New Testament) and the Qur'an. The four holy faiths referred to are Judaism, the faith of the Prophet David, Christianity, and Islam.

There are many practices stimulating the mystical experience both in the ritual itself and in the poems. Among these are *niyaz* or prostration, *zikir* or the silent or audible recitation of the names of God, the *semah* or whirling dervish dance not to be confused with the mevlevi practice, the *dua* prayer and blessing, the circle prayer, taking the sherbet, the performance of sacrifice and the singing of *nefes*, *duaz*, and *gazel*. The use of alcohol is mentioned in the poems, but not included in the ritual description.

The ritual use of mind-changing drugs such as alcohol has been commented upon extensively. An early reference is found in the *Kitab al-Ta'arruf* (Kalabadhi 1978: 110, 111). Intoxication is seen to produce an overmastering sense of God's being which destroys one's capacity to distinguish between what pains and what gives pleasure.

The mystical experience itself is expressed in terms of passing through four consecutive gates: the *shariat*, or Islamic law, the *tarikât* or dervish order, *marafet* or mystical knowledge of God, and *hakikat* or the attainment of *hak*, loving unity with the divine.

The symbols of the mystical experience in this ritual are many, but can be divided into those using the figure of ascent and those using the figure of love. Perhaps the two are represented by nightingales and roses. Figures of ascent are of course in the central poems of the ritual, the poems of the *Miracname* and the two crane poems at the end. The arcs of descent and ascent are suggested by the reference to threshold and the place of the *semah*, entrance into which is symbolic of entrance into the universe as a living human being.

The crane is used extensively in Bektashi poetry as a symbol of the ascending soul, of Hazret Ali, and of the divine (Köseoğlu 1988: 64;

Yüksel 1987: 89; Öztelli 1985: 205; Sertoğlu 1969: 265; and even the contemporary Bektashi poets Kılıçaslan s.a.: 77; Yüksel 1987: 89).

A lighter symbol of the same order is that of the swallow. Its importance in the ritual is meagre, but the enormous swallow population of the area makes it a symbol which must be especially significant in the daily lives of people who spend much of their time laboriously plowing beneath the swiftly soaring and diving birds.

The *dergah*, place of *semah* or dervish ecstatic dance in the story of ascent is referred to as well. Versions of the ascent are numberless. The one included here is shorter than many, and takes a functional slot in the ritual often taken by the story of the birth of the Prophet in many Sufi orders, although it so occurs on occasion. "On the occasion of the Prophet's nocturnal ascension (on the eve of 27 Rajab) and sometimes on other occasions the mi'raj story is recited in place of the mawlid" (Trimingham 1971: 208).

Much has been written about the varied ideas that especially Sufis may have about the ascension of the Prophet. Some take the meaning literally, whereas others appeal to a divisible anthropology. The present text seems to opt for the latter, the prophet's *beli* (waist) and *akil* (intelligence, senses) being taken or bound by the angel. The binding of the waist, an important part of the initiation ritual, can thus be seen as a symbol of ascent.

The love symbols are varied. Of course the famous Sufi love symbol of Leyla and Mejnun is apparent. The use of this in Bektashi poetry goes back to Yunus Emre (Gürer 1961: 74). Roses of Erdebil has become a symbol of love mysticism, although it is originally a reference to the role of Shah Ismail and the Safavid order of dervishes. Gölpınarlı (1987: 149) notes that pilgrimage to Erdebil has been as esteemed as that to Mecca.

The symbol of intoxication is a part of love mysticism as well. The sip of wine is the same word as taking a breath and refers to the progression toward the goal of union in divine love. This figure appears time and again in the poems of this ritual. Less frequently, but perhaps more touchingly, is the symbol of the bee on its quest for honey.

Finally sacrifice unites the two symbols of love and ascent. Sacrifice is seen as a gift of love and as a freeing of the soul to ascend to the divine. The equivalency of the sacrificial animal and the initiate is apparent in the very first poem of the ritual and is referred to often throughout. Such references are not always clear, especially when using such symbols as that of the *dar*, or *darağacı*, the gallows. This is the center of the *meydan*, the central place of ritual acts. The name Mansur is associated with

it, but this does not apparently refer to the murderer of the sixth holy imam Cafer, rather to the patrinyim of al-Hallaj, the great mystic who was executed for saying, "I am al-Haqq (God)." (Yürükoğlu 1990: 120; Gölpınarlı 1987: 539).

The positioning of the right toe upon the left is symbolic of presenting oneself as sacrifice, just as is the prostration. "Very important is the detail appearing in all stories of the sacrifice, — the position given to the foreleg of the animal to be slaughtered. It is that of the posture of the qapi or gulbang, described in the chapter on darwishism" (Ivanow 1953: 83).

Roermer (1986: 214) points out the close relation between viewing oneself as a sacrifice and total allegiance to the *mürşit*. "The state which he (Shah Ismail) founded perpetuated the Ardabil religious order ... characterized by the taj-i haidari ... Thereby the name Qizilbash became common usage ... absolute obedience to the murshid was demanded of them. We know that the Qizilbash soldiers fulfilled this obligation .... Their battle cry is significant: Qurban oldighim pirüm mürshidim! (My spiritual leader and master, for whom I sacrifice myself)."

The figure of the grape cut in pieces and divided is symbolic of self-sacrifice and reminiscent of the practice described among the Ahl-i Haqq by Ivanow (1953: 4). In the renewal of initiation rites there is what is known as "handing over one's head" *sar supurdan* or *sar dadan*. Its symbol was to cut a nutmeg in pieces and distribute them.

A contemporary Bektashi apologist has written on the subject of sacrifice (Kaya 1989). Although focusing on technical features of how the slaughtering should take place, (note also Sertoğlu 1969: 288) the author's main objective is to show how sacrifice symbolically unites the participant to the Ehl-i Beyt or people of the house (Shi'ite source of esoteric knowledge in the family of the prophet), and is symbolically to partake of the *kevser* or mystical spring of which Hazret Ali is the cup-bearer.

### Conclusion: Analysis of Ritual Change

Although the mobility of the Alevi *dede* must have meant that Alevi ritual in any given village must have varied between a full ritual life centred on the lodge and an emphasis on individual and family practice, there are some new factors in recent decades that must be associated with definite changes.

Two factors especially are to be mentioned. The first is the population drain from the village to areas of economic and educational betterment. The second is the process of modernization. The Turkish government fosters both of these processes through education and the media. For the most part these are perceived as positive developments. The only result that must be seen as negative is the impoverishment of the genetic pool in the village. The results on ritual are merely to be documented and evaluated here without drawing any value judgment.

The first result is the change from a balanced ritual life engaging the individual, the household unit, the *sulale*, and the whole village to a ritual life engaging predominantly the individual and the household unit. This means that the lodge ritual has in practice disappeared and along with it the transmission of the *musahip* tradition. An important vehicle of social interaction and economic interdependence has thus been lost.

On the other hand, increased importance must be found in those rituals that can be maintained on the individual and household level. These are especially concerned with animal sacrifice and the performance of Alevi folk-music.

The *ziyaret*, veneration of local saints, has taken on an additional function. These occasions provide an opportunity for reaffirming community identity with those living outside the village and who return to participate in the annual sacrificial festivals such as May 6.

After living in the village and participating in its religious life, my impression is that the mysticism of the dervish lodge remains as a certain life attitude along with the new views of modernization that have been so well inculcated. Although modernization, at least in the Turkish Alevi context, tends to conflict with the mystical experience of the Bektashi dervish in some areas, a democratized inner core remains. One sentence which I heard many times in the village illustrates the point: "The doorstep is the Kabe."

## Appendix

The Rites of Slaughtering Sacrifice according to the Twelve Imams in the Alevi Order of Dervishes: The guidebook of Vakkas and Ali Dönmez

This is an example of the ritual of slaughtering a sacrifice for a *pir*, *rehber* or candidate to initiation. Announcement of the sacrifice is made by a *musahip*

throughout the village with the formula, Eat a morsel of our sacrifice tomorrow (*yarınki gün bizim kurbanımız bir lokmamızı yiğün*).

If there are those in the village who are offended by those offering the sacrifice, let a reconciliation be made among them. But if the man remains obstinate in refusing to come to the *tekke*, let it be said, "Such and such person refuses to come and what is your decision?" Let one person from the *meclis* go and hear his position, and should he still refuse to attend, let him say that this sacrifice of the other *müşahip* be not annulled.

Let a ram be brought for sacrifice to the *meydan* of the forties. With feet bare and heads uncovered, let the elder *müşahip* stand at the right side of the ram and the younger at the left side, raise the right leg of the ram and kiss the top of the right ear above the eyes.

Then the *dede* recites a *dua* to the ram. When the *dua* is completed, the ram is left in the middle, everyone kneels and sits down. The *zekir* play the *saz* to the ram, going through the rosary. The ram's rosary *nefes* follows.

To God's lovers, saints of forties and sevens, I am the sacrifice of the twelve imams. I turned to the Kible, my tekbir given, I am the sacrifice of the twelve imams.	<i>Erler evliyalar kırklar yediler Oniki imamların kurbanıyem ben, Verildi tekbirim döndüm kibleme Oniki imamların kurbanıyem ben.</i>
---	--

I make my mother barren, father Gabriel Sharpened my knife, my moisture, dripping out, comes. By the command of truth I bowed to trouble. I am the sacrifice of the twelve imams.	<i>Anam kısır koyım atam Cebrail Bilendi bıçağım gelinde suyum, Hakkın emri ile oldum hükümüne gail Oniki imamların kurbanıyem ben.</i>
---	---

I recovered truth's edict to earth and sky, As I was spread out together with the ram, The desirers of light with strength counted I, I am the sacrifice of the twelve imams.	<i>Şakalak koç ile bile yayıldım Hak emretti yere çoğe ayıldım, Feriştahlar pençe vurdu sayıldım Oniki imamların kurbanıyem ben.</i>
--	--

Seven times they came and cut my fleece away, And thus they add to the flocks of Abraham. They cut my flesh in the smallest pieces, yea, I am the sacrifice of the twelve imams.	<i>Yedi defa tüylerimi kırkdılar İbrahimin sürüsüne kattılar, Etlerimi lime lime ettiler Oniki imamların kurbanıyem ben.</i>
--	--

Dervish Ali I am, my blood overflowed, I rise not from my post till my pir is come. I fear not though for God's sake I am death's own, I am the sacrifice of the twelve imams.	<i>Derviş Ali'm kanım magaha dökmem Pirim gelmeyince postumdan çıkmam, Hak için ölmeye ben esef çekmem Oniki imamların kurbanıyem ben.</i>
--	--

After the completion of this *nefes* the following *dua* is read.

To reach sense of the Creator's mystery To Muhammet Ali fell this sacrifice. I become sacrifice for Reality, To Hasan, Hüseyin fell this sacrifice.	<i>Akıl ermez yaradanın sırrına Muhammet Ali'ye indi bu kurban, Kurban olan kudretinin nuruna, Hasan Hüseyin'e indi bu kurban.</i>
--	--

To be in Imam Zeynel's control my boast,  
It was I who was Muhammet Bakır's dost,  
I it was who was Caferi Sadık's post,  
To Kazım, to Rıza fell this sacrifice.

*Al Imam Zeynel'in desdinde idim,  
Muhammet Bakır'ın dostunda idim,  
Caferi Sadık'ın postunda idim,  
Musa Kazım Rıza'ya indi bu kurban.*

I was the true light of Muhammet Takı.  
I was the mystery of Aliyel Nakı.  
I was the house of Hasan-ül Askeri.  
To Muhammet Mehdi fell this sacrifice.

*Muhammet Takı'nın nurunda idim,  
Aliyel Nakı'nın sırında idim,  
Hasan-ül Askeri darında idim,  
Muhammet Mehdi'ye indi bu kurban.*

To Aslı Shah's courageous group's best abode,  
The binding of the truth's the end of this  
road,  
One sacrifice each year is the seeker's load,  
To Muhammet at last fell this sacrifice.

*Aslı şahı merdan gürhü naci  
Hakikata bağlı bu yolun ucu,  
Senede bir kurban talibin borcu,  
Muhammet Mustafa'ya indi bu kurban.*

I am Shah Hata, as everybody says,  
I make this sacrifice as in ancient days,  
Its nails the beads, its blood coral for  
God's praise,  
To the twelve imams has fallen sacrifice.

*Şah Hatayım der bilirmi her can  
Kurban üstüne yürüdü erkan,  
Tırnağı tesbih kanıda mercan  
Oniki imamlar indi bu kurban.*

The *pir* recites a *dua*, the third *duaz*. Then the ram is handed over to the slaughterer. The slaughterer with knife in hand cuts the ram and its blood is poured out drop by drop on the earth. Let the bones and entrails of the ram, with the blood, be removed and buried in a pit closed out of the reach of cats and dogs. Then the slaughterer strikes off the meat in small pieces with a crooked knife. The *pir* delivers a *dua* and hands the meat over to the cook. The cook prepares the given amount of meat. The *aşık* play upon the *saz* reciting the *nefes*, while the *muhip* whirl the *semah*. After a while, the cook checks the meat to see if it is done and may be distributed. When the meat is done the cook gives that information. The *rehber* is the one who gives the companions the command, Be ready. Then they drop onto the *posts* of the *meydan* and the *müşahip* recite by heart the composition of the following *nefes*.

The offering's lanced, recited is the prayer.  
I seemed to awaken from my slumber there,  
When the standards of the four gates were  
laid bare,  
Naked into the place of semah came I.

*Kurbanlar tıylanıp gülbent (gülbant)  
çekildi,  
Gaflet uykusundan uyana geldim.  
Dört kapı sancağı anda dikildi,  
Üryan büryan olup meydana geldim.*

First upon the threshold I laid down my head,  
So they took me in the room of life full-fed  
And in the path of the saints my struggle led,  
To sacrifice both my head and soul came I.

*Evvel eşiğine koydun başımı  
İçeri aldılar diktim (döktüm) yaşıma,  
Erenler yolunda yer (gör) savaşıma,  
Can ve baş koyarak kurbana geldim.*

The inner light woke up in that sip of wine,  
My guide tied a band around this neck of  
mine,  
And then I took three more steps in the  
design,  
To trust the sacrifice of the lamb came I.

*Ol demde uyandı batım çrağı  
Rehberim boynuma bent etti bağı  
Üç kadın ileri ettim ayağı  
Kuzu kurban derler imana geldim.  
(Koş kurban dediler imana geldim)*

The pir held my ear and whispered quietly,  
 And being so close to Muhammet Ali,  
 My way is one of a firm friend, Caferi,  
 To take the oath with thanks to Allah came I.

*Pirim kulağıma eyledi telkin  
 Muhammet Ali'ye almasız yakın  
 Mezhebim Caferi'dir sadik ul metin  
 Allah dost eyvallah peymanaya geldim.*

They exchanged greetings at the four gates  
 of gold,  
 Blowing in the presence of the pir, were bold  
 And said, Let's hand in hand on the Truth  
 take hold,  
 An innocent one into the world came I.

*Dört kapı selamın verip aldılar  
 Pirin huzuruna çıkıp geldiler  
 El ele el hakka olsun dediler  
 Henüz masum olup cihana geldim.*

I stood firm on the ground amid the harsh  
 fight,  
 Made confession of Muhammet Ali's right  
 From the pit of misery on one dark night,  
 To be satiated with the drink came I.

*Yüzüm yerde özüm darda durmuşam  
 Muhammet Ali'ye ikrar vermişem  
 Şakayın karnını (Sekahüm hamrini?)  
 anda görmüşem  
 İçip kana kan mesdana (mestane)  
 geldim.*

The juice the pounded peony was giving  
 Made drunk whom for love of Truth gave up  
 living,  
 Shouted, Shah Hüseyin, then to tears were  
 driven,  
 To taste the ecstasy of that drink came I.

*Şakayım şerbetin ezip içtiler  
 Mest olup cümlesi serden geçtiler  
 Şah Hüseyin deyip hep ağlaştılar  
 İçip ol şerbeti mesdana (mestane)  
 geldim.*

Our path leads us to meet the twelve  
 imams here.  
 Ali, lord of Zülfikar, is my rehber,  
 Murshid Muhammet Ahmet chosen dear,  
 Drunken, servant of God to this place came I.

*Yolumuz oniki imama çıkar  
 Mürşidim Ali'dir sahib-i zülfikar  
 Rehberim Muhammet Ahmedi muhtar  
 Kuludur şahiye divana geldim.*

After reciting this *nefes* the *rehber* puts bands around the waists of the *müşahips*. The watchman, holding the staff in his hand, stands at the head of the *post*, bare-footed and bare-headed, his waist bound, and his right big toe upon the left. He says to the two *müşahip* and sisters (wives of the *müşahip* if they are married), "Welcome, friends, to the initiation." The elder *müşahip* stands first, followed by the younger, then the sisters, then the *lehina* standing in line and waiting at the entrance. Then these four *müşahips* and sisters move from the entrance to the *post*, dragging themselves along the ground, saying, Help, and Generosity. After each of them makes entreaty by kissing and laying the face on the *post* three times, they stand on the *post* side by side with the right toe upon the left. Saying *Huu*, they bow down and put their hands on their knees. The *pir* delivers a *dua*. When the *dua* is finished they again make prostration on the *post* and then stand in a row with heads on the back of one another. The *pir* says the following admonition. "Where you bow is the door of Truth, where you stay is the house of Ali Mansur. May he give soul to your body and faith to your heart. He gave you ears to hear and eyes to see. O believer, will to speak, come in nakedness and speak truth. May the *erenler* perceive it. *Huu*. Let it be love. Raise your heads."



After this invocation those present one by one make prostration on the *post* and remain standing in a row. The elder *müshâp* at the head of the row recites without melody the following *nefes*.

My sin is great, gossip's butt,  
Yet I have surrendered that,  
On the better way I've got,  
Allah, aye Allah, my pir (I accept).

*Günahım çok dildeyim,  
Teslim eldum eldeyim,  
Ben yolunda yolcuyum,  
Allah eyvallah pirim.*

Let the offended arise,  
I accept accusing eyes  
Of those hurt in anywise,  
Allah, aye Allah, my pir.

*Gelsin küsmüş var ise,  
Kem söz geçmiş var ise,  
Bir incinmiş var ise,  
Allah, eyvallah pirim.*

Come too close to Truth to bear,  
Grace and goodness everywhere,  
I must give my answers there,  
Allah, aye Allah, my pir.

*Hak'ka yakın varacaiğım,  
Hak cemalin göreceğim.  
Sorgu sual vereceğim,  
Allah eyvallah pirim.*

It is I Genç Abdal who  
Submits to the gallows' due,  
Save this sinner, Allah do,  
Allah, aye Allah, my pir.

*Genç Abdalim biçare  
Baş eymiştir bu dara  
Medet kil günahkara  
Allah eyvallah pirim.*

After this *nefes* the *pir* asks, "Are these *pir*, *rehber*, four gates and forty degrees of esteem faithfully attending Friday gathering, receiving their due and rendering their obligations to the Truth?" In answer they say, Truth. Then he asks those present, who represent the community of forty, "Body in *dar* (place of execution, middle of the *meydan*), face to the ground, at the request of the *cem*, do these men of the community, these friends, in our presence in the *meydan* of Muhammet Ali, come to the house of Mansur today. What do you say about these friends?" He repeats this question three times. If anyone has a complaint or accusation to make, he or she informs the *pir* or community. If there is any argument between the people in the *dar* and anyone in the *tekke* this is resolved and reconciliation made. If anyone has a complaint or reconciliation is achieved then the *erens* say, May their work go well. The *pir* answers, If the *erens* are content, so is the *pir*. The friends in the *dar* make prostration one by one on the *post* and move away from it. Then the *pir* comes to the *post* and says, Friends whose sacrifice is performed, brother with brother and sister with sister, embrace one another. The *pir* then strokes their backs with his hand or staff. Then the *aşık* play on the *bağlama* and sing the following *nefes*.

The blood of Muslims made a sea.  
Let us each one for Muslims weep.  
From each wound sprang a flowering tree.  
Let us each one for Muslims weep.  
Truth, there is no god but Allah, divine  
Lord Shah is Allah,  
Let us call upon His name for help and  
say, Allah Allah.

*Müslüm'ün kanı göl oldu  
Gelin ağlaşak Müslüm'e  
Yaraları gül gül oldu  
Gelin ağlaşak Müslüm'e.  
Hak la ilaâhe illallah, ilahi şah illallah  
Analım Allah ismini diyelim Allah  
Allah.*

Come let us strip the lion's dress  
And in rose water him caress,  
And tell Hüseyin our mournfulness.  
Let us each one for Muslims weep.  
Truth . . . .

*Gelin aslanı soyalım  
Gül suyu ile yuyalım  
Varrıp Hüseyin'e diyelim  
Gelin ağlaşak Müslüm'e.  
Hak . . . .*

The Muslim's wing is broken now,  
His body full of wounds, and how  
His blood comes down in streams to flow.  
Let us each one for Muslims weep.  
Truth . . . .

*Müslüm'ün kanadı kırık  
Yaraları delik delik  
Kanı akar eluk eluk  
Gelin ağlaşak Müslüm'e  
Hak . . . .*

Mervan's sword dealt blows to the pool  
And there his ruddy face turned pale,  
His children orphans, house a spoil,  
Let us each one for Muslims weep.  
Truth . . . .

*Mervan suya kılıç çaldı  
Sararıp gül benzi soldu  
Yavruları yetim kaldı  
Gelin ağlaşak Müslüm'e.  
Hak . . . .*

When the *aşık* finish this *nefes* and the *pir* his prayer, the initiates (*canlar*) on the *post* wake up as if from sleep, make prostration on the *post* and then to the *pir* and return. The watchman comes on the *post* and sits on knees and ankles and says, Come, friends, let us bring what is due to the *post*. Those present come one by one, make prostration on the *post* and leave whatever offering they have brought, and return to their places. The watchman says, May God give you blessed increase, and collects the offerings and gives them to the *rehber*. Then the following *nefes* is sung.

From there I came, from there I went,  
Gone like a summer flower spent,  
Gone are my works and what they meant,  
My life at last has passed away.

*İşte geldim işte gittim  
Yaz çiçeği gibi bittim  
Şu dünyada ne iş ettim  
Ömürçüğüm geçti gitti.*

The washers of my body win  
The task of watering my skin.  
The hoja's hand both bare and thin  
Wrapped round my shroud and went away.

*İşte geldi yuyucular  
Tenime su koyucular,  
Keferim elinde hoca  
Keferciğim biçti gitti.*

They called for the imam who showed  
To each his task, to each his load.  
Azrail has struck down my abode,  
Soul from her cage has flown away.

*Ça ğırdılar imam geldi  
Her biri bir işe geldi  
Azrail pençesin çaldı.  
Can kafesten uçtu gitti.*

They held me by my hands and let  
Me down with ropes behind, and set  
Arms firmly held in place, and yet  
Soul from her cage has flown away.

*El ettiler elimizden  
İpattılar belimizden,  
Pek tuttular kolumuzdan  
Can kafesten uçtu gitti.*

They put me down into my grave,  
They threw soil on my head, I gave  
Up all my blood, the kind, the brave,  
My tears flowed out and ran away.

*El ettiler mezarıma  
Toprak attılar serime  
Sığındım kâni kerime,  
Gözüm yaşı taşıtı gitti.*

The imam started out to read  
Last rites for me, his last kind deed,  
The neighbors left me without heed,  
They also turned and went away.

*İmam talgın başladı  
Bir sevapak i işledi,  
Komşular bizi boşladı  
Geri dönüp kaçtı gitti.*

An angel to my graveside came  
And asked his questions as in blame,  
Struck sorely with his mace like flame,  
My consciousness melted away.

*Kabrime bir melek geldi  
Benden bir sualcık sordu,  
Hışmedip bir topuz vurdu  
Tepdildiğim saştı gitti.*

Teslim Abdal secured his place,  
The end of time has won its race,  
The twelve imams extend us grace,  
Though skin to soil has passed away.

*Teslim Abdal oldu tamam  
İşte geldi ahir zaman,  
Yardımcımız oniki imam  
Ten turaba düştü gitti.*

The Alevi people follow the sitting of the forties in fulfilment of the desires of Muhammet Ali. Once the forties were constituted by 23 *mümin* and 17 *muslim*. Therefore they chose three sisters from among those in the *tekke* to represent Fatma-tu Zehra, Hatice-i Kibriye and Şehriban. If pure sisters were not found, they chose three from among the *talips*. The watchman again stands in the *meydan* while the sisters make prostration three times from the entrance as they move toward and stand beside the watchman. Then the *pir* says, O *erens*, these sisters are going to represent Fatma tu Zehra, Hatice-i Kibriye, and Şehriban. What do you say about them? If everyone accepts these sisters as pure and honest people and believes that they are qualified, then the sisters start to whirl as the imam says the following *duaz*.

Fatma suffered separation,  
She opened the door of heaven,  
Imam Hasan drank the poison,  
Struggle from God to him has come.

*Fatmaana fırgata düştü  
Uçmak kapısını açtı,  
İmam Hasan zehir içti  
Ona haktan gâza geldi.*

Imam Hüseyin's red blood flowed bright,  
Imam Zeynel convinced of right,  
The destined quill began to write  
When Naki came pure from the womb.

*Aktı İmam Hüseyin'in kanı  
İmam Zeynel mürvet kâni,  
Ana rahminde züldani  
Naki kalem yaza geldi.*

No day of error has there been  
Since we to Bakır were inclined,  
And we have walked the path divine  
Where Cafer-i Sadık led on.

*Bakıra meyil katalı  
Çıkamaz dilimiz hatalı,  
İmam Cafer'e yeteli  
Yolarımız düze geldi.*

Kazım, Musa, Rıza, Taki, I read my fate,  
Before its painful lash I wait,  
And touch my flesh and bone with hate,  
Until my body flees from dawn.

*Kazım, Musa, Rıza, Takiyi okudum  
Nakinin darına durdum,  
Kendi özümde sitem sürdüm  
Can cesedi naza geldi.*

I am not one to lose my hope  
In Hasan Askeri's abode,  
Nor in lord Mehdi's age of gold:  
From Ali Murtaza they come.

*Hasan Ali Askeriden  
Ben umudumu kesmem ondan,  
Mehtiyi sahip zamandan  
Aliyel Murtaza geldi.*

To the Beloved speaks Hasan sweet,  
He says, "My heart aches sore with grief,  
With grief, sore grief, and what is meet?"  
Now is our turn since one is gone.

*Hasanım der, gare ne der  
Yareliyem çarem ne der,  
Kanan göçtü vara ne der  
Şimdi nöbet bize geldi.*

When these *duaz* have ended, the *aşık* all return to their former places and kneel in the prescribed manner. The *aşık* pray the following three *duaz*.

**First duaz.**

'Twas thou who ruledst from Kaf to Kaf,  
O lovely  
Ali, thou art the one, the only, Ali,  
Whose seal on earth extends Muhammet's,  
comely  
Ali, thou art the one, the only, Ali.

*Ta ezeli kaftan kafa hükmeden  
Ali birsin, Ali birsin Ali bir,  
Arzda Muhammedin hatemin yutan  
Ali birsin, Ali birsin, Ali bir.*

And who besides Hasan and Hüseyin is great?  
In difficulties flee to Zeynel's estate.  
Thou took'st and gavest life in Nuseyri's fate,  
Ali, thou art the one, the only, Ali.

*Hasan Hüseyyindir çekili gelen  
Müggülün var ise Zeynele dolan,  
Nuseyri öld'rüp hem diri kılan  
Ali birsin, Ali birsin, Ali bir.*

From Muhammet Bakir to Cafer stretched  
the time,  
Thou sold'st thyself a market-slave clandestine,  
And castedst out the gate of Hayber from  
its shrine,  
Ali, thou art the one, the only, Ali.

*Bu Muhammet Bakır'dan Cafer'e  
yeter  
Kul olup kendini meydanda satan,  
Hayber'in kapısını havaya atan  
Ali birsin, Ali birsin, Ali bir.*

Thou wast reborn to be Musa-i Kazim too,  
Wast willing to do battle as masters do,  
Strike down earth's usurpers, destroy  
and pursue,  
Ali, thou art the one, the only, Ali.

*Musa'yi Kazımsın doğup duransın  
Sen bir Rızasın, sahip kıransın,  
Kaldıruben dağa taşa vuransın  
Ali birsin, Ali birsin, Ali bir.*

Muhammet Taki's work is wisdom's trace,  
Increases still Naki's flailing hand of fate,  
Thou pluckedst the birds from the dragon's  
hiding-place,  
Ali, thou art the one, the only, Ali.

*Muhammet Takinin hikmettir izi  
Aliyel Naki'nin artiyor coğu,  
Ejderha karnından çıkardan kuşu  
Ali birsin, Ali birsin, Ali bir.*

Hasan-ül Askeri weighs the people's sin,  
The bright reign of Muhammet Mehdi comes in  
To catch the dragon, tear him like a linen,  
Ali, thou art the one, the only, Ali.

*Hasan-ül Askeri günahlar tartar  
Muhammet mehtinin dalgası artar,  
Çekip ejderhayı bez gibi yırtar  
Ali birsin, Ali birsin, Ali bir.*

Thy humble slave Dervish Süleyman doth bow,  
With thoughts from the inexpressible to show,  
In vain I speak such as this world cannot know,  
Ali, thou art the one, the only, Ali.

*Derviş Süleyman'in başım ayılmaz  
Leyli nahar destan etsem duyulmaz,  
Şu dünyada birsin iki denilmez  
Ali birsin, Ali birsin, Ali bir.*

## Second duaz.

Each morn, each morn the birds sing anew  
 their song,  
 Allah is One and one Muhammet Ali.  
 The nightingales after roses cry along,  
 Allah is One and one Muhammet Ali.

*Her sabah, her sabah ötüşen kuşlar  
 Allah bir Muhammet Ali diyerek,  
 Bülbüller gül için figana bağlar  
 Allah bir Muhammet Ali diyerek.*

The bee looks up from making honey to say  
 Our destiny is but the fate of one day,  
 Veysel Karani rode to Yemen this way,  
 Allah is One and one Muhammet Ali.

*Kismetimiz kiblemizden buluna  
 Arı da iniler kudret balına,  
 Veysel Karani gitti Yemen eline  
 Allah bir, Muhammet Ali diyerek.*

Düldül, Fatma, Kamber thus began their  
 prayer,  
 With sorrow Jesus spoke these words, rose  
 in air,  
 And Shehriban said to mount her camel there,  
 Allah is One and one Muhammet Ali.

*Düldül, Fatma, Kamber durdu duaya  
 İsa'da kahredip ağı havaya,  
 Şehriban soyundu bindi deveye  
 Allah bir Muhammet Ali diyerek.*

We truly hold the twelve imams with grieving,  
 Acknowledge and accept them with believing,  
 Imam Hasan drank from the poisoned cup, said,  
 Allah is One and one Muhammet Ali.

*Biz çekeriz imamların yasını  
 Gerçek işit oniki imam sesini,  
 İmam Hasan içti ağı tasını  
 Allah bir, Muhammet Ali diyerek.*

In a sieve the true believers sifted fine,  
 New comers on the path of Truth brought  
 in line,  
 And Shah Hüseyin in bright blood bathed  
 and dyed,  
 Allah is One and one Muhammet Ali.

*Mümin olan ince elekten elendi  
 Takip olan hak yoluna talandı,  
 Şah Hüseyin al kanlara boyandı  
 Allah bir, Muhammet Ali diyerek.*

Imam Zeynel was torn apart limb from limb,  
 They asked Muhammet Bakır for no grace dim,  
 The honor of Cafer was this one great hymn,  
 Allah is One and one Muhammet Ali.

*İmam Zeynel paralandı bölündü  
 Muhammet Bakıra niyaz kılındı,  
 Caferi Sadiğa erkan verildi  
 Allah bir Muhammet Ali diyerek.*

Bird of the heart finds here no nest apart,  
 The desire of fasting dawn falls on the heart,  
 Kazım, Musa, Ali, Rıza's blessings start,  
 Allah is One and one Muhammet Ali.

*Gönül kuşu bulamıyor yuvası  
 Gönülleri düştü sahur havası,  
 Kazım, Musa, Ali, Rıza duası  
 Allah bir Muhammet Ali diyerek.*

Taki and Askeri join in one bright flame,  
 Hasan Askeri one spirit light became,  
 The Mehdi hidden from the cave without  
 blame,  
 Allah is One and one Muhammet Ali.

*Taki, Naki, Askeri bir oldu gitti  
 Hasan-ül Askeri nur oldu gitti,  
 Mehti mağarada sır oldu gitti  
 Allah bir Muhammet Ali diyerek.*

Four holy books to four holy faiths came down,  
 Muhammet's faithful the clear Qur'an entone,  
 Kul Hümmet by these words made Ali his own,  
 Allah is One and one Muhammet Ali.

*Dört kitap yazıldı dört dine düştü  
 Kuran Muhammedin virdine düştü  
 Kul Hümmet Alinin derdine düştü  
 Allah bir Muhammet Ali diyerek.*

## Third duaz.

There is no help in all this world but in Thee, *Bu cihanda derde derman sendedir*  
 Save us, Allah, O Muhammet, O Ali. *Yetiş Allah, ya Muhammet, ya Ali,*  
 Believing Muslims sorrow most grievously, *Mümin müslüm bütün derdi gamdadır*  
 Save us, Allah, O Muhammet, O Ali. *Yetiş Allah, ya Muhammet, ya Ali.*

The sun and moon are weeping there in the sky, *Ağlar gökgüzünde hem mahi mihri*  
 With ecstasy the world was filled by and by, *Feryat ile doldu iklimin dehri,*  
 Shah Imam Hasan was poisoned then to die, *Şah imam Hasana verdiler zehri.*  
 Save us, Allah, O Muhammet, O Ali. *Yetiş Allah, ya Muhammet, ya Ali.*

Then gathered were the supporters of Yezid, *Yezitler bir araya geldiler*  
 Muhammet's seed surrounded by the wicked, *Ehl-i Beyt'i ara yere aldılar,*  
 Shah Imam Hüseyin fell to the sword amid, *Şah imam Hüseyine kılıç kıldılar*  
 Save us, Allah, O Muhammet, O Ali. *Yetiş Allah, ya Muhammet, ya Ali.*

Imam Zeynel Abidin was attacked there, *İmam Zeynel abidini bastılar*  
 The martyrs' heads were cut off, none to *Şüheydanın başlarını kestiler,*  
 forbear, *Götürdüler hem dımışga astılar*  
 And hung about Damascus' gates in mid-air, *Yetiş Allah, ya Muhammet, ya Ali.*  
 Save us, Allah, O Muhammet, O Ali.

They seized not the apostle of Allah's speech, *Tutmadılar resulullah sözünü*  
 His daughter taken captive, bride out of reach, *Esir etti gelinini kızını,*  
 All of Ali's house the face of truth must preach, *Ali evlat hakka tuttu yüzünü*  
 Save us, Allah, O Muhammet, O Ali. *Yetiş Allah, ya Muhammet, ya Ali.*

For Imam Bakir's, and Imam Cafer's sake, *İmam Bakır, İmam Cafer hakkı için,*  
 For Shah Musa's, and Kazim's and Riza's sake, *Şah Musayı Kazım, Rıza için,*  
 For Imam Taki's also Shah Naki's sake, *Şah Takinin, ah Nakinin hakk için*  
 Save us, Allah, O Muhammet, O Ali. *Yetiş Allah, ya Muhammet, ya Ali.*

Askeri, Mehdi are guardians of time *Askeri, Mehtidir ol sahip zaman*  
 Until the holy convocation sublime *Gelince kurulur bir ulu divan,*  
 Call for the inspiration, now is the time, *Çağır ey ilhamı zaman bu zaman*  
 Save us, Allah, O Muhammet, O Ali. *Yetiş Allah, ya Muhammet, ya Ali.*

When the third *duaz* has ended, the *baci* request a piece of clay of Kerbala and stand up. The *aşık* represent the meeting of the forties. Then they read the following *mihracname*.

Then Gabriel the angel came *Geldi Cebrail çağırdı*  
 And called Muhammet by name, *Muhammet Mustafa dedi*  
 Allah lays on you His claim, *Hak seni mihraca buyurdu*  
 Obey His invitation. *Davete kadir hûda.*

This is my first command, abide *Evvel emanet bu dedi*  
 In footsteps of the holy guide, *Pir ile rahbet tut dedi*  
 From the right path turn not aside. *Tarik mustakine yetti*  
 Confused was the prophet's station. *Yetasın kadın erkene.*

He knew Allah, almighty, great,  
And followed Gabriel to the gate.  
By the morning light, Allah said.  
Muhammet left earth's vocation.

*Muhammet müşgüle daldı  
Hakkı anda azim bildi  
Rehberle el ele oldu  
Hak buyurdu vedduha.*

The angel took Muhammet's mind  
And bound his waist, the stair they climbed  
To dergah where dervishes find  
Reality's salutation.

*Muhammet belin bağladı  
Akl Cebrail bağladı  
İki bir eyledi  
Yürüdüler hem dergaha.*

Unto the gate of Dergah came,  
Saw shining there a lion's mane,  
It growled, it moved and none could blame  
Muhammet's great perturbation.

*Dergah kapısına geldi  
Bir arslanı yatar gördü,  
Haykurben hamle kıldı  
Başa kapı bir fına.*

The secret of the worlds replied,  
Fear not, Beloved, I'm at your side,  
Make known your seal and do not hide  
Your famous name's acclamation.

*Sırrı kâinat buyurdu  
Korkmasın habibim dedi,  
Hatemi baş versin dedi  
Nişan olsun arslana.*

Before the lion he placed his seal.  
At the sight it turned on its heel  
At Muhammet's certain appeal,  
The lion left the location.

*Hatemi uğruna verdi  
Arslan anda sakin oldu,  
Muhammede yakın verdi  
Arslan cekildi nihana.*

Into the presence of God went  
The prophet, his first question meant  
What is divine wisdom's assent  
That forced from me adoration?

*Vardı hakka tavaf kıldı  
Evvela bunu söyledi,  
Ne hikmet sırrın var dedi  
Hayli cebriyledi bana.*

He saw there the lonely dervish  
And secretly told him his wish,  
I wish Ali were here with me,  
I wish his substantiation.

*Bir biçare derviş gördü  
Hemen yalmaşın diledi.  
Ali benimle olaydı  
Danaydı ol şaha.*

Oh my good fortune and success,  
It is my follower beloved,  
In the place of God measureless  
My heart bows down in prostration.

*Ey benim sırrı devletim  
Oda sana tabidir habibim,  
Secdeye eğildi kalbim  
Eşiği hak kiblegaha.*

He spoke ninety thousand commands,  
Two hearts bound as with iron bands,  
Spoke Allah's unity first hand  
To the world as a donation.

*Doksanbin kelam demişti  
İki gönül dost konuştu,  
Tevhidi armağan saçı  
Yeryüzündeki insana.*

Muhammet got up to his feet  
For his own people he would greet  
The judge in mercy and entreat  
Forgiveness on his own nation.

*Ayağa kalktı Muhammet  
Ümetine diler ümmet,  
Cümlesine olsun rahmet  
Onda dedi hem kibriye.*

In deep prostration he fell down  
And said, "I bow before Thy crown."  
Then took his leave to his own town  
By the forties' habitation.

*Eğiluben secde kaldı  
Hoşça kal sultanlık dedi,  
Ayrılıp eve geldi  
Yol uğradı kırklara.*

He came into the forties' court,  
Sat in silence where they consort.  
They bowed before him in accord  
Who stayed in God's adoration.

*Kırklar makamına geldi  
Oturuben sakin durdu,  
Cumle kırklar secde kıldı  
Hazreti emrullahı.*

Muhammet in submission bore  
His soul to God, and there before  
Shah Hasan and Shah Hüseyin poured  
Gabriel grapes in acclamation.

*Muhammette sürdü yüzün  
Hakka teslim etti özüñ,  
Cebrail getirdi üzüm  
Şah Hasanla hüseyin şaha.*

Salman also stood by and prayed  
His master might come to his aid,  
A piece of grape was given that made  
His health's pure regeneration.

*Salman orda hazır idi  
Seydullahını diledi,  
Bir üzüm danesi indii  
Salmanın kes kürlahına.*

From Allah came an outstretched hand,  
Muhammet saw its seal expand,  
The thing was great to understand,  
He cried out in exaltation.

*Kudretten bir el geldi  
Muhammet hatemin gördü,  
Ezdi engür eyledi  
Uğradı bir müşgül hala.*

The sherbit's sip, one sip alone,  
And all caught up into the throne  
Of some ecstatic love full-blown,  
Muslims whirled in jubilation.

*Ol şerbetten biri içti  
Mümin müslüm aşka düştü,  
Üryan büryün hep karıştı  
Yürüdüler hep samaha.*

Muhammet in the state of love  
With the forties below, above,  
Whirled to applauses and shouts of  
Huu Allah, Allah's gyration.

*Muhammetde aşka geldi  
Kırklar ile çarheyledi,  
Cümleside pençe çaldı  
Dediler hü Allah Allah.*

Love gained the victory at last,  
The righteous way of doing cast,  
The unity of God stood fast  
At memory's exhilaration.

*Muhabbetler galip oldu  
Yol erkan yerini aldı,  
Tevhid kararını buldu  
Hatırları oldu safı.*

Muhammet returned to his place.  
Toward Allah Ali turned his face,  
Before him set the seal of grace:  
Murtaza, unique vocation.

*Muhammet evine geldi  
Ali hakkı tavaf kıldı  
Mühürü önüme koydu  
Setdeksin sen ya Murtaza.*

Thou art beginning and the end,  
Thou art the seen and unseen friend,  
The lord of those who comprehend,  
Imam and saint of high station.

*Hem evelsin ahirsin  
Hem batsın hem zahirsin  
Talip rehser şahısın  
Ya imam ehli evliya.*



I am Shah Hata who writes of his belief,  
I found the saints beyond belief,  
The secrets of Allah in brief,  
Secrets of divine summation.

*Şah Hatayım okuf oldum  
Evliya hak sırrın buldum,  
Özümüz inandıramadım  
Ol çürügün evrahına.*

At this point the *baci* make prostration and everyone begins to whirl. This sacred whirling is called the *semah*. Then the following *nefes* is recited.

Did you come down from the Kabe one by one? *Kabe ellerinden sökin mi geldin*  
Why did you cry out so happily, my crane? *Ne yaman fırgath ötersin turnam*  
Are you walking in lord Imam Ali's train? *Imam Ali katarına uymuşsun*  
Are you going to the forties' *semah*, crane? *Kırkların semahın tutarsın turnam?*

Together with you, among you are the Threes, *Üçlerde seninle bilebilir bile*  
You've attained to the Sevens' ascendancies, *Yediler de şöhretine naile*  
You've gained the prophet Hızır's sympathies, *Ol Hızır nebi de yoldaşın ola*  
There's nothing can keep you from the goal, *Görihi naciye yetersin turnam.*  
my crane.

When summer comes again and five moons *Yaz gelince beş ayları doğunca*  
are born, *Pervaz vurup arş yüzüne ağınca*  
You rise before the throne of Allah adorned. *Yavru şahın tellerine değince*  
When the falcon chick touches your wings *Ali dost dost diye ötersin durnam.*  
airborne,  
O friend Ali, shall be your anthem's refrain.

Within your throat is dear chosen Ali's voice. *Alinin avazı sende bulunur*  
Sing not, my poor crane, let me not hear *Ötme garip durnam bağrım delinir*  
your voice *Bildir ahvalini sen de gel imdi*  
To make me sad, now you came to show *Görüller gamını atarsın turnam.*  
my choice  
And that the sorrows of our hearts are but vain.

Of love Dervish Ali comes to tell a tale *Derviş Alim aşkın hatmini düzer*  
And sits writing his friend's letter without fail, *Oturmuş dostunun mektubun yazar*  
Complaint like Leyla and Mejnun's cry and *Leyla mecnun gibi ağlayıp gezer*  
wail, *Can ver ki conana yetesin turnam.*  
Give up life and attain Allah, my crane.

When the *nefes* is finished the *baci* do *niyaz* and sit down and perform *zikr* with hands on one another's shoulders, while the *aşık* recite a stanza of the *nefes*:

Ali, Hasan, Huseyin, Zeynel, Bakir,  
Kazım, Rıza, Musa, my faith in heart and ear,  
Taki, Naki, Askeri, Mehdi thanks be  
The descendant of Abraham is Haydar.

*Ali, Hasan, Hüseyin, Zeynel, Bakır,  
Kazım, Rıza, Musa gönlümde haktır,  
Taki, Naki, Askeri, Mehtiye şükür  
İbrahim desdinin demanı haydar.*

After this is recited the *baci* again perform *niyaz* to the ground, while the second *semah*, similar to the first, is performed, the following *nefes* should be recited:

Returned to inspect the abandoned gallows,  
So they say you arrived in Baghdad, my crane,  
In Madina Mecca's source Fatma follows,  
Did you see them in the city there, my crane?

*Devredip gezersin dari fariyi,  
Bağdat diyerina vardınımı durnam,  
Medine şehrinde Fatma anayı,  
Mekani ondadır gördün mü durnam?*

Indeed we accepted you and your greatness,  
Took faith, confession made in appropriateness,  
To Imam Ali upon a crystal sea,  
Did you brush the surface of this sea, my crane?

*Biz de beli dedik bizden uluya,  
İman aldık ikrar verdik veliye,  
Necef deryasında imam Ali'ye,  
Bu deryaya yüzün sürdün mü durna?*

Arriving at Salman's in Medina's sway,  
Seeing Kazim's tomb in Baghdad on the way,  
Passing the threshold with your head turned to pray,  
Is your confession spent, my crane, O my crane?

*Medine şehrinde Salmana varıp,  
Bağdat'da Kazımın kabrini görüp,  
Baş eğip eşiğine yüzün sürüp,  
İkrar bent olup durdun mu durnam?*

Let not the witness of Kerbela belie,  
There is no grant from Truth set forward to die,  
May the blood of Imam Hüseyin never dry,  
Did you see the martyrs' sacrifice, my crane?

*Hürşehit'de Kerbela'da çürümez,  
Haktan izin yoktur kalkıp yürümez,  
İmam Hüseyinin kanı kurumaz,  
Şehitler serdarın gördün mü durnam?*

Raise high holy Job's vessel and raise it higher.  
With two wolves in one body, wherefore desire?  
The one is honey, the other silk like fire,  
Did you then attain their mystery, my crane?

*Hazreti Eyüb'ün mikaben kaldır.  
Tende iki kurt vardır neye maildir?  
Biri ipek sarar birisi baldır,  
Bunların sırrına erdin mi durnam?*

Behlul came to make his dwelling on earth near,  
And saw his abode in the heavens appear,  
The holy ones' talisman is in their hands here,  
Did you stop in the Forties' gallows, my crane?

*Behlül evcik yapor idi zeminde,  
Makamını gördü uçmak evinde,  
Tılsımı erenlerin cebinde,  
Kırkların darında durdun mu durnam?*

In Yemen Veysel Karani traveled round  
In the twelve imams' way refreshed and renowned.  
Imam Mehdi in whatever time, what bound,  
Shall he appear, did you inquire there, my crane?

*Veysel Karani gezer idi Yemende  
Serin verdi oniki imam yolunda.  
İmam Mehdi hangi vakti zamanda,  
Nasıl zuhur eder sordın mu durnam?*

I'm Kul Hüseyin, in truth I shall arrive,  
Passing to the dergah by hundreds alive,  
Sacrifice my head, to see my lord I strive,  
Did you also see my lord there, O my crane?

*Kul Hüseyinim der ki hakka varalım,  
Varıp dergahına yüzler sürelim,  
Can baş feda edip şahi görelim,  
Sen de o sultanı gördün mü durnam?*

This time again the *baci* perform *niyaz* and then sit on their knees and ankles.  
Once again the *aşık* recite the same verse of the *duaz* while the *baci* perform *zikir*.

Ali, Hasan, Hüseyin, Zeynel, Bakır,  
Cafer, Rıza, Kazım, Musa are truth dear,  
Taki, Naki, Askeri, Mehdi thanks be  
The descendant of Abraham is Haydar.

*Ali, Hasan, Hüseyin, Zeynel, Bakır  
Cafer, Rıza, Kazım, Musa gönlümde  
haktır,  
Taki, Naki, Askeri, Mehdiye şükür,  
İbrahim desdinin demahi haydar.*

The *bacı* again perform *niyaz*, then the three walk about the whole room while the *bacı* on the left performs *niyaz* to the ground at each corner saying the following *duaz* during the *nefes* of the *aşık*.

- Of the transgression we have done day or night  
We do repent and flee unto Allah's grace,  
To Muhammet Ali is our path of right,  
We do repent and flee unto Allah's grace.
- If Hasan Hüseyin are light in divine light,  
If Zeynel Abidin's secret mystery's right,  
We have to release the selfishness of "I".  
We do repent and flee unto Allah's grace.
- If we stray out of Muhammet Bakir's way,  
Cafer will give what earn those who go astray,  
Is it seeming to you to hurt hearts this way?  
We do repent and flee unto Allah's grace.
- From Musa-i Kazım to Imam Rıza go  
Taki and Naki our useless efforts show,  
For day and night our evil habits still grow.  
We do repent and flee unto Allah's grace.
- Hasan-ul Askeri's roses ever grow  
And Mehdi will come and make the sorrows go  
That from our daily denunciations grow.  
We do repent and flee unto Allah's grace.
- I'm Derviş Süleyman of Baghdad, Basra,  
Look at that empty cauldron, epoch's decline,  
Surrender yourself up to blessings divine.  
We do repent and flee unto Allah's grace.
- After the *duaz* the *bacı* perform *niyaz* and begin the *semah*. The *aşık* begin the following *şahlama*.
- My longing is for Kerbela day and night.  
Let us flee to the love of the twelve Imams.  
Apart from these I have nothing to delight.  
Let's surrender ourselves to the twelve Imams.
- The nightingales offer their sorrow in song,  
To believers in Truth the ballads belong,  
Roses of Erdebil too soon came along,  
Let's gather the roses for the twelve Imams.
- Under the palace flow the waters and foam,  
The sounds of the lutes turn our fate back  
toward home,  
Into forty a grape like sweet honeycomb,  
Let us divide the grape for the twelve Imams.
- Gece gündüz hata işlediğimiz işe  
Töve günahlara estağfurullah,  
Muhammet aliye bağlıdır başımız  
Töve günahlara estağfurullah.*
- Hasan hüseyin nur içinde nur ise  
Zeynel Abidin sır içinde sır ise,  
Eğer özümüzde benlik var ise  
Töve günahlara estahfurullah.*
- Muhammet Bakırın izinden çıkmak  
Yükümüz Cafer'den tutarak ahmak,  
Sana layıkmıdır hatırlar yıkmak  
Töve günahlara estahfurullah.*
- Musa-i Kazım'dan İmam Rıza'ya  
Taki Naki emeklerimizi vermeye zaya,  
Gece gündüz islediğimiz bat huya  
Töve günahlara estahfurullah.*
- Hasan-ül Askerinin gülleri bite  
Mehti gele gönlümüzün gamını ata,  
Hergün etti imiz kov'a giybeta  
Töve günahlara estahfurullah.*
- Derviş Süleyman'ım Bağdat Basra  
Bak şu kem kazanca bak şu asıra,  
Elaman mürüvet kalma kusura  
Töve günahlara estahfurulla.*
- Gece gündüz arzumanım Kerbalâ  
Gelin varak oniki imam aşkına,  
Serden gayri sermayem yok elimde  
Gelin verek oniki imam aşkına.*
- Dertli öter şaharın bülbülleri  
Mani söyler hak ehlinin kulları,  
Er açılmış erdelilin gülleri  
Gelin derek oniki imam aşkına.*
- Sarayın altından akuyor aklar  
Çalınır sazlar dönüyor çarklar,  
Kırklar bir üzümü kırk bölen kırklar  
Gelin bölük oniki imam aşkına.*

One of the forties kicked loudly at the door,  
 One of the forties made an heir to restore,  
 Sari Kaya's fair, the king's pride evermore.  
 Let's go down to the love of the twelve Imams.

*Kapıyı depti kırkların birisi  
 Birisinden hasil oldu varisi,  
 Sarı Kaya güzel şahın kormsu  
 Gelin konah oniki imam aşkına.*

The seeker must carry his leader along  
 To strengthen the weak ones and to right  
 the wrong,  
 Rıza decks the meydan with sweetmeat and  
 song,  
 Let's go feast on the love of the twelve imams.

*Talip rehberi sırtında götür  
 Tamam eyle noksanımız sen yetir,  
 Rıza lokmasını meydana getir  
 Gelin yiyecek oniki imam aşkına.*

I'm Shah Hata, indeed I've acceptance,  
 Allah Muhammet Ali's invitation  
 Inspires us all to every sin's confession,  
 Let's come stay in the love of the twelve imams.

*Şah Hatayım eydir ha beli beli  
 Çağrışalmı Allah Muhammet Ali  
 Cümleniz de bir ikrarın da gulu  
 Gelin durak oniki imam aşkına.*

When the *aşık* have finished, all return to their former places and sit down.  
 The *aşık* sing a *gazel* to end the *cem*. They can sing whatever *gazel* they like.  
 After the *gazel* is sung, the people repeat in unison the following.

By the scriptures of Kerbela,  
 The Beloved have died martyrs there,  
 Mother Fatma's children's despair,  
 Ah Hüseyin, O Hüseyin, clear-eyed Hüseyin.  
 The deed, the deed, the deed, grant peace  
 on the spirit of Muhammet Mustafa,  
 God grant upon the posterity of Muhammet.

*Kerbela'nın yazıları  
 Şehit olmuş kuzuları  
 Fatma Ana'nın nazlıları  
 Ah Hüseyin, vah Hüseyin elâ gözlü  
 şah Hüseyin.  
 Failatün, failatün, failat ver Muham-  
 met Mustafa'nın ruhuna ver selavat,  
 Allahümme selli âlä seyyidine  
 Muhammet.*

Then sura Fatiha is read and with this the meeting is over. Everyone prays for the souls of those who have served them during the meeting. The watchman adds meat to the rice to make *pilav*. After the meal everyone goes home. On the way home they say, "To those who lay down and sat down I wish days without gossip, may Ali help them, may Hızır be their guide." (*Yatanaş oturana lousuz ve giybitsiz günler, evine gidnin Ali yardımcısı olsun Hızır kılavuzu olsun.*)

## References Cited

### Aktüccar, Halil

1984 Yunus Emre, Hayatı, sanatı ve eserleri. İstanbul: Gökşin Yayınları.

### Baldick, Julian

1989 Mystical Islam. An Introduction to Sufism. London: I. B. Taurus & Co.

### Bezirci, Asım

1986 Pir Sultan, yaşamı, kişiliği, sanatı, bütün şiirleri. Çağaloğlu-İstanbul: Say Dağı-tım.

- Birge, John Kingsley**  
1937 *The Bektashi Order of Dervishes*. Hartford, CT: Hartford Seminary Press.
- Dengler, Ian C.**  
1978 *Turkish Women in the Ottoman Empire*. In: Lois Beck and Nikki Keddie (eds.), *Women in the Muslim World*; pp. 229–244. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Erdoğan, Aşur**  
s. a. *İslamiyetin içyüzü ve Şahseven hayatı ve nefesleri*. İstanbul: Gülay Ajans.
- Erseven, İlhan Cem**  
1990 *Aleviler'de Semah*. Ankara: Erkin Yayınları.
- Eyuboğlu, İsmet Zeki**  
1990 *Bütün Yönleriyle Bektaşılık*. İstanbul: Der Yayınları.
- Gölpınarlı, Abdülhakıy**  
1963 *Alevi-Bektaşî nefesleri*. İstanbul: İstanbul Remzi Kitabevi.  
1987 *Tarih boyunca İslam mezhepleri ve Şîlik*. İstanbul: Der Yayınları.
- Gürer, Selahattin**  
1961 *Aşık Yunus Emrenin bestelenmiş şiirleri*. İstanbul: İsmail Akgün Matbaası.
- Ivanow, W.**  
1953 *The Truth-Worshippers of Kurdistan*. Leiden: E. J. Brill. (Ahl-i Haqq Texts)
- Kalabadhi, Abu Bakr al**  
1978 *The Doctrine of the Sufis (Kitab al-Ta'arruf ahl al-tasawwuf)*. Transl. by A. J. Arberry. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kaya, Haydar**  
1989 *Kurban-kevser ve Ehl-i Beyt*. İstanbul: Anadolu Matbaası.
- Kılı, Hüseyin**  
1989 *Hazret-i Muhammed'den iki emanet*. İstanbul: Ufuk Matbaası.
- Kılıçaslan, Şaban**  
s. a. *Damlarlar*. S. 1.
- Koç, Şinasi**  
1988 *Allah insanlardan ne istiyor?* Ankar: Güven Matbaası.
- Köseoğlu, Ali Rıza**  
1988 *Hünkar Hacı Bektaşî Veli--Şiirler Anatolojisi--Öz deyiş ve nefesler*. Ankara: Ayyıldız Yayınları.
- Kudret, Cevdet**  
1965 *Pir Sultan Abdal*. İstanbul: Yeditepe. (Yeditepe Türk Klasikleri, 6)
- Momen, Moojan**  
1985 *An Introduction to Shi'ite Islam. The History and Doctrines of Twelver Shi'ism*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Moosa, Matti**  
1988 *Extremist Shiites, The Ghulat Sects*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.
- Naess, Ragnar**  
1988 *Being an Alevi Muslim in South-western Anatolia and in Norway: The Impact of Migration on a Heterodox Turkish Community*. In: Tomas Gerholm and Yngve Georg Lithman (eds.), *The New Islamic Presence in Western Europe*; pp. 174–195. London Mansell Publishing.

**Noyan, Bedri**

1987 Bektaşılık Alevilik nedir. Ankara: Doğu Matbaacılık.

**Noyan, Bedri (ed.)**

1986 Hacı Bektaş Veli velayetnamesi. Ankara: Doğu Matbaacılık.

**Nüzhet, Sadettin**

1930 Bektaşî şairleri. İstanbul: Devlet Matbaası.

**Oytan, M. Tevfik**

1945 Bektaşiliğin İçyüzü. İstanbul: Maarif Kitaphanesi.

**Öztelli, Cahit**

1985 Bektaşî Gülleri. İstanbul: Özgür Yayın Dağıtım.

**Roermer, H. R.**

1986 The Safavid Period. In: Peter Jackson and Laurence Lockhart (eds.), The Cambridge History of Iran; vol. 6: The Timurid and Safavid Periods. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

**Şahin, Yusuf**

1987 Kulhak. İstanbul: Erenler Matbaası.

**Şapolyo, Enver Behnan**

1964 Mezhepler ve tarikatlar tarihi. İstanbul: Türkiye Yayınevi.

**Schimmel, Annemarie**

1982 As through a Veil. Mystical Poetry in Islam. New York: Columbia University Press.

**Sertoğlu, Murat**

1969 Bektaşılık nedir? İstanbul: Başak Yayınevi.

**Tabātaba'i, 'Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn**

1975 Shi'ite Islam. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd.

**Trimingham, Spencer**

1971 The Sufi Orders in Islam. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

**Yesirgil, Nevzat**

1963 Yunus Emre. İstanbul: Yeditepe. (Yeditepe Türk Klasikleri, 2)

**Yüksel, Hasan Avni**

1987 Aşık Seyrani. Ankara: Yenigün Matbaacılık. (Türk büyükleri Dizisi, 32)

**Yürükoğlu, R.**

1990 Okunac en büyük kitap insandır, tarihte günümüzde Alevilik. Çemberlitaş-İstanbul: Alev Yayınları.