

A STUDY ON ALEVI HUMANISM

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ABSTRACT

A STUDY ON ALEVI HUMANISM

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The aim of this study is to discuss the connection between Alevism and Humanism with a detailed examination. The main question of the thesis is whether Alevism can be linked to Humanism or not. The concepts of humanism in the history of Alevism are analyzed in terms of human-centrism, mind, and the love of humanity, tolerance, respect and morality. Alevism, which is largely influenced by Haji Bektash Veli's teachings, could open a door for Humanism and for the strength of this connection with Alevism; this door is examined and questioned. While Haji Bektashi Veli and his orders seem compatible with a human-centered philosophy not only for his century but also for today; it has some problematic aspects as well. And this thesis is written to reveal both the reasonable and problematic sides of the link between Alevism and Humanism. By the evaluation of different views, the similarities and differences between Alevism and Humanism are shown.

Keywords: Alevism, Syncretism, Haji Bektashi Veli, Humanism, Human-Centered

ÖZ

ALEVİ HÜMANİZMİ ÜZERİNE BİR ÇALIŞMA

Sürücü, Betül

Yüksek Lisans, Felsefe Bölümü

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Bu çalışmanın amacı Alevilik ve Hümanizm arasındaki bağlantıyı detaylı bir şekilde tartışmaktır. Tezin ana sorunu Alevilik ve Hümanizmin bağlantılı olup olmadığıdır. Hümanizmin kavramları; insan merkezli olması, tolerans, saygı ve ahlak Alevilik tarihinde analiz edilir. Alevilik üzerinde büyük etkisi olan Hacı Bektaşî Veli'nin öğretileri Hümanizme bir kapı açabilir mi ve bu bağlantının gücü araştırılıp, sorgulanır. Hacı Bektaşî Veli ve öğretisindeki kavramlar insan merkezli felsefe ile sadece yüzyıllardır değil günümüzde bile uyumlu fakat bazı açılardan da problemlidir. Bu tez Alevilik ve Hümanizm arasındaki bağlantıyı mantıklı ve problemleri taraflarını göstermek için yazılmıştır. Alevilik ve Hümanizmin benzerlikleri ve farkları konusunda değişik görüşler değerlendirilecektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Alevilik, Senkretizm, Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli, Hümanizm, İnsan Merkezilik

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

What is the practice of philosophy in Turkey like? When one looks at academia, the practice seems to be modeled on the Western tradition, with more recent interest arising in Islamic philosophy, and some rare attention occasionally drawn to Eastern philosophy and mysticism. This cursory glance may create the impression or illusion that Turkish people do not have an original philosophy of their own, but merely oscillate between Western philosophy and Islamic philosophy, and then the following questions are raised: Does Turkey have its own philosophy? Why is there not any original philosophy in Turkey? Have there ever been important Turkish philosophers?

Turks were generally nomadic warriors; they were the best warriors of their time, second to Mongols. It is generally believed that at least partly because of that, they just preferred not to go for philosophy and science, and Turks are criticized for their failure to provide an adequate philosophy even though they were so close to philosophical thoughts, considering Turkey's geographical proximity to Greece and ancient Greek ideas, in addition to the influence of Islam. However, Turkish contributions to human thought for different branches of philosophical knowledge should not be disregarded. This thesis focuses in particular on Alevi thought, which it considers to be a distinctively Turkish philosophy, which contributes much to the broad improvement of human thought in philosophical culture, and has shaped a decisive moment in the history of thought. Haji Bektashi Veli has exercised immense impact on Alevi literature from his own day until the present. Even though approximately seven centuries have passed, his thoughts have been maintaining their effectiveness and continue to enlighten the path of humanity. Hence, there needs to be an intensive research carried out on Alevi contributions to human thought extending into many dimensions.

‘What is Alevism?’ is a critical question today. While the order of Alevism is passed on through generations through a closed social structure, the process of modernization in Turkey involved a new expansion of the interpretation of Alevism, including a gathering and accumulation of information about Alevism that it carries from the past. Because of its closed society characteristics, Alevism can sometimes cause intense debates about how it is to be interpreted and evaluated. One of the central topics of debate is whether Alevism can be secular despite sharing similar features with Islam. Some writers assert that after the immigration to rural areas and the self-identification process of Alevism, Alevism can no longer be seen either a branch of Islam or an irrational belief system or sect. The definition of Alevism, its historical position in relation to Islam, its religious and cultural dimensions, historical development and change are among the other topics discussed, and Alevism is identified with various concepts of life style, teachings, philosophy (and in particular, humanism, naturalism, communism, socialism). Consequently, its meaning can be shifted easily according to socio-political and ideological intentions.

Alevism, simply understood, is centered on the love of Ali, who is accepted as the founder of the order and its “path”. However, its rituals, religious texts and life practices vary depending on different regions of Anatolia, and there are completely different perspectives on and opposite interpretations concerning the description of Alevism. The source of information on Alevism is based on an oral tradition which has come to our day. The ambiguity of historical materials and legendary great historical personalities and the fact that their culture is transferred through generations verbally create problems in completing the research about Alevism. In Turkey, there are many misleading texts on Alevism that are composed of polluted information and the limited numbers of academic studies are inadequate. Moreover, Ottoman archives have not been completely opened up to research.

Alevism is a dynamic order, with various features of the ancient faith structure constantly evolving, while preserving the mystical understanding and retaining a

position that is also in harmony with Islam. In this understanding, sacramental rituals of recitation joined by both men and women and which involved music, bards and dance appeared suitable with the older principles of the wandering Turcoman. The first doctrines of the interpretation of Alevism transmit traits which can be perceived as the maintenance of ceremonies established by Hodja Ahmed Yesevi. But in its historical formation process, Alevism synthesizes separate geographies, cultures, traditions, religions and practices. Alevism's syncretic and heterodox structures offer diverse perspectives for association with modernized ideas such as socialism, communism, and humanism.

Ali is accepted as the founder of "the road"; however, Haji Bektashi Veli is also a leading figure who has shaped Alevism with his Sufi and humanist teachings. Despite various nuances, from a historical and sociological point of view, Alevism and Bektashism are not considered independently today since they develop out of the same historical backdrop of folk Islam. Both terms may be used interchangeably from time to time as the Alevi-Bektashi culture, Alevi-Bektashi faith, or Alevi-Bektashi philosophy.

Alevism symbolizes the unity of all religious and political differences. Because of the interactions of Sky-God, Shamanism, Manism and Zoroastrianism in its formation, Alevism has emerged as a heterodox and syncretic form of Islam in distinction from Sunni Islam. On the other hand, there is a rich humanist philosophy under this syncretic and heterodox structure. Haji Bektash Veli has a really rich international viewpoint, and worked to eliminate the misinterpretations between different societies, to bring humanity closer in its outlook upon the world and to bring about real cultural interaction between different races and nations. Haji Bektash Veli's order gives priority to humanity. The unity of God-human-universe, the freedom of the human being, the importance of the mind, love of humanity, respectfulness and tolerance are significant concepts belonging to the order of Haji Bektashi Veli. "Good people are good people regardless of their language, religion, race" and "Look at the 72 nations with the same regard" are two famous sayings of Haji Bektashi Veli,

which illustrate his humanism. In Alevi society, the human being is valuable merely because of being human regardless of ethnicity, language or color. Further, Alevi tolerance embraces all human beings notwithstanding their wickedness and faults. In Haji Bektashi Veli's thought, human beings contain God in their essences as the mirror of God in the world. The center of human being is the mind but love and faith are also indispensable for humans. In the unity of human-universe-God, everything that exists in the universe is placed in the human being by the divine way, such that the human being is expressed as a microcosm of the universe (macrocosm). The human body is the area of conflict between good and evil. The good side (soul) is expected to overcome the evil side (nafs). For the sake of human beings, God created the universe; human being with the divine essence of God has dignity, nobility, honor and freedom because of being the center of the universe. This teaching evidently has striking similarities to Western humanism, as well as important differences, which will be explored in this thesis.

Humanism is a human-centered movement that developed mainly among the intellectuals in Italy in the sixteenth century after the Renaissance. It is a rational structure that sees human being as the highest value, advocates that human actions and morality can be rational and natural without reference to a supernatural field and prioritizes human freedom. Humanism attained a more philosophical structure with the enlightenment age and became a life principle. According to humanism, all problems can be solved by human beings without appeal to supernatural entities and human being is in the center of life, so humanism eliminates religion and the thought of God. Contemporary atheistic, materialistic, socialistic, naturalistic and Marxist thoughts are commonly associated with humanism. The progression of humanism becomes a secular way for the interpretation of the universe after modernization.

In contrast, it is a deeply debated issue whether Alevism can be secular. While there are interpretations that efface the connection between Alevism-Bektashism and mystical Islam, the concept of syncretism (combining of different beliefs),

gnosis and heterodoxies of Alevism debilitate these kinds of assertions. For this reason, some authors criticize the compatibility of Alevism with Humanism. The details of connection between the features of Alevism Humanism are interpreted in this thesis.

This thesis consists of seven chapters. The first chapter is introduction. The second chapter gives fundamental information about Alevism-Bektashism. In this chapter, the general evaluation of Alevism-Bektashism, its origins, rituals of worship, esoterism, the institution of dedelik, brotherhood, and ostracism are given in detail. This chapter also includes an account of the syncretic and heterodox structure of Alevism-Bektashism. In this direction, the Alevi-Bektashi tradition is presented with a view to the transformation in the order from the beginning up to the establishment of the Turkish Republic.

Humanism in Anatolia is the topic of the third chapter. In this chapter, the improvement of Sufism is outlined through a narrative of the historical events behind it. The manifestation of human beings is emphasized in the unity of human-universe-God. Furthermore, the life and thought of Haji Bektash Veli, who is an emblem of the struggle for the meaning and construction of the Alevi-Bektashi character in the studies about Alevism-Bektashism is also presented.

The fourth chapter is about the bases of the philosophy of human beings in Alevi belief. Human beings are placed at the center of the universe in the ontological and epistemological thought of Alevism. In addition, love is the supporter of human reason and knowledge in Alevi thought, and people who stay away from love and reason cannot be happy and cannot achieve the divine purpose.

The fifth chapter is centered on a comparison of Alevi humanism with humanism in the West. In the West, the transition from God-centered to human-centered thought is contributed to the philosophy of human being by Christian humanists and secular humanists. The most prominent figure in Western humanism is Erasmus who investigated ancient manuscripts in light of the concepts of human rationality, morality, and free will. The development of materialistic and

naturalistic worldviews against religion has led to the improvement of secular humanism. Most notably, Feuerbach searches for a philosophical anthropology to replace the old humanist philosophy, including the effort to “naturalize freedom” assumed in his final writings.

In the sixth chapter, other philosophically relevant dimensions of Alevism are indicated. Among these, Alevi-Bektashi orders’ pantheistic features are examined. The Alevi reconstruction process starting with immigration to urban areas following the foundation of the Turkish Republic and the Alevi-Bektashi identity formation up until today are discussed. The structure of the Alevi-Bektashi tradition in different stages is outlined in relation to the shifting characteristics of it. Furthermore, in this chapter, the stages which have shaped the economic, social and political dynamics in Turkey and whose reflection in the self-identification process of the Alevi-Bektashi can obviously be comprehended are pointed out. Individuality is usually the product of social activity, talks about a spontaneous philosophy, which is proper to everybody. This philosophy includes language, common sense, good sense and also folklore, namely beliefs, superstitions, opinions, way of seeing things and acting. The last chapter is the concluding chapter.

CHAPTER 2

DESCRIPTIVE ACCOUNT OF ALEVISM

The name Alevi can be descriptive of loving Ali and following the path of Ali's family. The use of 'Alevi' in Turkish, is similar to use of 'Musevi', (disciple of Moses (Musa), or Jewish); and 'Isevi', (disciple of Jesus (Isa), or Christian), the names for two other major religious groups, named after their prophets. However, in Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Iran, Egypt this term has a different meaning like 'being a member of Ali's lineage.

Ali Ibn Abi Talib is the most fundamental figure of the Alevi-Bektashi route. He is the son of Prophet Muhammad's uncle whom the prophet loved very much. Ali is Prophet Muhammad's cousin and also became his son-in-law after marrying the prophet's daughter, Fatima. He is the first to declare his faith in Muhammad's prophethood; hence he became the first Muslim. Ali is the closest human being to Muhammad. Ali joined all the combats alongside Muhammad and they did not leave each other all their lives. Ali's courageous performances became the topic of tales and legends. Şah-ı Merdan or the Lion of Allah are the other names of Ali. Ali is reputed to be very well-informed in religion and he is also known as a very good speaker. When Islam progressed to become the basis of a state and reached the power of self-preservation, Ali left his sword to serve humanity. He was not concerned with the state and the Sharia but with the human being and his/her rights. Ali did not focus only on the words of Quran; its essence was more important than its words for him. He thought that violence should be replaced by peace and human beings should live happily and brotherly, sharing their opportunities with each other. He was Muhammad's intended successor, and the first caliph, but opponents stole this right from him, so he became the fourth caliph. After the death of Muhammad, Ali continued to read

and write, and to rush to the aid of people instead of fighting for power. He fought against injustice and corruption all his lifetime. When he became caliph, he continued his modest life and ruled over people with justice and fairness. (Özcan, 2011) Muhammad had in mind the leadership of Muslims to continually stem from his family line (Ahl al-Bayt) starting with Ali, Fatima, and their two sons, Hasan and Husayn. Ali and his sons are considered the first three imams, and the other nine of the 12 imams (saints of Alevism) are derived from Husayn's blood line. (Yaman & Erdemir, 2006, p. 107)

The problem of caliphate and the sorrow of Ahl al-Bayt (Ali's descendants) had a big emotional impact on the birth of Alevism. The "sorrow of Ahl al-Bayt" refers to the battle of Kerbela in which all of Ali's descendants, with the exception of one, were slain. The most significant occasion that Alevism draws on in its development in the political and intellectual sense and enables it to extend to surrounding nations is the Kerbala Event. The masses who suffered from violent and arbitrary practices of the rulers wanted to revive Ali's fair rule. Ali became a figure, representing all the oppressed masses.

The majority of the Alevis-Bektashis live in the Republic of Turkey, but there are also large Alevi-Bektashi societies in the Balkans, including Albania (an essential center in the history for Bektashism), Macedonia, Bulgaria, and northern Greece. They have great populations in Western Europe, particularly Germany and Austria. The Alevi groups are never a homogenous ethnic, social, and religious society, and the recent resources reveal the difference among their numerous communities and sub-communities. In Turkey, the Alevi groups generally characterize themselves as Turks (after the foundation of the Turkish Republic), but there are also populations which qualify themselves as Kurds, Zaza and Arab. Arab Alevis (Nusayri) reside mostly in Hatay. There is much debate as for the Anatolian population but today groups such as the "Kızılbash", "Abdal", "Yörük", "Zaza", "Barrak", "Avşar", "Nalçı", "Tahtacı", "Çepni", "Sıraç", "Amucalı", "Bedreddini", "Tekere", "Nusayri" and "Bektashis" are

called by the name of Alevi. (Yaman & Erdemir, 2006, p. 108) Furthermore, Dressler uses the term 'proto-Alevi' for the pre-twentieth century religious communities which were called by diverse names such as Abdals, Çepnis, Kızılbashs and Tahtacıs but shared similar rituals and practices because being an Alevi is a rather a modern notion and hence must be used as an umbrella term. (2003, pp. 109-154) Because of its human centered philosophy, it has brought different kind of groups together. Instead of the former, pejorative term Kızılbash ("Red-Heads"), Alevi groups changed this term to call themselves Alevi. The word "Kızılbash" appeared in the 15th century in the time of Sheikh Haydar of the Safaviyya order; it means "redhead" and refers to the headgear of Haydar's politico-religious troopers, a red cap with twelve folds that represents the Twelve Imams of the Shia. (Melikoff, 2004, p. 179) Because of their opposition to the authority, the Kızılbash were labeled 'zındık', 'heretics', 'rafizi', 'schismatic' (or 'Shi'a'), 'mülhid', 'atheist' and even 'kafir', 'unbelievers' during the Ottoman period.(Stoyanov, 2011, p. 172) Alevis are a sub-ethnic and cultural community in Anatolia, totaling in the millions.

2.1 Alevi Unorthodoxy

Alevism and Bektashism are shaped by the interaction with different traditions, and Alevism never was a homogeneous congregation but has always had a diversity of sub-groups. Alevi unorthodoxy allows for supporting a humanistic worldview without discriminative irrational thoughts. The primitive collective principles were moved to the Anatolian land by people wandering to the west en mass; and came to life as a creative basis in the formation of humanistic philosophy in Central Asia. Owing to the demeanor of involving all, it can be assumed that Alevism is an outcome of all reconciliation. Like a bee, Alevism takes the essence of every flower and expresses the most beautiful aspects of all cultures and beliefs within its body. (Aktürk, 2015, p. 55)

Akpınar considers that Alevi society exhibited unorthodox practices owing to the presence of different versions of Islam in Anatolia in both Seljuk and Ottoman

periods. (1993, pp. 79 - 81) Alevism-Bektashism was introduced into the previous Turkish creed in Central Asia. The various qualities of Alevism preserved the Central Asian Turkish beliefs, carried to Anatolia by wandering dervishes who had adopted them into their religion. When Turkish tribes had begun to accept Islam, they had not entirely abandoned their pre-Islamic traditions. They combined different traditions and religions with their recently accepted religion.

The highest reason for the spread of this humanistic and religious orientation was the traveling dervishes who hailed from Khorassan to Anatolia. The establishment of the Seljuk Empire led to the eastern border being opened to waves of immigrants. For the period of the first half of the 13th century, the Mongols started moving westward, transmigrating not only nomadic groups, but also residents from Iran and Khorasan, to try to find places in the Seljuk cities of Anatolia. The penetration of the clannish structure created a polarity between nomadic and semi-nomadic societies. In the sovereignty of orthodox Islam, the migrant groups adopted a quite different form of humanistic Islam, being under the reconciliation of diverse cultures.

The Bektashis are claimed to have aggregated in their order a considerable number of humanistic doctrines and practices of heterogeneous origins, containing not only Shiism and Sufism but also conserving pre-Islamic and non-Islamic impression and customs originating in Christianity and antique religions as well as ancient Turkic elements. (Birge, 1937, p. 133) Alevism-Bektashism met with particular types of native traditions including ancient Turcoman religions such as Celestial God, Shamanism, Manichaeism, Buddhism, Nestourianism, Orthodox and Catholic Christianity, and Judaism, Mysticism, Hurufiyya, Shia as well as previous Pagan and Christian ideas of Neo-Platonism. Shamanism and Buddhism gave supernatural form to this faith in terms of miracles, belief in alteration of shape and anthropomorphism. This kind of anthropomorphism also overcomes the alienation that is criticized as religions' negative effects on human beings by Feuerbach. Moreover, the Iran Hurufism's

themes in the 15th Century and the Shiism of Safevis in the beginning of the 16th Century characterized Alevism-Bektashism with human centered thoughts. The Foundation of Alevi and Bektashi faith is combined with these belief systems. There were also ideas and practices promoted from Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism such as incarnation (hulul) and transmigration (tenasüh). These similarities will be detailed in the section below.

From the humanistic reconciliation of all religions, beliefs and understandings mentioned, a belief system and a cultural form of understanding have emerged: a syncretism called Alevism-Bektashism. (Ocak, 1996, pp. 210-211) Despite similarities between these diverse belief systems, Alevism created unique viewpoint that is focusing on a human-centered idea.

Because of performing heterodox orders, Alevism-Bektashism is a multidimensional belief system. The transformative form of Alevism in combination with other faiths and the conservation of its naturally syncretizing position in history, provide the context for multi-communication and humanism. Hence, the basis of a comprehensible Alevi faith structure is centered on the essential concepts of syncretism and heterodoxy. Ahmet Yaşar Ocak explains Alevism as a syncretic faith because of Turkish heterodoxy. (2000, pp. 210-211) He expresses the sociological phenomenon of societies that preserve specific cultures and advance within these traditions for eras. For the period of this cultural exchange, the society crosses through to a different tradition; at the same time it does not give up the relationship with its previous principles, conserves some structures even as centuries pass and modifies ancient beliefs as well as recent religion. Apparently, this occurrence was experienced within several Turkish communities, while entering the Islamic beliefs in diverse periods and places. When Turkish communities confirmed the recent religions, they conserved the structures of their prior principles. A similar progression was experienced in the Islamic period. (Ocak, 2000, p. 55)

The word 'heterodox' is used for groups in the religious structure that display a differentiation from the basic beliefs and principles of orthodox Islam. The origin of the word is French and 'heteros' means different and the meaning of 'doxa' is doctrine or thought. At the same time, the term 'heterodox' can be used in the same meaning as "contradictory, opposing, and non-communal". Syncretism is mentioned by Christian theology by the seventeenth century the latest. It means an effort to unify variances and bring about a union between divergent cults or philosophical thoughts. Erasmus utilized the word in the sense of harmonization among Christians; yet, syncretism was firstly used in a religious argument to mean the unifying of theological dissimilarities, at a church convention by Calixtus. (Kamstra, 1967) Syncretism sounds like an affirmative policy aiming to involve encounter and support tolerance but it is impacting how pejoratively the word is utilized by the supporters of the so-called correct belief. "It is seen as a loss of identity, an illicit contamination, a sign of religious dissolution." (Veer, 1994, pp. 196-197) It was commonly viewed as a deception of doctrines, or as an effort to protect unity at the expense of truth in theological arguments. Syncretism is perceived as a disruption of the truth. (Veer, 1994, pp. 196-197)

Syncretism is commonly utilized in history as if it were a translucent, expressive term, referring to the "borrowing, affirmation, or combination of notions, symbols, or practices of one religious custom into another by a process of selection and pacification." (Veer, 1994, p. 196) Moreover, the word 'syncretism' includes transformative politics for identity; for instance, Alevi groups do not categorize themselves either as a cult, purely a syncretism or any other definitions like culture, philosophy, etc.

2.1.1 Shamanism

Shamanism is believed to have had one of the predominant impacts on Alevism among ancient beliefs in the process of its formation, that give shape to the original religion in rural Alevi customary. Irene Melikoff describes Alevism as

“Islamized Shamanism.” Shaman Turks were influenced by many religions, mostly by other syncretic ones; still, they have revealed the most resistant attitude towards Islam. (Melikoff, 2004, pp. 149-150) Melikoff coined the term “chamanisme islamisé.” certain practices, such as special ways of treating the bones of sacrificial animals, the importance of the threshold, and the ceremonial staff sometimes used by Alevi divine leaders (dede) during the cem, were possibly derived from shamanism. When Shamanism and Alevism are compared, the most important God of Shamanism is Ülgen Ata who is the same as Ali in terms of humanistic features. Ülgen Ata's sons and assistants represent Ali's sons and 12 imams. Selman and Kamber like Ali’s helpers replaced Ülgen Ata’s helpers. (Yörükan, 2005, p.86)

Furthermore, Alevi murshids mythical figures also have extraordinary capacities: their souls can travel to different bodies, they fly into the sky; they can direct the powers of nature, do not burn in a fire; they can do magic, heal illnesses. (Ocak, 2000, p. 95) Shamanism was a religious-magical system in the environs of a magical and influential character of a Shaman or ‘Kam’; Kam or dedes have holy lineage features; the appropriate one from their family becomes the next Kam or dede. Like humanistic Alevi saints, Kam’s magical abilities were not utilized for malicious action. Ocak continues by defining Kam as not merely a sorcerer or a physician. As it is seen in the history of Turks and Mongols, a Kam has an active and powerful role in political life as well. (Ocak, 2000, p. 71) Cem ritual also have similarities to the Shaman’s ceremony; for instance, women and men come together and sit in a circle, drink and dance in a trance in rituals indoors at night. (Melikoff, 2004, pp. 149-150)

2.1.2 Manichaeism-Buddhism- Zoroastrianism

Melikoff indicates that these dervishes involved in their principles not only many properties of pre-Islamic Turkic shamanic opinions but also properties of other religions, such as Manichaeism and Buddhism. (2004, 77) Manichaeism has moral rules similar to the fundamental rule of Alevism to “be in control of your

hand, tongue, and loin.’ In addition, promise to commit in a cem made for life to enter the sect has similarities with the initiation ritual of religion in Manichaeism. (Melikoff, 2004, p.77)

The transmigration is called the continuation of a person's soul with the transition to another body after death. According to Alevi belief, Hz. Ali was found in the body of Haji Bektashi Veli and Haji Bektash will take place in Abdal Musa's body after his death (Ocak, 2000, pp. 185-186) The incarnation that is generally described as the transfer of things to God or the incarnation of the body, especially the embodiment of a human appearance, has a close relationship with Buddhism and Zoroastrianism. (Ocak, 2000, p: 200) Like Alevism, Buddhism has the belief in the incarnation of the soul even though Buddhist perception of the soul is dissimilar from Islam. The name Buddha symbolizes enlightenment indicating an individual who is independent of the ties of the physical world and reaches the perfect state of mind free from confusion and contamination of the world. Similarly, Alevism’s perfect man or mature man dies before his death; he/she purifies passions, desires, ego, self and everything in the universe so he/she wants to unite with God without physical or other worries. Zoroastrianism regulated a ritual in special times of the month. During the ritual, wine was drunk, quatrains were discoursed and instruments were played. This ritual was termed ayin-i cem in the sense of celebrating in Persian language. (Korkmaz, 2000, pp. 206-207)

2.1.3 Christianity

The Alevis’ monogamy and their severe restrictions on divorce can show the effect of Christianity. Also, the drinking of alcohol and a kind of cleansing from sin during the cem ritual may be traced to the practices of Christians. Moreover, the community of Alevism states the holy trinity of Haqq (God)-Muhammad-Ali similar to the Holy Trinity in Christianity. Alevism’ consubstantiality is belief in having the divine essence in all three that only comes to be perfect together with the other two. (Goldziher, 1981, p. 230) The three persons of the Trinity in

Christian theology mean the Christian Godhead as one God in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The individuality of the three persons is stated in Bektashi poetry; for instance, Pir Sultan Abdal's quatrain supports the trinity claim;

God is one: Allah – Muhammad – Ali,

This name fills the entire world.

This way is the way of Allah – Muhammad – Ali

Come into the shrine of Muhammad – Ali.

In Alevi belief, it will be seen that Prophet Muhammad and Ali do not equal God and both of them have the same divine essence that was given by God. They only reflect God's light; in addition, all things in the universe were created by God so they have God's divine essence. Lastly, if the human's behavior is not accepted within the Bektashi order, the human becomes a fallen, which is considered as a kind of punishment that is similar to the ostracism applied to the Christian people. According to Birge, the twelve apostles are also connected with the twelve imams. (1937, pp. 243-245) The Alevi-Bektashi trinity, the Christian trinity, or the twelve apostles and twelve imams are similar in number; yet, there is no analogy of belief or names.

2.1.4 Shiism

Alevi-Bektashi principles are also influenced by a Shiite and pantheistic character, although the Shiite impact may be a quite late improvement of the sixteenth century. Cahen asserts that before the Safaviyya officially systematized Shiism, the discrepancy among Shiism and Sunnism was not recognized within the societies. (1998, p. 218) Without a hesitation, the verbal practice and active literatures are essential in Alevism Shah Ismail's Shia learning prepared him to comprehend the mysticism and writings of his period, and he wrote quatrains both in Turkish and Persian; he adopted Shaman beliefs and Turcoman traditions. (Melikoff, 2004, p. 179) Shah Ismail is a special leader who also gave direction to Alevi feelings, literatures and movement in the fifteenth century. The

effects of Shia were seen in Alevi-Bektashis' nefes. For both Alevism and Shiism, there is a divine human need for a leader such as a sheik, pir or murshid with divine manners for the purification of one's nature. As with humanism, the human mind is really important for Alevism; moreover, it can reach the maturity of knowing the creator and creatures of the content only with his/her guider. (Gölpınar, 1987, p. 274) The human being reflects God's justice in human actions. Despite the fairness of God, the human being is a free servant who does not face any compulsion to his/her actions in order to take responsibility of the behaviors' results. The effects of Shia were really significant for Alevism's rebellious character; yet, Alevism was not equal to Shiism as much as to Sunnism because the basic religious laws are stricter for Sunnism and Shiism than they are for Alevism. In short, Alevi philosophy has been affected by diverse belief systems and thoughts for centuries but it does not seem to equal any faith because of its special syncretic and heterodox features.

2.2 Esoterism

Alevism is a way of mysticism that focuses on the love of God instead of fear of God. It also finds its essence in human love because of believing in the manifestation of God in human beings. Alevism accepts the essence of the Qur'an on the basis of human love. For example, "Let there be no compulsion in religion. Truth stands out clear from error; whoever rejects evil and believes in Allah" (Qur'an 2: 256) Esoterism contributes to the content of humanist Alevi philosophy for tolerance and softness without strict rules. Alevism and Sunnism were both influenced by Islamic Mysticism and Khorasan dervishes and originated from the same social and religious historical events. However, despite the similar ground, they developed alternative understandings of social and religious history and alternative forms of mythologies. Both Alevism and Sunnism assert that their faith, worship and teachings are more accurate than the other. Alevis interpret the Quran in an esoteric (batini), allegoric, and symbolic manner and do not accept the external practices of Islam and its five pillars. Exotericism (zahiri) contains holy performances and rules that are expected to

standardize human actions in the world and are easily comprehensible and achievable by the common people, as different from esotericism. The aim of the exoteric principles is centered on acquiring a satisfactory residence for the soul in the eternal life by following the approved actions and worships of the structured religion.

Alevis believe that the Sunnis distorted early Islam by ignoring, misunderstanding, or altering important passages of the original Quran, especially those dealing with Ali and ritual practice. There is no such thing as a complete and untouched version of the Quran because the text officially compiled by the Caliph Osman and then the other texts were demolished.

Unlike Sunni Islam, the Alevism of Turcoman populations was a folk Islam which was not as harsh in its interpretation and application of the devout principles; in this form of Islam, ancient dogmas and backgrounds are seen to play a more dominant role than Islamic rules. Alevi villages lack mosques and an important part of the Alevi Rituals do not contain the practice of prayer five times a day, mosque-attendance, fasting in Ramadan, undertaking pilgrimage to Mecca or reciting from the Quran. The meaning behind fasting in Ramadan is not abstinence from material foods but purifying the soul from the ego or self (nafs) and evil; moreover, hajj is not a bodily visit to Mecca but rather a mystical path for the heart. Alevis have their own prayer place termed cemevi and their own cultural and spiritual practices unique to their faith.

Alevism is commonly contingent on an oral tradition and reaching the historical documents is very problematic. In addition, it seems especially hard to get information when dealing with the closed social formation due to the historical and social conditions behind its formation and its subjection to governing opinions. Alevi populations, who have lived a closed social life for centuries have confirmed the information about their beliefs and historical pasts as sacred and viewed showing them to people who are not one of them as a taboo. Therefore, the weight of the oral tradition and social structure, the limited

amount of written pieces among Alevis has gained an almost holy status. (Yaman & Erdemir, 2006, p. 16) The oral tradition and closed social structure compose the secret that is the preservation against the potential threats of the environment. Alevism continued with oral and written resources.

Verbal customs rely on the information of dedes and their practices; Alevi groups lacked academic organizations so their beliefs, customs, structures, rituals and practices were passed down from generation to generation by dedes (spiritual leaders of Alevi groups). Dedes continue to be the spreaders of the oral tradition. The principle's studies of human, life, belief, and culture are transferred to the public by the discourse of dedes.

2.2.1 Yesevism

The sheik of Alevism was Ahmed-i Yesevi, who, by mixing pre-Islamic components with Islam, established a religious orientation that was diverse from Orthodox Sunni Islam. Ahmed-i Yesevi sent his representatives to Anatolia and the Balkans to spread his original religious understanding. Yesevi's ideas, which appeared as a heterodox form of Islam, spread to Anatolia and the Balkans through the efforts of these colonizer dervishes. Vefatism, Babatism, Haydarism, Khorasani Melametism are different names of Yesevism, but The Khorassan Qalandari's approach was enhanced. These will be discussed in more detail in chapter 3.

The important leader of Alevism, one of Yesevi's students, Haji Bektashi Veli came to Central Anatolia to Suluca Karahöyük, which is the town known by the name of Haji Bektashi today. Muhammad, Ali, Hasan, Husayn, the twelve imams represent the figurative characters of Alevism. On the other hand, Baba Ishak, Baba Ilyas, Sheikh Bedrettin, Haji Bektashi Veli, Balım Sultan, Nesimi, Mansur Al-Hallaj and Pir Sultan Abdal are effective murshids of Alevism in terms of their influences. (Aydın, 2008, pp. 307-308)

2.3 Alevi Worship

In Alevi society, there is no compulsion; everything is based on volunteering. Alevism desires a kind of social system in which everything is shared, where all human beings live happily without oppression. Alevi societies and religious communities have their own significant religious holidays and celebratory times. Alevis also have divine worship and holiday times. The cem ceremonies are attended regularly. Besides these ceremonies, nevrüz, hidirellez, Muharram Fasting, Hızır Fasting, banquet of sacrifice, and Abdal Musa offering meal are also apprehended as significant times for Alevis. Dede is a spiritual leader of the community who can keep the cem community reliant on a standardized version of Alevi rituals. Different kinds of cem ceremonies exist; for example, promise to commit (ikrar), (brotherhood) musahiplik, rite of integration (görgü), rite in cem (dar). (Özcan, 2011, p. 255) Alevis have their own holy book called 'buyruk' that prescribes the doctrine and rituals and was written by significant guides. Buyruks are not ordinary books for Alevis but educate humans to be perfect human. Alevis also have many liturgical hymns called nefes. Throughout the cem ceremonies, the quatrains of Pir Sultan, Shah Ismail Hatayi and Kul Himmet are recited, semah (ceremonial dance) is performed, meal is spread around, and victims of Kerbela are remembered. Moreover, a community court is established where the dede publicly evaluates the correctness and guiltiness, of certain individuals and the individuals who are found guilty are penalized. It is imperative to submit to the penalty; otherwise the ostracism of the "guilty" person becomes unavoidable.

Alevism respects the basic commandments of all religions. Racism, nationalism and fanaticism have no place in the humanistic Alevi worldview. Being independent on religious commandment, the Alevi ritualistic credence is centered on chains of moral guidelines rather than exoteric stresses on faith; Alevi groups live obeying Islam's inner or immanent meaning; that is why Alevism is comprehended like an esoteric faith. Alevism is the path of (God) Haqq-Muhammed-Ali. (Özcan, 2011, p. 228) Dedes express that Prophet Muhammad and Ali are created from the same divine light, both of them being

one, them being brothers (musahip, ritual brothers). Alevism is designed for the love of Haqq-Muhammad-Ali. The comprehension of the principle and its practices rely on the confirmation of the essence of grounds (the quintessence means to know human innermost divine self). Style of application and ceremonies also exist in Alevism (as sketched above) but the esoteric sense is essential. Haji Bektashi Veli also stresses God's esoteric content that is considered as the ground of being the perfect human. The perfect human becomes a representation of the supreme creature after the accomplishment of dying before death or being God with God. Not only Sunni Mystics like Nakshi Sufis (who conform to religious laws such as the five times prayer in a day), but also Alevi come from the same Sufi tradition and Ahmet Yesevi; yet, Alevism as an Islamic principle is assumed as the road of the sect, targeting esoteric unity with God during improvement toward the perfect human or mature human. According to Bektashi Baba, it is a way in which everyone is required to use their mind, questioning and discussing in place of worshipping or retelling the names of God day and night. (Keçeli, 1996, p. 23) In the absence of critical thought, human beings cannot go beyond performing stereotypes of behavior as mere imitations of the movements around them. In the uncritical actions of those who do not have a philosophy and who do not filter what they are told through their minds, nothing performed differs from what is spoken to them. Esoterism is understood as an activity that enables people to make sense of their religious life. Esoterism contributes to the content of Alevi philosophy for the road of truth.

2.3.1 Cem

One of the significant traditional practices of Alevism is the cem ceremony that is a kind of invitation for human beings to live a life full of meaning and happiness by giving meaning to life and to the world, focusing on the disappearance or minimization of negativity in human life such as resentment, selfishness, anger and ambition. The term 'cem' means to come together. The cem ceremonies are shown under numerous altered terms, contingent on their intentions, geographic areas, and diverse ethnicities. (Özcan, 2011) These

variances are a reflection on the cultural richness of these areas and the connection of different traditions. Because of their cultural and sociological importance, cem rituals are believed in a wealth in Anatolia. The cem ritual has various roles: the first one is the basically religious role. These rituals are gatherings of Alevi followers who come together to worship and establish a community court to resolve public difficulties. Ceremony also has social functions, “namely education serving community-building. The rate at which participants can translate the things heard here in their everyday life indicates the extent to which they have identified with the idea.” (Sipos & Csaki, 2009, p. 49) The public problems and opinions are debated so the people have the opportunity for socializing to share their faith, comprehension and questions. (Kaygusuz, 2007, p. 8) All men, women and children together have a place in cem houses. Erkan is a community court consisting of equal numbers of men and women, who are mature and valued public participants. For centuries, Alevis have not need government’s court of justice because they have always solved their moral problem. It is directed by a leader known as dede, who is associated with honored heredities, and attended by a musician. Moreover, after the ceremony people free from their spiritual dirtiness because the most inventive and distinguished of the Alevi practices of faith is certainly the cem that implies human’s individual voyage to his internal side to purify his ego. There are different types of cem such as promise to commit (ikrar), rite of integration (görgü), rite in cem (dar).

According to the Alevi faith, most of the traditional practices of Alevism, including cem, are based on the Kırklar Cemi. The Assembly of the Forty (Kırklar Meclisi) is a collecting of almost forty people comprising of the Prophet Muhammad, the Ahl al-Bayt and the others close to them. (Yaman & Erdemir, 2006, p. 76) According to the Alevi faith, most of the traditional practices of Alevism, including cem, are based on the Kırklar Cemi. Cems are generally held on Thursday nights. When Alevi dedes travel to their faraway pupils, the cem is declared by the one (peyik) who is accountable for it. This is followed by the

distribution of food termed lokma which is delivered by the public cems. The people, who join in the ritual, get lokma. Throughout this gathering, mystical dancing of semah and music played by the saz (Turkish instrument) are performed. Dede sits on the seat of honor of the cemevi. The cem ritual is a divine ceremony that consists of twelve services. The first step of this ceremony is its beginning with consent (razılık). Without receiving the mutual consent of dede and the public, the cem cannot be happening. (Yaman & Erdemir, 2006, p. 76)

For the period of the cem worship, the quatrains of Pir Sultan Abdal, Shah Ismail Hatayi are recited, semah is completed, lokma is spread around, and victims of Kerbala are commemorated. The Dede elects who is correct and who is mistaken in front of the public, and the guilty individuals are disciplined. It is commanding to obey the punishment; otherwise ostracism becomes inevitable. Cem is not only praying, but it also includes various purposes for Alevi as a teaching organization and has been a place for solving social complications for centuries. Furthermore, cem represents equality, solidarity, tradition, purification and enlightenment. In cem ceremony, as the way of purification of evils, all human beings come as death and they turn back to their houses as alive. (Özcan, 2011, p. 254)

2.3.2 Semah

The semah, which is a spiritual dance, is an essential part of cem and is performed by turning and swirling. It is a set of mystical and visual body actions in rhythmic harmonization. Semah is performed by men and women to the accompaniment of the saz or the lute played by sincere musicians. They are contained in the twelve central services found in cem services, religious practices completed by members of Alevi-Bektashi. (Yaman & Erdemir, 2006) This dance of devotion has many varieties. The several forms of semah take place in Alevi-Bektashi groups with separate musical features and rhythmic productions. One regular characteristic is the performance of the ceremony by both men and

women, side by side. Semah ceremonies are originated from the perception of unity with God as part of a natural cycle: people come from God and return to God.

You are God. I am human. I came from you and bear your essence. I am not separate from you. The idea the action of turning both palms toward the sky and then reversing them so that they face the earth is the same. When the dancers put their palms in front of their faces during the semah, it means that they are looking at their own beauty in the mirror and therefore see divine beauty. There is a movement where the palms of both hands are turned to heaven and then brought to the chest and united over the heart. This is interpreted as God I am Adam, in other words God is in me, or God is in man. (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2017)

Probable relations to a shamanistic heritage can be noticed in the dance of cranes' movements. Shaman miracles converted into birds that then travel through the air. The transformation of human into bird is originated also in the wonders of Bektashi sheiks. For example, it is said that Haji Bektashi Veli journeyed from Khorasan to Anatolia in the form of a dove. (Markoff, 1993, p. 106) There are choreographies even within a unique public and the similar dance composition can be accomplished diversely by different personalities. As mentioned above, there are various forms of semah. One of them is performed in cem only among members as part of the twelve services; the other ones are completed independently of services to teach semah principles to a younger age group.

Identification with the universe: human has roamed the four corners of the world and he has found that a secret is hidden in the body of all creatures in heaven and earth, and all things give out a sound. He/she stepped out of his body, listened to the music and said to himself/herself: I have always lived on this Earth, and on this planet, but now the heaven and the earth are inside me. Wherever I look I observe my own beauty. Human entered the city of reason and there he caught sight of the prophet Muhammad. He/she entered the city of love, and there he caught sight of the majestic Ali. (Sipos & Csaki, 2009, p. 44)

Semahs are the most essential means for the spread of the Alevi-Bektashi custom. All practices, customary themes and experiences are distributed orally, and different types of art and literature linked with the tradition continue to

succeed. Semahs play an important part in developing and inspiring the traditional music culture.

2.3.3 Brotherhood (musahiplik)

Unlike Sunnism, Alevism has distinct kinship institutions such as brotherhood (musahiplik) or kirvelik. Two non-relative adult persons decide to be partners in Alevism, and then they start to be brothers in a cem ceremony; this kind of cem ceremony is called the rite of integration. Two non-related adult persons confirm that they are satisfied with each. Dede requests from the members that, if anybody has an objection to them, they would stand forefront and explain the objection. If there is a problem, dede finds a resolution to the problem and he prays for absence of damage and doing wickedness. After brothers' walking and greeting all people in the center of cem house, they return to their seats. (Yaman & Erdemir, 2006)

Brotherhood is much more important than blood relation because Alevis cannot contribute to/ participate in cem rituals without their brothers; and they have to help each other for all their lives. If one wants to borrow, the other one has to give money. In addition, one of the brothers cannot get married if the other one does not participate in the brother's wedding. In all important events, conditions, difficulties, illness, wedding, birth, death, musahip couples support and aid each other. This support is endless in that, once the link between the two men or women has been recognized by a dede, it is supposed to continue even into the after world, where the two men endorse one another to God on the Day of Judgment. (Özcan, 2011) Yet, this form of promise and backing is not valid to all Alevis because brotherhood is started by the dede, who must first know the pairs' readiness in terms of their mystical progression, certain age and mind maturity. Brotherhood institutions are based on the connection between Prophet Muhammad and Ali as well as Ahilik.

Brotherhood is important for three aspects; Sufism, morality and economy. The brothers become the passengers of a mystic path and overcome obstacles

together during lifetime. The essence of Sufism is morality so they have to be honest and moral towards each other. The brothers' behavior is exemplary and they thus contribute to the social environment and the development of the societies' moral values. In addition, the wealthier brother is responsible to help his/her poorer brother, so brotherhood institutes a kind of economical assurance. (Özcan, 2011, p. 274) However, brotherhood is rarely being maintained since the migration from rural to urban regions and modernization.

2.3.4 Male and Female

Alevism positioned the reinforcement for the side of humanitarianism with the human and for equality between man and woman. (Korkmaz, 1995, p. 50) The principles of equality, righteousness, and respect for all are noticeable features of Alevi groups and provide females a more appreciated position in their society than that of Sunni Islam. Because the Alevi approach objects to discrimination based on gender, race, faith, language, nationality and ideology, it shows the same respect to everyone, love and support to all societies. All human beings should have equal, same rights and responsibilities without discrimination of race, nationality, gender (male-female). (Özcan, 2011) Unlike Sunni practice, covering women's heads is not an obligation for Alevi women; moreover, women are not as isolated from society and the view of polygamy or one-sided divorce does not have place in Alevi doctrine. Women also partake equally in the religious life of the community. The acceptance of men and women's equalities are reflected in all aspects of life, and men and women come together in worshipping ceremonies such as cem and semah. (Yaman & Erdemir, 2006) Polygamy is not condoned by the standard Alevi system of marriage, contrary to the system of marriage in Sunni Islam. Females are free to dress in modern wear and can go into any occupation they choose. Alevi females are supported to get the best education they can. Duties performed in societies practicing Sunni Islam, such as paying money for getting the bride are not accepted behavior due to the importance attributed to human beings. Without consigning women to a position of inferiority, men and women are given equal rights to make

accusations concerning their wives or husbands; thus, if women's husbands' faultiness is proven, they can be ostracized (*düşkün*). The parity and inseparability of men and women in all public and religious areas of life lead to denigrations by outsiders who do not approve of these practices. (*mum söndü*) (Özcan, 2011)

2.3.5 Moral Codes and Sanctions

In Alevi belief, as in humanism, human beings are rational and free creatures without fatalistic beliefs. Alevism also rejects the imposition of religious dogma and does not directly accept all Islamic ethics without hesitation. Moral values are evaluated by the human mind. Alevism is viewed as the authentic, worldwide religious creed, its normative side revolves around the contrary notions of good and bad. (Markussen, 2005, p. 89) The fundamental rule of Alevi standards is to “be in control of your hand, tongue, and loin.” Alevism expresses self-control by using the following moral code: The control of the hand forbids killing, stealing or violence against another human beings, animals, or nature; the control of the tongue forbids gossip, lies or speaking maliciously; the control of the loins, forbids adultery and non-consensual sex. These doctrines aim to deter people from immoral actions done with the hands, things done with the tongue and physical insults. Human being duty is to behave modestly and to feed, refine, mature and fill his spirit with love of God. (Özcan, 2011)

Alevi-Bektashi community is subject to authorizations in order to guarantee the social orders. This sanction is called ostracism. However, for one to be regarded as an ostracized soul, one must be questioned in a public forum. (Er, 1998, 49) Firstly, the crimes that will lead to ostracism in Alevism-Bektashism, are acts that violate the principles of control of the hand, tongue and loin, which is based on a certain moral structure, philosophy and way of being human. So, the reasons of ostracism can be offenses such as theft, killing, lying, being married to more than one woman, disrespecting the mother and father, fighting with the brother, offending, gossip, kidnapping, or forbidden earnings. Dedes and Alevi

society have equal rights in terms of the acts seen as deserving of ostracism, even though dedes are respected and mature. In these cases where the dede was guilty, such as divorcing from his wife, swearing, not knowing the Alevism teachings or failing to transfer teachings correctly, he was not different from his pupils. (Yaman & Erdemir, 2006, pp.70-71) As for the definition of ostracism in general, it is an ostracism that states that the person is guilty because his/her actions are wrong for Alevi ethic and the rules of the ground philosophy of the Bektashi order. (Kaygusuz, 2007, p.8)

There is a harsh punishment system that completely changes the social relations established among the people in Alevi Bektashi communities by isolation of the judged person from social life. The house of the ostracized is not visited; they are not saluted, and their salute is not taken, and no interest is shown in their funeral. If someone who is not ostracized continues to connect with the ostracized person, they also become ostracized. This penalty can be temporary or permanent depending on the results of the crime. The permanent penalties for offenses which are not possible to forgive are called as ostracism in the way of Bektashi whereas the term ‘müşkül’ is used for those whose punishment is temporary and who can be forgiven.

CHAPTER 3

HUMANISM IN ANATOLIA

Mystical Muslim intellectuals followed humanistic, rational and scientific discourses in their exploration for knowledge, and morality. A wide range of Alevi writings on love, poetry, history and philosophical theology show that Alevi understanding was open to the humanistic notions of individualism. Just as the grounds of humanistic principles have close relationship to ancient Greek philosophy, naturalism, rationalism, socialism and communism the bases of Alevism also includes various belief systems, thoughts, and philosophies. Throughout the history of understanding starting with human beings, many answers were given for the questions about what human is and the main goal of his/her existence.

In Alevism-Bektashism, human being's life does not depend only on the material world but also on the progress of human representation. The human being is only clarified by the dervishes' sect. The universe is created for the sake of the perfect human being (*insan-ı kamil*), a view that evidences the value attributed to the perfect human being in Alevism. The order of Haji Bektashi Veli seeks to eliminate the social, political, and cultural discriminations by the love of human beings, tolerance, equality and sharing. Haji Bektash Veli and the group of dervishes organized around him supported a human-centrism, regardless of all the socio-political, economic and traditional obstacles. His belief system is related to the humanity ideal lacking alienation.

The socio-anthropological circumstances such as ancient traditions, battles, invasions, and rebellions provided a path for the philosophical-historical organizations formed nearby the lives of the dervishes.

3.1 Historical Origins

The schemes of Alevi and Bektashi principles formed for humanity and society can be considered in light of the historical situations that were suitable to create the philosophical structure of Alevism and Bektashism with this practical attitude. As Alevism and Bektashism advocate the society's togetherness with a humanistic approach, it avoids the supremacy of authority and gains strength without political, financial, and military support. Alevism-Bektashism started to spread in Anatolia and western Iran and different cults appeared in the seventh-thirteenth century related to the period of the Qalandariyya. (Köprülü, 1993, p. 12) The origin of these cults and of the Sufi movement is Ismailism.

3.1.1 Ismailism

Early Ismaili philosophy dates back to the Fatimid period (fourth/tenth to sixth/twelfth century) in the Arabian world but the tradition was preserved and elaborated in Persian, in Persia and in Central Asia. (Nanji, 2003) The thought of Ismaili took its power from the oppressed workers, peasants and farmers. The violence and discrimination they faced included the Qur'an, hadiths and practice. As a solution, they questioned the Qur'an's rules on faith, worship and the status of man. Ismailism is not an extension or version of Islamic beliefs, but a violent reaction to the values and practices of Islam that are or are claimed to be violent and discriminatory.

In that respect, Ismailism emerged from the thoughts of Ali's rights and equality with Hussein's resistance against the tyrants, which concentrated on the common ground. They modeled the way Ali, Hussein and Abu Muslim came forward and sacrificed themselves. These leaders are needed; there is no Alevism without Ali, Hussein and the other leaders. (Özcan. 2011, p. 93)

The Ismailis overcame the difficulties they faced. During their uprisings, they learned to organize themselves for planned action and rebellion to defeat their

oppressors. By using these experiences, Ismailis became the pioneers of the theoretical and practical idea of Alevism, which aims to establish a rational public state based on brotherhood and equality. (Özcan, 2011, p. 14) The developed Ismaili beliefs were exported to Egypt, Syria, Khorasan, Maveräünnehir and Anatolia. Ismailis placed the refined values of the Hellenic, Iranian and Indian civilizations in place of Islamic provisions that did not comply with the conditions of the day and did not respect justice and rights. They called it “Ismailism”; its method depends on Western interpretation and its action depends on rebellion or resistance.

Ismaili cosmology adapts a Neoplatonic framework and integrates a manifestational cosmology. The starting point of which is the doctrine of *ibda*. “In its verbal form it is taken to mean 'eternal existention' to explain the notion in the Qur’an of God’s timeless command (Kun: Be!).” (Nanji, 2003)

According to the Ismaili interpretation, the process of creation can be said to take place at several levels. *Ibda* represents the initial level, which transcends space and time. However, *ibda* does not indicate a “specific act of creation”. Rather, it establishes a “dialogical mode” between God and his creation through the cycle of space and time. An Ismaili writer, Nasir Khusraw, describes this cycle as follows:

Time is eternity measured by the movements of the heavens,
whose name is day, night, month, year. Eternity is Time not
measured, having neither beginning nor end... The cause of Time
is the Soul of the World....; it is not in time, for time is
in the horizon of the soul as its instrument, as the duration
of the living mortal who is "the shadow of the soul", while
eternity is the duration of the living immortal - that is to
say of the Intelligence and of the Soul. (Nanji, 2003)

According to Nanji, this passage synthesizes two ways of understanding time: “time as cycle” and “time as arrow”. “Time as arrow” refers to linear time.

Linear time is an instrument of “the soul” and it defines the duration of mortal bodies. “Time as cycle”, on the other hand, refers to the reincarnation of souls. The reference to the “living mortal” as “the shadow of the soul” expresses the belief that while the body dies, the soul does not die, but re-enters the cycle of space and time until it is ultimately united with God through the perfection of human nature (which will be discussed in detail Chapter 4). Thus, according to Nanji, *ibda* “sets the stage for developing a philosophy of the manifestation of transcendence in creation.” Nanji notes that this understanding lies at the heart of Ismaili philosophy’s emphasis on “active engagement in the world”. (Nanji, 2003)

Such a synthesis is crucial to how the human intellect eventually relates to creation and how it ultimately becomes the instrument for penetrating through history the mystery of the unknowable God implied in the formulation of *tawhid*. Ismailism, operates cyclically. According to this typological view, the epoch of the great prophets mirrors the cosmological paradigm, unfolding to recover the equilibrium and harmony inherent in the divine pattern of creation. Prophets and, after them, their appointed successors, the imams, have as their collective goal the establishment of a just society. The function of the Prophet is to initiate the cycle for human society and of the Imam to complement and interpret the teaching to sustain the just order at the social and individual levels. (Nanji, 2003)

The Ismaili philosophy is non-dualistic because the spiritual and material realms are united under a higher genus; much like it is in Spinozism. Even though these realms are distinguished from each other in language and through reason, they represent elements of a whole. Further, each realm possesses its own hierarchy. A true understanding of God must also take account of His creation, and the linguistic and rational definition makes this (exoteric) understanding of God possible. “Ultimately, this discovery engages both the intellect (*‘aql*) and the spirit (*ruh*), functioning in an integral manner to illuminate and disclose truths (*haqa’iq*).” (Nanji, 2003)

3.1.2 Sufism

The subject of Sufism is the relationship between creator and created, that is grounded on morality and love. According to some commentators, the name

‘Sufi’ comes from the Greek word ‘sophos’ that means wisdom. The purpose of human being is to know God by using the human mind, intuition and love. One of God's names is ‘alim’; so are human beings who have the most knowledge and are closest to God (Özcan, 2011, p. 72)

Alevism is based on esoteric and mystical values that are the product of human mind and needs. Moral action depends on three preconditions: firstly, the human being must be sane and distinguish between right and wrong; secondly, the human must be free to choose the right action; lastly, the moral action should be continuous and constant. The esoteric mind is controlled by the command of an advanced conscience that shows the right path and makes human lives easier. The greatest treasure given to human, mind is the most distinctive characteristic of human being. There is no area of moral values that the human mind is afraid to explore, to challenge, to question, or to doubt, despite the order of Qur'an. Human mind is the most reliable guide for understanding the universe and making human choices. Furthermore, all moral principles' essence is the love that is the source of all virtues as patience, tolerance and generosity. Darkness or all evil is caused by the lack of love. The love starts with the love of appearances and matter and its maturity is completed with the invisible. In addition, Sufism is a political concept, a philosophical belief that aims to challenge and change the cruel rulers in a peaceful way and to free people from servitude. (Özcan, 2011, p. 92) Sufism is a good path in which human being can make right choices and reach the deep love of God. In Alevi mysticism, worship is not based on Sharia's rules, such as praying five times a day, fasting in Ramadan, alms or hajj; it is dependent on an honest life without expectation of awards from God. The first stage of Sufism is good morality to avoid negative emotions and behaviors such as lies, slander, anger, hatred, and arrogance.

3.1.3 Wahdat al-Wucud

Husayn Mansur Al-Hallaj who lived in 857-922, is the foremost powerful frontrunner of Sufism so his understandings shaped all Arab Sufis and Iran Sufis

like Ibn-Arabi, and Hodja Ahmet Yesevi in terms of Wahdat al-Wucud. (Uludağ, 1997, pp. 299-300) Mansur Al-Hallaj briefly combined all his beliefs with the concept of human, universe and God. The mystical union with God that is connected with human divine essence is again at the root of this belief. Plurality is seen as only the external side of entities; it is just a mirror image of the one in numerous forms and the one is God. The existences within all the universe as well as human beings are included in the One. There is not anything except God. He believed that he reached God and he became God and with God. Therefore, he said his most famous word ‘Ana al Haqq’. (I am the Truth) (Eyüpoğlu, 1992, pp. 113-115)

I saw my Lord with the eye of my heart.

He said, ‘Who are you?’ I said, ‘I am You.’

You are He Who fills all place

But place does not know where You are.

In my subsistence is my annihilation;

In my annihilation, I remain You. (Katz, 1978, p. 92)

He was publicly killed in Baghdad because he was blamed for perversion and propagandizing against the pilgrimage to Mecca. The perfect man of Al-Hallaj’s esoteric principles is the mirror image of God. Human being’s activities are in harmony with the will of God, as a holy unification with God. The love of the human being is a respect to the part of God being in human. The heterodoxy of Islamic Sufism was adopted by Turcoman nomadic dervishes such as Haji Bektashi Veli, Yunus Emre and Mevlana, containing the concepts of the perfect human, love of human beings and the unity of human-universe-God.

Mansur al-Hallaj’s impact on the construction of the heterodoxy of the Alevi orders, during the confirmation of Islam, is not to be underestimated. His system revealed the unity of the universe as the representation of the glorifying human being. The elimination of the separation between the creator and the created put human in the center of the universe. And, in the progression of time, Wahdat al-Wucud opened a door for human rights and democracy. (Melikoff, 1993, p. 320)

3.1.4 Khorasan Erens

Khorassan was a significant place as a source of the humanistic belief system. The studies on Sufism show that in the beginning of the century of Islam, disorder of political, sociological, economical and traditional transformations within the social organization began Sufism. It appeared as a spiritual response against all the destructive circumstances mainly in Khorassan. In addition to being the center of the Seljuk Empire, Khorasan was the center of mystical Iranian principles. The Battle of Kösedag between Mongols (the most powerful nation in the period of the regime of Hulagu) and the Seljuk Empire caused the collapse of the Seljuks. (Özmenli, 2014) Many of the Seljuks were put to the sword, and numerous palaces, buildings, houses and gardens were ruined by Mongol soldiers. The Hulagu's Mongol military service destroyed all heritages, buildings, places as well as human lives on their way. The number of deaths, victims, or injuries was rising from battle and the Seljuk's land burst into terrible bloodshed by Mongol soldiers. To escape from battle, the chaotic environment, poverty, absence of food, the residents' displeasure, the disturbance and anxiety, people became fascinated with mysticism, serenity and love. (Özcan, 2011, p. 244)

Khorasan Erens achieved the purpose of bringing together the numerous social groups, communities and races, inspiring human beings into disregard of worldly worries, which directed human beings to destruction. The colonizer dervishes from Central Asia originated ascetic missions on the model of Khorasan, mingled with the residents and inspired hope in them through the spiritual salvage they provided. Anatolian Turcoman protected their relation to this Central Asian city, which was a place of high traditional and systematic knowledge.

Under the outlook of Sufism and the label of such instructions as the Qalandariyya and Haidariyya, the babas spread esoteric thoughts among the nomadic and semi-nomadic Turcoman tribes, where Turcoman multitudes were

conserving their prior views and customs to an enormous magnitude while adapting to Islam. Again, the common people did not pay much attention to sacred men and leaders who extend the difficult and unexciting devout rules but were instead related more to and were influenced by the leaders/fathers who extended available devout understanding in which they established relations between the novel faith and ancient principles. The sacred sheiks reiterated the orders of their Ismaili leaders. (Özcan, 2011)

3.1.5 Qalandariyya

Qalandariyya emerged within the groups in Khorasan that were undermining the political and social commands by their system of living, dressing, and approaching the Islamic procedures in a certain way. The true Sufi message of love for human beings and love for God were interpreted by Qalandari dervishes. The humanistic disposition won over the hearts of hundreds of thousands of people. Qalandari dervishes contacted the crowds directly. Human beings served and loved them with the inspiration of eternal truth. “The whole universe is summed up in the human being. The Devil is not a monster waiting to trap us, he is a voice inside. Look for your devil in Yourself, not in the Others.” (Tabrizi, 2010)

Ocak declares that this approach is surveyed in the meaning of the term Qalandari which has come to suggest illegitimate, asymmetrical and disturbing practice. In fact, however, the term ‘Kalender’ expresses the principles of the tariqat in Qalandariyya. The letter of ‘kaf’ is contented with the hands, ‘lam’ with grace, goodness, beauty, pleasantness, ‘dal’ with religious, ‘ra’ with (riyazet (to break desire of nafs)) so that he who collects these features can be called ‘Kalender’. (Azamat, 2001, p. 254) Hence Qalandari united the concepts such as paying no attention to worldly concerns and ascribing value to godly love on the grounds of an esoteric construal of Islam. (Ocak, 1982, pp. 3-6) The major standard of Qalandariyya is not to own worldly connections and concerns for the future. Nomadic Qalandari separated themselves from worldly fears and

concerns about social stigmas, condemnation and shortages. (Köprülü, 1993, p. 12)

The approach of Qalandari sects disturbed the authorities such as the Seljuk and Ottoman Empires. The first religious and political occurrence in Anatolia was identified as the Babai uprising. (Köprülü, 1993, p. 13) The inventors of the uprising were the Turcoman Qalandari's who were composed of the supporters of the Vefai, Haydari and Yesevi belief and native people. The chaos triggered by the Mongol attack came suitably for the Babai revolution managed by Baba Ilyas. This rebellion assisted the collapse period of the Seljuk Empire.

3.1.5.1 Qalandariyya-Haidariyya-Bektashism Relationship

In the Anatolian region, for the liberation of humanity they motivated the esoteric utopia in which there were no private proprietorship, no social classes and no government. The Babai revolution against the Seljuk organization in the thirteenth century took place because the administration became alienated from its public so it exploited and oppressed the Anatolian people, forbidding them to speak Turkish under Persian and Arab influence. The initiator of the uprising, Baba Ilyas and his two caliphs Baba Ishak and Haji Bektashi Veli were also Qalandariyya. (Ocak, 1992, p. 205) Bektash was also the pupil of Lokman Parende, one of the students of Ahmed Yesevi. (Öztürk, 1986, p.886)

Concerning the relation between Bektashis and Qalandariyya, it was believed that Bektashism was a sect that was influenced by Qalandariyya. However, Bektashism is a division of Qalandariyya ascended with in its' order because of the supremacy of the sect of Haji Bektashi Veli. The Bektashi pictures exhibit Haji Bektashi Veli's style of clothes as similar to Qalandari dervishes. Furthermore, Haji Bektashi Veli and his student were Qalandari according to the quatrains and nefes in Bektashi texts. The important students of Haji Bektashi Veli were Abdal Musa and Kaygusuz Abdal, and the word 'abdal' means Qalandari. Haji Bektashi Veli had his own moral values, humanistic and

attractive personality, with love and dedication to human beings, without any worldly wealth, support or power.

Qalandariyya also inspired the Melamis movement; which possessed a human-centered belief and wide tolerance, without any condemnation or self or ego. Khorasan Melamis did not depend on asceticism (zühd) but love and a mystical contemplation (cezbe). In addition, Yesevism and Qalandaria came together for composing the sect of Haidariyya. Haji Bektashi Veli also was the sheik of Vefai-Haidariyya. (Ocak, 2000, p. 220)

The members of the Haidariyya sect wore jewelry for symbolic meaning; for example, the ring necklace exhibiting Hz. Ali or Kutbittin Haydar's servant, a tuft of hair on their heads overcoming nafs, the ring in their ears, not listening to every promise, the chain on their feet not walking on the way of superstition, ring attached to gender organs chastity. Furthermore, they do not cut their mustache because Kutbittin Haydar had a mustache but they shave the face owing to the idea of being the mirror of God. The bells were used to communicate with other dervishes. (Yazıcı, 1998, p. 35) Haji Bektashi Veli's style of dressing resembled the clothes of the dervishes' of Qalandariyya and Haidariyya. Yet, Qalandariyya-Haidariyya was dissolved within Bektashism with the growth of Bektashis later in the seventeenth century.

3.1.6 Hurufism

Hurufism contributed to humanistic beliefs by elevating human beings to the level of God. The formation of Bektashism was influenced not only by the sects but also the religious, socio-political and cultural belief structures, which were in a continuous movement. The many sources that were available in that period as well as the human imagination in Alevism-Bektashis played a role in the formation of Bektashism and post-Bektashi thought.

Hurufism is an informal Sunni sect established in Iran in the sixteenth centuries by Fazlullah from Esterabad, who chose to understand metaphysics through the

intuitive method of esoterism. (Bausani, 1992, p.357) This understanding attracted the attention of thinkers such as Mansur al Hallaj, Muhiddin Ibn Arabi and writers such as Sayyid Nesimi who reflected Hurufi thoughts in their works. The basis of the belief in Hurufism depends on the numbers and letters that are as accepted sacred and symbolized, which was the product of a faith that had existed since ancient times. According to the Hurufi belief formed around these numbers, God emerges in the face of man. The human being has twenty-eight lines on his face and these twenty-eight lines are the sum of the letters of the holy Quran. Then, as the human being ages, the number of lines increases to

thirty-two, and this number is associated with the Persian alphabet. The reason for making this association is to show that the Persian language is superior to Arabic language; hence the Persian written Cavidan-Name is superior to the Qur'an. (Muhtar, 1986, p.220) Furthermore, the Hurufi influence can be seen as effective in the interpretation of the letters that form the name of Muhammad. These letters are seen as shaping the human body, as 'mim' resembles the two hands; 'ha', the abdomen; and dal, the feet. (Coşan, 1996, p. 41)

In Hurufism, to express the human issue a little more clearly, God appears not only in the face of man, but also in the soul. The thirty-two letters in the Persian alphabet are actually a single letter. In every letter, there is the unity of being, Wahdat al-Wucud. Since each letter contains Earth, air, water and fire, the human being collects all the worlds in him/herself. God finds its creative maturity in human existence. (Melikoff, 1993, p.187) It can be seen that in Hurufi thought the Haji Bektash belief has taken place: that God does not have to be sought for anywhere else other than the human being, and when the human being can achieve God's knowledge and consciousness, God is reflected on the human face.

As it is known, numbers are also important in Bektashism. Three, five, seven, nine, twelve, and forties each have a different meaning. The use of numbers as symbols has been so effective in the Alevi Bektashi belief structure that these

symbols can be seen in almost every place of worship (dergah), especially in Haji Bektashi Veli' tomb or in the houses of people who have the belief of Alevi-Bektashi.

Hurufism's fast entrance into the Ottoman administration would make the Sultan Kanuni Süleyman to struggle to salvage his civilizations from distortion. Yet, regardless of several alterations, the related concepts between Hurufism and Bektashism like Wahdat al-Wucud and perfect human were transformed and took root. Before the influence of Hurufism, there was no mysticism of numbers in Bektashism and the unity of being turned out to be more prominent by changing anthropomorphism with pantheism. (Melikoff, 1993, pp. 170-173) Fazlullah's important student Nesimi extended Hurufism to Anatolia by separating it from Sufism. In the approach of Nesimi, worldwide love was constructed on Wahdat al-Wucud. The perfect human merely reaches unity of God and is with God. Nesimi did not raise the human being to God; he transported God to the ground of the world.

3.2 Haji Bektashi Veli

Haji Bektashi Veli is the sheik of the Alevi-Bektashi populations who have been living in Anatolia for centuries Bektashi Veli was firstly educated by Lokman Parende, a student of Ahmed Yesevi. The available welding presumes that he has lived in the 13th century. While Haji Bektashi Veli and Ahmed Yesevi did not live in the same periods, Haji Bektashi Veli was motivated and inspired by his Sufism. Haji Bektash Veli is also considered as one of the Sufis who are the nomadic dervishes like Yesevi, Vefai, Qalandari or Haydari. Haji Bektashi Veli preached the love of humanity as the highest goal for all people. He was the framer of a fresh cult that did not diverge from the Qalandari and Haidari tariqas. (Köprülü, 1993, p. 29) He and his brother supported the Babai rebellion since he was the pupil of Baba Ilyas and there were some assertions that he would come to be one of Baba Ilyas' next halife/caliphs. His brother Menteş died in the

uprising; after the rebellion was suppressed, he moved to Suluca Karahöyük. Haji Bektashi Veli lived a simple life in rural areas. (Ocak, 1992)

There exist two dissimilar characterizations of Haji Bektashi Veli; one of them is the historical Bektash and the other is the legendary Bektash. Semi-mythical legends and the lives of poets of his period inform us about his existence. The Haji title means that he made the pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina to complete the Hajj. He is the eponym of the Bektashi Sufi order and is considered as one of the main instructors of Alevism. The sect was not set up by the noun provider Haji Bektash Veli himself but by his fosterling daughter and Abdal Musa who contributed to the cult named Bektashism. They collected the disciples together with Otman Baba and Kaygusuz Abdal, whose pieces are encompassed in the general religious practice to present and their names are repeated in the Bektashi bards and hymns. (Ocak, 1992)

3.2.1 The Janissaries cops

The Ottoman sultans comprehended the significance of Haji Bektashi Veli and his point of views among the dervishes in Anatolia during the early periods. When the Ottomans acquired control over Anatolia, Haji Bektash came to be the sheik of the Janissary. In this period, the important role of the Bektashism became more powerful. The Janissaries named themselves sons of Haji Bektash. He was the pir of the most essential part of the novel military construction, the Janissaries. (Özcan, 2011) Consequently, Bektashism was inspired by the guideline of Haji Bektashi Veli, and under the auspices of sultans, it obtained more and more power among immigrant and semi-immigrant groups. (Kressing, 2002, p. 66) At the beginning, Bektashis and Ottomans had a good connection because Bektashis benefited from having a massive guardian and the Ottomans also generally benefited from the dervishes who were expert at using the blade in war and a scarifying territory. In addition, the dervishes' tolerant notion of belief facilitated a meeting ground between the Islamic Turks and the mainly Christian public. A network of brotherhoods was founded abroad with many religious

centers within a wide territory extending from Anatolia to the Balkans; these many religious centers were connected to a main center and thus a precise religious order was founded.

However, the Kızılbaş arose among the Turcoman spreading quickly due to its initiator of Safavid. Sheikh Haydar started this movement that was sustained by the strengthening of his child Shah Ismail in the fifteenth century. Shah Ismail's Shia knowledge enabled him to comprehend mysticism and the writings of his period, and he wrote bards both in Turkish and Persian. He adopted Shaman beliefs and Turcoman traditions. (Melikoff, 2004, p. 179)

The Ottomans transferred an exclusive support to the Sunni division of Islam generally for political aims, and they acquired the heading of caliph of orthodox Sunni Islam. However, the Turcoman multitudes revolved in the direction of Shiite traditions. The Kızılbaş was not only a religious movement but also a social and political organization. From the fifteenth century onwards, it converted itself into an expression of the forceful Turcoman objection to the

Ottoman management. (Inalcık, 1994, p. 195) Therefore, owing to the compressions of Sultan Bayazit II, Balım Sultan reconstructed the Bektashi organization and became the sheik of Bektashism. He had control over everything and unified the Bektashi rules. As a result of this transformation, Balım Sultan was considered the second founder. Because of the threat to the Ottoman Empire, Bayazit II put to death or incarcerated forty thousand people. Thus, Alevism's rebellious character has been maintained against authority's pressures for centuries because authority did not provide a social structure in which all human beings live happily without oppression.

3.2.2 Alevism-Bektashism

Alevi-Bektashi communities have followed in Haji Bektashi's path. Alevism and Bektashism are commonly taken together in the literature, suggesting they are one and the same community. However, although there is a close connection

between the two groups, not all Alevis agree with the Bektashi dervishes because their spiritual leaders are separate from them. (dede and baba) Nevertheless, the religious order or sect called Bektashism is quite similar to Anatolian Alevism. There have historically been two groups of Bektashis. The sect split into two twigs on the question of legitimate guidance: a branch is the leaders of those dervishes who entered the order by oath; however, the other branch's grade is genetic, and it is believed that their progeny is from Haji Bektashi Veli. One, called the Çelebis, argue that they were direct physical descendants of Haji Bektash (sons of the loin). A larger group of Bektashis, called the Dedes or Dedeabas, assert that Haji Bektash had no natural sons but only had spiritual disciples (sons of the path). It has been generally described that a person only becomes an Alevi by being born into an Alevi family, but a person can become a Bektashi by participation in the order. (Özcan, 2011)

Conversely, both terms are used instead of each other from time to time. As Melikoff indicates, "Alevism cannot be separated from Bektashism because both terms refer to the same phenomenon, the phenomenon of Turkish folk Islam." (1993) Alevi and Bektashi groups share more similarities than dissimilarities, the same fundamental faith and moral principles and literatures. In a very wide

ancient simplification, the basic difference among them was that Bektashis were traditionally urbanized and educated while Alevis lived in villages in the Anatolian countryside. The Alevi-Bektashi culture, Alevi-Bektashi faith, or Alevi-Bektashi philosophy, these terms are commonly used by Alevis. Many describe the differences between the groups with these statements: there is no alteration in path, just in practices and the way is one, the form a thousand and one. Alevi-Bektashi does not only participate in Turcoman roots, but also many theological and religious principles, rites, and most sacred texts. Alevis today place great importance on Haji Bektash. They proudly display his picture in their associations and worship centers and they name associations after him. A lot of Alevis wander to his tomb in Kırşehir every August.

3.2.3 Velayetname-Makalat

There is very little actual historical detail available about Haji Bektash. It is almost universally accepted that he was a Turcoman born in Khorassan in Iran, educated as a Sufi, moved to Anatolia, settled in what is now the town of Haji Bektash. His date of birth is assumed approximately as 1207 and 1247, and he died around 1270. (Ocak, 1992) Beyond these few actualities there are many legends about Haji Bektash the truth of which are debated. Supernatural traditional stories are passed on from generation to generation among societies and there are innumerable poems of Alevi bards about him. Most of these stories display Haji Bektash as a man with mystic wisdom and powers. All that is known are stories and legends passed down orally. These stories and legends were printed down several centuries after his death in a book entitled the Velayetname by a Bektashi dervish. This word ‘Velayet’ means the friends of God (Allah) in Arabic; combined with ‘name’ (book), it means the book of God’s (Allah) friend. In this book, Haji Bektashi’s lineage is traced back to Ali and Prophet Muhammad. The Velayetname also tells his life, stories, and miracles in legendary manners; for example, a fish rising from a waterway saluted him in a man sound or when he turned two lions strike him into rock. Haji Bektash appeared in different places at once and he passed down distances of a lot of days in the blink of an eye. This book also reflects the socio-political structure and the world of thought in the written period. Velayetname presents Haji Bektash Veli and his order in the form of a white pigeon, one of the simple patterns of the metaphor for portraying truth. The symbol of the pigeon represents his mission. (Melikoff, 1993)

In Makalat, Haji Bektashi Veli explains that the central principles of the Alevi faith are the four gateways and forty levels. They are well-known concepts of Islamic mysticism for the Bektashi order. The Four Gateways are the four stages of exams one must pass through to reach the highest goal, union with God. These steps are sharia (şeriat), mystical path (tariqat), knowledge (maarifet) and spiritual truth (hakikat). The first step is religious law i.e., rules of religion and

simple information about the creed such as five times prayer, fasting and alms. The next stage, the path, has inner directions; to complete this stage, one must be a disciple (talip) for experiencing cem or the twelve services, and educated by a spiritual murshid (guide). Knowledge consists in acquiring awareness for the ultimate experience of God (hakikat). At the truth station, the human being masters his/her nafs in a fight to overcome himself/herself by the love of God. The forty stations are associated with ten levels or duties which are clearly clear orders. (Coşan, 1996)

Birge uses the symbol of ‘sugar’ used by a dede for describing the progression of the four doors: a human being can first use the lexicon to learn what sugar is and how it is used. That is the sharia station to path. He/she sees the deficiency of that approach when she/she is able to get practically acquainted with sugar, such as by seeing and touching it. This represents the path to the station of knowledge. To really taste sugar and to require it to come into oneself is to go forward one step deeper into an appreciation of its nature, and that is what is intended. If a human being could go still further and turn out to be one with sugar so that he could say ‘‘I am sugar’’ that and that alone would be to know what sugar is, and that is what is involved in the truth stations. (Birge, 1937, p. 102)

CHAPTER 4

ALEVI PHILOSOPHY AND HUMANISM

The humanist position of Alevism has been emphasized in several historical documents. The general approval that the Alevi Bektashi faith is more tolerant than other religious interpretations was expressed by almost all Alevi writers. In fact, many researchers working on Alevism agree with the general opinion. According to Fıġlalı, tolerance and the value given to people is so exaggerated in the Alevi Bektashi tradition that Alevis were called “human worshipers” even. (1996) There is no need to distinguish between religions because that causes disputes among people. In fact, all religions purpose to provide peace and brotherhood on earth” says Bektashi Veli in his text “Velayetname”.

Bektashism originates from Haji Bektashi Veli’s ideas. It is based on human love and centred on the unity of “Universe, God and Man”. The first step to achievement is to know oneself and love oneself as the human who loves himself/herself also loves God. The following quatrain expresses the Bektashi understanding:

Students hew stone,
They hew and present it to their master,
In every inch of the stone,
They call God to mind. (Hall, 2012, p. 100)

This chapter will examine in greater depth the philosophy of Alevism, focusing on its conception of the human being, in the thought of Haji Bektashi Veli in particular.

However, since Alevism is often identified first and foremost as a religion or a religious sect, rather than a philosophy, the chapter begins by first making some observations on the complicated relation between religion and philosophy.

4.1 Relation between Philosophy and Religion

Philosophy and religion both aim to look into human problems related to existence, knowledge and the ethical values that direct a human being's behavior. There is a similarity between philosophy and religion in terms of their purpose; both try to find the truth of being and value. While following Kant's critique of pure reason, post-Kantian contemporary philosophy has significantly detached itself from questions about the knowledge of the universe, and the purpose of human being and life, philosophy has originated in questions on how the universe came into being and what the purpose of human existence is. These questions are especially asked and answered in divine religions; in other words, both philosophy and religion are concerned with human being's purpose of existence, the existence of the universe, the value of life, morality, and humanity.

While they both strive to understand and explain the universe and the human being, there are significant differences between philosophy and religion in terms of their sources and methods. The information revealed in religion is transmitted through the believers of God. In philosophy, truths are sought after and reached through reason. Religion is divine in its source and its philosophy of the human being. There is no doubt that religion seems closed to change in terms of its basic rules and orders. In contrast, philosophy is based on reasoning; asking questions, doubting, being open to criticism; in this way, it constantly renews itself and changes. Philosophy strives to acquire knowledge or yield understanding by rational means, particularly about issues that pose specific challenges for empirical investigations.

For some philosophers, there is not necessarily a conflict between philosophy and religion; on the contrary, philosophy is needed for the truth of religion. According to Topçu, philosophy does not oppose religion, "philosophy is the

sunny garden for believing souls”. (1999, p. 199) The basic function of philosophy is to teach the mind its way of thinking. Many different evaluations and perspectives can be developed; but it is philosophy that determines the chosen thought. Without a philosophical attitude, one’s assertions and behavior can be self-contradictory. Moreover, in the absence of critical thought, human beings cannot go beyond performing stereotypes of behavior as mere imitations of the movements around them. In the uncritical actions of those who do not have a philosophy and who do not filter what they are told through their minds, nothing performed differs from what is spoken to them.

Philosophy is also the master of the religious orders that saves faith from superstition and legends, and worship from being meaningless ritual. Philosophers thus contribute to strengthening religious claims; for example Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* was used to design Christian world for centuries. Philosophy can thus be practiced as an activity that enables people to make sense of their religious life. Similarly, religious thinkers’ contribution to philosophical thought should not be underestimated.

When a philosophical and religious journey that begins in an individual circumstance reaches the mystical level, it transcends not only its individual freedom and responsibility, but also itself: it becomes a nature that includes all humanity. In this stage, the road of philosophy and religion that started with human being ends with humanism or humanist philosophy; so that the connection between philosophy, religion and humanism becomes clearly visible.

Such is the case in Alevi-Bektashi philosophy, and this is why it is handled along with religious and social relationships. Alevism integrates philosophy not only with religion, but also with morality and social and political attitudes. In that sense, its philosophy is strictly bound with practice, which requires from the human-individual an exacting journey of moral self-development.

4.2 The Moral Alevi Principles

Alevi morality is based on the teachings of the four gates and forty stations; the control of hand, tongue and loin; Tevella Teberra; and three circumcision seven fards. These teachings can be found in almost every application area of Alevi-Bektashism. The principles basically deal with the love of God, Muhammad and Ali. However, they attach importance not to form, but to essence as reason, love and service to humanity, modesty/humility, knowledge, compassion, goodness, being brave, understanding, learning and teaching.

Although the four doors forty stations are also included in Ahmet Yesevi's Divan-ı Hikmet, the explanations about the four doors forty stations are detailed in Haji Bektashi Veli's Makalat. (Bal, 2014, p. 149) Korkmaz states that the four doors forty stations are the necessity of humanization and being human (1998, pp. 21-23) The tariqat passenger on the path of God, who is not yet mature, becomes mature through the four gates and the forty stations on the way to becoming the perfect human. Thus reaching the divine secret they become the carrier of this secret in the service of human beings.

According to the statement in the Buyruk, seven fards help people to cleanse their animalistic instincts. The seven fards are: questioning, setting goals, focusing, finding solutions to problems, finding our own self, integrating with society, and being occupied. In the meantime, respecting people, being compatible with them and wanting to know also are other necessary fards in the Buyruk. (Bozkurt; 2015, pp. 88-89) Tevella is expressed as loving Allah, Muhammad, Ali and his lineage, and loving those who love them is to be friends with them. Teberra is not to love those who do not love Allah, Muhammad and Ali. (Özmen, 1998, p. 19) According to Noyan (2006, p.378), Tevella expresses that people are good and clean people with their consent. The Teberra is to give up material things and self. According to Dierl, the Alevi terms "teberrâ and tevellâ" have an important place as they can be seen to be the first examples of humanism in history. Ali is a humanistic character because he served and loved

all human beings; therefore Tevellâ (love of Ali and his lover) means the struggle for a humanist, democratic and socialist society; teberrâ (hatred against Ali and his enemies) is the struggle against human beings' oppression, humiliation and disdain. (1991, pp. 120-121)

4.2.1 Human-Centeredness and Unity of All Humans

All Orthodox religions such as Islam, Judaism and Christianity draw a portrait of the human being as a stupid creature who cannot know the truth on their own and thus must be guided and managed. In addition, in these religions, women's positions are worse than a human being. Yet, Alevism praises human being to the skies. (Dierl, 1991, pp.74-77)

Most researchers have written or talked about the value and importance of human beings in the Alevi Bektashi tradition. The following quatrain is such an example (This quatrain is supposed to belong to Haji Bektash, but is believed to belong to Kaygusuz Abdal, whose quatrains are dedicated to lyrical and pastoral themes and to the gnostic approach he had adopted.

Temperature is in fire, not in sheet iron,
Miracle is in coat, not in crown,
Whatever you look for, look for within yourself
Not in Jerusalem, Mecca, Pilgrimage. (Birdoğan, 1995, p. 101)

The humanistic character of Alevism manifests itself in the Alevi's understanding of God. According to this understanding, human beings put their own rules; God commands nothing. God only has the right to demand knowledge about himself. People decide for themselves what interests them such as how to dress, how to seek shelter and what to eat, or what methods of worship to practice. The assertions that without human being there is no God and God did not demand any worship from man formulate the Alevi philosophy. The real worship is to think and produce. Rather than mentioning the name of God often, real worship deals with the natural and positive sciences; thus work is the best form of worship. (Pehlivan, 1994, p.38)

For Alevi Bektashis, worship is social and its purpose is to make the human being complete. Human love is the foundation of worship; prayer is to prostrate on the truth, ablution is the eviction of evil within man, hajj is to enter a heart. The main purpose of worship is to struggle to create a good and orderly society. Haji Bektashi Veli's saying that "the biggest book to be read is the human being" sum up Alevi's religious thought. (Dressler, 2003, p. 38)

You look for kible, kible is in you.

You look for secde, mihrab is in you.

You look for Kaaba, Kaaba is in you. (Dressler, 2003, p. 38)

This quatrain which belongs to Kul Husayn, is a good example to show the Alevi faith and its objection to the formation of Islam through requirements such as five times praying, pilgrimage or Ramadan fasting. Obviously, these expressions (kible, secde, Kaaba) in the quatrain are not related to their exact denotations; the quatrain emphasizes the significance of human being in allegories.

According to Alevi belief, during creation, God transferred his own characteristics and soul to the human being; thus the human being is the caliph of God. The status of human being as the caliph of God brings with it having attained him, acting as his guardian, and fulfilling his judgments. At the same time, the common opinion among the Bektashis is that God can gather everything in himself and the human being also has gathered everything in himself/herself. The difference between God and the human being is that God is limitless but human is limited. (Bozkurt, 2015, p. 19)

It should be noted here that Alevi Bektashis believe that there is no distance between the creator and the created human. Therefore, in a divine term, true love and humanistic love are together. (Gölpınarlı, 1992, pp. 181-182) In Alevism, the good life is paradise, the bad life is hell, and there is no belief in heaven and hell. The Alevi concept of sin is ignorance. In Ottoman society, the Bektashis were intellectuals and liberal people that had a supra-religious stance against the clergy, which led them to be accused of atheism. (Melikoff, 1993) The

humanistic character of Alevism can also be seen in its attempt to build identity above all races and ethnicity. In Alevism, the universal character of humanity is brought to the fore instead of distinct racial emphasis. Aytaş compares Thomas More and Haji Bektashi Veli in terms of the structure of thought brought by the movement of Humanism. He points out that the humanity, tolerance and respect emphasized by Thomas More and Dante are only those of their own religion; therefore, due to their religious beliefs, there remains a distinction between themselves and other people and societies. In this respect, Haji Bektash better exemplifies the humanist idea that does not discriminate between race, religion and language and that holds that everyone is unified. (2010, pp.139-140)

This tradition of tolerance in Alevism predominantly depends on the atmosphere of Turcoman because Tashkent, Bukhara, Samarkand, were cities where all beliefs lived side by side as dozens of different faiths in peaceful and primitive democracy.

A guest has arrived, my heart's rejoicing,
Guests, you're welcome,
Guests, how good of you to have come .
Nobleness has disappeared from people, winter has turned into spring.

Pray, so that guests will come to see us,
We don't mind starving, let us be happy,
Old and young alike, regard the guest as Hızir

The guest opens the inner lock as well,
He honors the host,
In fact the guest is Ali.
No guest comes to a damned house,
He struggles, takes pains, his sowing won't yield crops,
He roars in vain, he achieves nothing

My Pir Sultan Abdal, it is registered.

The guest brings us luck,

The guest is holy, apologize! (Sipos & Csaki, 2009, p. 572)

Likewise, Aydın defines Haji Bektashi Veli as a pacifist and a humanist Sufi. (2008) Bektashi tried to teach society the unifying elements such as love, respect and tolerance. Indeed, Haji Bektashi Veli's advice "Even if you are offended, do not offend in return" refers to these unifying attitudes. The evidence to base the Alevi Bektashi faith on tolerance is brought from the Velayetname of Haji Bektashi Veli; many other depictions and paintings portray the union of lion and gazelle, which are each other's enemies, in the lap of Hünkâr.

4.2.2 Nature of Human

According to liberal Western thought, as exemplified by Hobbes, man is not only selfish at birth, but also belligerent. For this reason, in order for people to live together, there is a need for a uniting, supervising element like sword and power. In Haji Bektashi Veli's thought, human being is not evil and belligerent due to human nature.

Haji Bektashi Veli believes that the human being is born without sin or bias; this view comes from the idea that God does not create bad existences. Human goodness or badness, evil depends on his/her completely free choices between right actions and wrong actions. (Aytaş, 2010, p. 144)

In this respect, the humanist understanding is quite close to the daily life form of Haji Bektash and the ongoing Bektashi thought of the effort to find the good, the beautiful, happiness, right and wrong by the human individual using his/her mind. As an ongoing life practice of 'today' the Alevi Bektashis see human beings as faced with the good and the evil in this world and their behaviors are evaluated in the 'dar' institution by the members of the community. In other words, even if Alevism has the belief in an afterlife, it does not promote living this life for the other world as in medieval thought. It is appropriate to express

Haji Bektashi Veli' advice about this emphasis on life "today": "never remembrance of the past and not waiting for the future". (Öz, 2011, p. 36)

The human being in the order of Haji Bektashi Veli should be enriched with knowledge and learning, so that he/she becomes aware of his/her mind, heart and existence. Because Alevi Bektashis is a community based on knowledge and learning, underlining the advices of Prophet Muhammad to take science and learning into account, Haji Bektashi Veli comes up with an imagination of human beings who are eager for science and learning. For instance, Haji Bektash Veli concludes "Always read and teach the good, the beautiful, to learn the truth. Whoever keeps knowledge as the highest and sublime never shrinks or descends. The uninformed, ignorant man is like a waterless mill". (Göçgün, 1999, p. 152)

4.2.3 Transformation-Incarnation-Anthropomorphism

According to Alevi-Bektashi belief, Ali was found in the body of Haji Bektashi Veli and Haji Bektash will take place in Abdal Musa's body after his death (Ocak, 2000, pp. 185-186) Incarnation is generally described as the transfer of things to God or the incarnation of the body, especially the embodiment of the soul in a human appearance. Transmigration is the continuation of a person's soul with the transition to another body after death. In Alevi-Bektashi belief, the souls of human beings constantly transfigure, this alteration takes place in the form of a cycle as starting with an inanimate creature, later continuing with plants, moving from plants to animals, and from animals to humans. Thus the entry of open pigeon pants, the pigeons being regarded as an oppressed creature, has given Bektashi a distinct respect and blessing.

As an example of incarnation the belief that Ali's spirit is actually in the body of Haji Bektashi Veli can be given, but we must pay attention to the presence of God in that body. In other words, there is actually God in every body as Ali. There is also the influence of Shiism, as can be seen in the term "Shah" contained in "bismi-Shah". The identity of the Shah-i Merdan Ali in Islamic

thought expresses the reflection of God in the human being. (Melikoff, 2007, p.23) Transformation and incarnation on the ground of God, Ali and Haji Bektashi Veli, in turn, lead to the formation of a perception that every living creature in which it is found has a divine essence, divinity. Thus the view that Ali may be seen as the same as God in the structure is different from the idea that Christ can be seen as an appearance and a deity in the West. It should be noted here that this latter perception has taken place in some Alevi-Bektashis groups. (Melikoff, 1993, p. 44-45) However, it is not possible to say that almost every Alevi Bektashi accepts this belief as true. For example, the Anatolian Alevis cannot speak of the deity of Ali as God, some communities among the Nusayris (Arab Alevis) and Tahtacılar, believe the deity of Ali. In Alevism and Bektashism, Hilmi Dede Baba said that

I held a mirror on my face
Ali appeared on my eyes
I look deeply at my essence,
Ali appeared on my eyes.

One of the things that caused this perception is Mansur al-Hallaj and Ibn Arabi's doctrine of Wahdat al-Wucud. Another is the mythological elements in Bektashi literature in general. According to the doctrine of Wahdat al-Wucud, existences belong only to God. The created matters are reflectors of God. At this point, the most important reflector is what appears to be the human being. (Sunar, 1975, pp. 20-21)

In short, the names of Muhammad and Ali are manifestations of God. There is an essence or light of Haqq-Muhammad-Ali, but it is not possible to interpret the similarity of Muhammad and Ali as equal to God because of the essence or light. The models Prophet Muhammad and Ali are respected/revered by Alevi people for their moral behavior and evaluated as the chief teacher showing goodness and truthfulness. Likewise, Haji Bektashi Veli is the leader of the path that teaches this kindness and illuminates societies. (Yalçın, 2007, pp. 230-237)

4.2.4 Speaking Quran

Human beings are believed to be the speaking Quran in Alevi Bektashism because of the fact that human beings are created with love and that everything is hidden in the human heart. Human beings reach the consciousness of nature by the human mind and the mind of nature; internalizing nature seems related to understanding spoken Quran as Adam's manifestation of God. The Quran speaking simultaneously is called Ali. (Dierl, 1991, pp.82-91) Ali is seen as the mirror image of the Divine; he is the revealer of the esoteric Qur'an, while the Prophet is seen as the vehicle by which the exoteric Qur'an became manifest to humanity. (Osmani, 2012, p. 111)

4.2.5 The perfect human

Sufism aims at a spiritual state of pure selfless love and reaching oneness with God that is the only divine reality. Devotion to God is the simple requirement of release; the crucial aim is the magnificent union with God. Because God is present in the heart of the human being, those who desire to come near God must try to find him in themselves, but the unaware strive for God in useless things. The real devotee wishes with all his/her heart that he/she complete firm fights through changing and challenging situations along the path extending to God. The returning inner struggles serve human being to decrease the power of the ego and give a chance to his/her soul to find a key to open its bodily chains' locks.

About trying to find God, it is said that wherever human being sees, God is there. He includes everything and has knowledge about every tiny thing. God's factual existence remains a secret for human beings; not only does he not have any beginning or end, but he also has eternity and infinity without depending on time.

There are three stages in reaching God. At the beginning, the human being escapes from actions governed by his/her desires, thus cleansing the individual

of its worse actions. After that, one should focus on only God and no one else; this makes the human heart perfect. As a final point, all physical connections are thrown away and there is the mystical escalation of the soul. God placed heaven in the soul's heart which is larger than all heaven, earth, hell and universe. The heart is the sphere of divine awareness; in the place of love and the worship of God, there is a secret; therefore the soul's secret knowledge of God, the spiritual power. God is remembered in all spaces and times as hidden in inner selves in the form of words, labor, actions, sitting and standing, eating and drinking, sleeping and being awake, continuously and ceaselessly.

The mystery of God's existing in one's heart is the meaning of monotheism. If a human being wishes to discover him/herself, he/she has to come near God and rely on him with all his/her heart. The existence of love and affection is believed to be in the heart, but Haji Bektash uses the word 'life' (can) rather than 'heart', to express the presence of love and affection. Hence, the terms 'heart' and 'life' can be used in the same sense.

It is simple to know the existence of God because God is more obvious than the sun and the entire worlds that were created by God and his light; in what manner could God be in mystery? On the other hand it is difficult to catch God's sheik since their actions and qualities are secrets.

Beware, don't reveal the secret of Sehakum,
Hide me, my servant, let me hide you,
Never reveal your precious being.
Hide me, my servant/my dear, let me hide you.

With your hands, legs, eyes, mouth,
Speak to God with your every word,
In the depth of your soul within yourself.

The knower keeps silent, the one that speaks

knows nothing about this state,
Words can't express its essence,
It's been hidden by God's lovers, they've become blessed.

The holy people have lined up,
They are going to God following God's command,
They say you should never reveal the secret of divine knowledge,
They say you should never reveal the secret of Sehakum.

My Genc Abdal, hide yourself in yourself,
May God keep you in strength and health,

By God's command I am in you and you're in me. (Sipos & Csaki, 2009, p. 571) (Sehakum: Mystic explanation of wine of Elest is hidden in the secret of Sekahüm) (Birge, 1937, p. 113)

4.2.6 Reason in Alevism

Haji Bektash has determined the central point of the human being as reason, which is the director of all actions. Reason separates human beings from other living beings and gives them responsibility. Thanks to this important feature found in humans, the presence of reason, human being can distinguish good from evil, right from wrong, and acquire virtues such as love, humility and service to humanity. (Yalçın, 2007, p. 85)

Learning science is one of the processes of becoming a human being in the way to attaining God. (Durakoğlu, 2015, p.53) According to Haji Bektashi Veli, science is similar to the stars; thanks to true science the stars guide people towards reaching God. Science is also a mirror for this reason, when one looks at the mirror; one sees his/her negative features. This is also the reason for not criticizing the bad qualities of others. (Coşan, 1996, p. 55)

Knowing and understanding the mind at the beginning, human should know himself/herself and the purpose of his/her creation. This is a step by step process of understanding the divine light that exists in oneself, during which one

experiences living without harming himself/herself and his/her environment by using the inner intuitive eyes about all the creations of God.

Temren points out that in Alevi belief, that God can create the human being by blowing from his soul. (1995, p. 153) In Bektashi writings, the word 'soul' means breathing (nefes) and consciousness. Divine consciousness is the same thing as the state of knowing God. The human reason is the best scales on earth because it knows and commands everything and is the sultan in the body, the heart of peace.

In addition, love is the supporter of reason and knowledge and people who stay away from love and reason cannot be happy and cannot achieve the divine purpose. Human beings have not only reason, but also love, knowledge and faith; all of these factors are equally important for shaping human actions.

4.2.7 Love

According to Haji Bektash, human is created on the basis of God's love. God has created the universe so that his beauties can be known by human beings. Everything that exists in the universe have been exemplified in the human being in the divine way, the human being is expressed as a Microcosm. This divine purpose of human beings has created a lack of distance between the human being and the creator. This understanding which takes place in thought is the principle of Wahdat al-Wucud of Ibn Arab. Even though Alevi Bektashi takes the name Wahdat al-Mevcud in order to emphasize the unification of the existing in the communities, human being reflects God.

In God's essence, there is love and affection for all beauties placed in the human being. This love and affection directed God to be visible and in this way, God has created the universe. (Keçeli, 1996, p. 100) Among the Alevi-Bektashis, there are texts called Buyruk which tell about the various customs and belief structures of Alevism-Bektashism with consideration to historical events. In the Buyruk, the creation of the universe and man is shaped by the light created by

God's creation of sea (limitless light) on the basis of love, affection and beauty, and the division of the precious stone thrown by the sea in half. Thus, everything in nature is shaped and revived but God shares his essence with only human souls in all existing things. (Bozkurt 2015, pp. 18-19) Love is what creates a human being, makes human beings alive, and gives them the purpose of searching for divinity. (Çetinkaya, 2010, p. 61)

At this point, every human being is a unique being. Human beings' love caused the creation of all universes. Human and universe are oriented by love; the whole universe is full of love without emptiness. God is the creator to be loved, respected, and not feared.

The belief that everything and all creatures are transferred from God spreads the idea of looking at all creatures with love, not harming anything and coming together with seventy-two nations in the daily life of human beings. (Keçeli, 1996, p.157) The beauty of God appears on the human face (cemal). The human soul is the reflector of God's beauty, goodness, knowledge.

4.2.8 Cemal-Celal and Purifying Nafs

The belief that the beauty of God is in the face of human beings is reflected in the daily life of Alevism-Bektashism as well as in the cem that they carry out to perform their worship. According to the information from the dede, the persons of the cem pray face to face owing to the beauty of God (Haqq) and his existence in humans. This ceremony is called the ring prayer stemming from their ring-shaped seating. At the same time this action as prostrate on human being (lying stretched out on the ground with one's face downward), but there is no worship of human beings here as a result of this prostrate. (Er, 1998, pp. 16-17) In God-human-universe unity, human beings find God in their essence to fight with nobody but selfness.

Sweetheart, if you can't play the instrument of love,
Don't touch it, don't pluck the string.

If you can't stand the voice of love,
Don't touch the thorn or the rose either

Listen to the nightingale, cheer up,
Who would like the croak of the crow?

Don't shake the fruitless tree in vain,
Don't touch its leaves or branches either.

Come, don't leave the way, if you love God,
Heal the hearts if you're eloquent.

If you are not headed for the town of God,
Don't hurt the traveller or the road either. (Sipos & Csaki, 2009, p.548)

Human beings contain soul and nafs, and these two features are in constant struggle. As long as the human does not support the good and does not present goodness, it is a natural result that the evil overcomes the soul.

In this respect, Noyan draws attention to the idea Hüsni-ü Absolute: the idea that God's beauty appears in the face (cemal) of humans, as well as the notion of anger (celal) in the human being. These two ideas are inseparable in humans. Both face (cemal) and anger (celal) are two rulers in the hearts of the human being: one (cemal) expresses mind, beauty, and goodness, while the other (celal) expresses the nature that is the devil. (Noyan, 2006, pp. 353-354) Celal, everything that is evil is related to the nafs (nefis) but it helps people to know themselves, and to understand their environment. It is impossible for people to know themselves without knowing nafs, and thus cleaning themselves from evil feelings by searching for God and feeling the existence of him.

The mature human obtaining God's holy knowledge depends on the heart and the two enemies placed within it: one is reason or soul, the other is the nafs. The part that expresses God's essence is prepared and trained with abstinence from doing destructive things, education, improvement and good morals; it is given spiritual knowledge by God, which sinks into the depths of the soul.

The other sultan of the city (body) is the nafs who commits forbidden acts. His assistant is the ego and his leaders are pleasure, arrogance, jealousy, greediness, anxiety, slander, and annoyance which do not permit humans to be in peace. Dying before one's real death represents getting rid of the ego, arrogance, fighting, fear or hope, profit or loss in one's heart. All good or bad situations are viewed as the same because they are gifts from God. For example, sometimes the lover wants to see the degree of his/her love and makes easy or hard tests, if right answers are given in all events, the love is true love without any condition. With the elimination of one's desires and wishes, one behaves in the same way as the lover. After the annihilation in God, humans do not only lose self, nafs or ego but also abolish even their names. They enter the realm of letting go, there is no difference; the mature person within the essence of God represents all universes or existing things; however, a person reflects on nothing by removing God from oneself. (Özcan, 2011)

The human body is the area of conflict between good (soul) and evil (nafs). According to Haji Bektash, the human being has exoteric (zahiri) and esoteric (batni) characteristics for the mirroring of God on earth. (Özcan, 2011) When humans taste real pleasure, they become free from the deception of nafs, evil and the physical substances so they do not waste their time without fondness of God.

If a human being is aware of his/her real existence, s/he never discriminates even against the small entities in the universe. If a human being takes place in the hearts of the people, he/she nears God because the hearts of people are much more divine than Mecca (God's home) and they are a throne for God's holy essence. With these principles, human being gives priority to the essence rather

than the form, the person who knows him/herself in God, finds God in him/herself. S/he can reach the point of perfection by acting in accordance with this state of knowing and finding. (Özcan, 2011) All formal worships, carrying out God's apparent orders do not guarantee human beings salvation. However, without any worships, the human being can facilitate reaching god by winning other people's hearts and strengthening their spiritual side.

When the human being can purify him/herself from the passions or commands of nafs, knowing him/herself allows one to become a real human being. As in many sects, in the Bektashi order to realize the self and to educate nafs is to get rid of the animalistic features. In Makalat, we can see these opposing forces as anger versus reason; greed versus shame; jealousy versus science. (Coşan, 1996) While intelligence, shame and knowledge are whole (moral, good behaviors bring closer to God); anger, greed and jealousy dispel unity. The human being is expected to choose one of the basic principles of Bektashism, the integrity of reason, shame and knowledge during this struggle. By understanding this wholeness and transforming it into a way of life, life can be virtuous, wise and perfect. (Özcan, 2011)

It should be noted here, however, that while all kinds of desires are restricted during the process to becoming the perfect human being, the torture of body is not allowed. Although nafs, ego or self can seem to be rejected totally, self-knowledge is not possible without its existence. Moreover, if human beings lack their ego or self, they will be as same as angels. That may be understood the best situation for a human; but in fact angels are at a lower level than the perfect human since the perfect human has the chance to reach the creator's or the highest degree. After becoming the perfect human, the restriction of passions or desires is not needed; the perfect human become happy in every situation and the human development is completed. In addition, the design of heaven and hell are not distinguished from this world in Alevism; thus human beings should live the best version of their lives.

The form and the essence are inside human being. When the human being is ready, the dress of perishing falls off him / her and the gown of eternity will be put on him/her. If human tarry, the garment will be taken off and the cloak of fire will be put on him/her. Having reached enlightenment, the hypocrite becomes a sage; if he/she was a sage, he/she will fall in love; if he/she is in love, he/she will be loved. There is no higher grade, it is heaven itself. (Sipos & Csaki, 2009, p. 43)

CHAPTER 5

ALEVI HUMANISM IN RELATION TO WESTERN HUMANISM

The purpose of this thesis is to understand the humanistic element in Alevi thought. A particular challenge that is posed to this project is the question of whether Alevism can be seen as a kind of humanism in the sense that the term 'humanism' has acquired in the Western philosophical tradition. There are important similarities, which will be pointed out in this chapter, as well as significant differences. The most important difference is the mystical element in Alevi thought, which is lacking in the traditional understanding of humanism in Western thought despite the fact that early Western humanists were also Christians. Hence, a comparison between Alevi humanism and Western humanism will also be related to the question of Alevism's relation to secularism, which will be taken up in Chapter 6 as well as in this chapter.

During Renaissance, the humanist movement was primarily started by Christian thinkers who were not necessarily against religion. But the human being and his/her mind were pressured by religious belief until the emergence of humanistic philosophy in Renaissance. The Church emphasized religious elements by ignoring its connection to reason. When faith underestimated the power of reason and science, the separation between philosophy and religion deepened. According to the Church, the human birth was seen as the consequence of sins so the existence of human being could not be praised during lifetime.

Humanism, instead of obsessing with immortality, focused on making the best of existence in this world. The Church maximized its profits through the image of the suffering holy man as an ideal human being; conversely, "Renaissance man" transformed self-denying into self-actualization. Renaissance founded a rebellion

in contradiction to the authority of the Catholic Church and the religious restrictions on thought. Human mind took back its superior place from creed.

5.1 Philosophy of Humanism

“Humanists, in approaching life from a human perspective, start with human ways of comprehending the world and the goal of meeting human needs.” (Edwards, 2008) It is an essential fact that people examine the important meaning in the period of existence, world, and life since human beings have an ability to consider. The world in which human beings try to survive is both material and social. The social values within the social systems and institutions construct the human being’s life and this sociality also extends to the spiritual and psychological fields of existence. Human beings construct their worldviews with points taken from a philosophical understanding, besides focusing on the bases of ethical and socio-political problems.

When philosophy is confirmed as a philosophy of vita, a philosophy of action or living that seems to be a most suitable choice for self-actualization is humanism. Philosophy is not just an understanding or clarification of existences but also a vigorous attempt to inspire people in terms of conclusions and principles that are totally meaningful and desirable for unification and measures of facts and systems for comprehending or constructing the most consistent reality. Philosophic knowledge evaluates all recommended functions and structures.

Therefore philosophy has a mission, not merely about exploring the reality, but also of displaying in what way that reality can be placed in the activities of humanity. It assists in connecting the age-long break between intellectuals and achievers, between idea and application. (Lamont, 1965, p. 32)

“Philosophy is a combined effort to deliver an exact and united analysis of the cosmos, of human nature, of humanity, and of the core morals. Plato states that “the philosopher is the spectator of all time and all existence.” (Lamont, 1965, p. 32) Corliss Lamont adds to Plato’s description that the philosopher must inquire into the major branches of the natural sciences and social sciences for achievement of a rational explanation of Nature and humanity. He reveals that

Humanism contains more than the refutation of supernaturalism. It requires a confirmatory philosophy as translated into a life devoted to one's own advance and the service of all humanity. (1965, p. 32)

Contemporary humanists generally consider themselves as non-theists, (agnostics or atheists) owing to their perception that there is not sufficient evidence of a supernatural God working for this earth and managing the human race towards a holy fate. Nevertheless, the hugeness of the cosmos makes them careful about completely rejecting the presence of supernatural powers. However, according to Heidegger, humanism is basically the determination of human essence so humanism takes care of human beings and gives importance that human beings do not to go outside of their essences. Every determination of the human essence is related to metaphysics, whether intentionally or not. Therefore, all kinds of humanism are associated with the field of metaphysics. (Heidegger, 2002, p. 47)

Humanism is a guiding attitude that focuses on the welfare, advancement, and happiness of all humanity in this one and only life. The highest ethical purpose of Humanism is the well-being of all people, with a high level of confidence placed on rational systems, democracy and love. The human being has the roles and features of God, due to being wise, autonomous, and one's own redeemer. For secular humanists, mankind is the single legislator. Modern humanism rejects any supernatural law or moral order, which is not originated from human intelligence. Human beings are the only creator of their ethical truths.

5.2 Humanism in Europe

Humanism is considered a philosophical movement that is associated with the intellectual and cultural change in Renaissance Europe. Humanism focuses on ethics that underlines the value of human beings, individually and communally, and usually chooses individual understanding and evidence over traditional principle or belief. Humanism is an approach which gives main significance to

human beings. Human worth, potential, science and sensuality are stressed against the religious despotism of Church.

Christian Humanists chose to use the perfect explanation of humanism, thus adding a religious texture to humanism: Christian humanism gave emphasis to Jesus's humanity; for example, Jesus's public educations and inclination to combine human mysticism with materialism. The humanist doctrine is suitable with the teachings of Jesus such as universal human worth, freedom and happiness. Christian Humanism provides a philosophical combination of religion and humanist philosophies, using the doctrines of classical learning to focus on theology, and the significance of personal conscience.

5.2.1 Renaissance Humanism

Renaissance Humanism started with the rebellion against the other-worldliness of medieval Christianity by the rediscovery of the Greek and Latin classics that opened a door to stop the autocracy of the Church. The first utilization of the word 'humanist' in English in print seems to be in 1589. (Copson, 2015, p. 1) In Renaissance, the concept of humanism was reproduced from the term *umanista* that was deriving from the latest Italian word that originally expressed 'students of Latin' which was the language in which Roman and Greek cultures were studied. (Copson, 2015, p. 1)

The Renaissance of Europe began in the period of the fourteenth century in Italy and then extended to the world. Early humanists did not think about the conflict between rationalism and their Christian belief. They voiced objections to the despotism of the Church, but they were not in contradiction with the Church itself, or against religion. Secular Humanism developed as a result of a significant division between reason and belief, because the Church tried to control two vigorous parts of science and mind. In science, Galileo's maintenance of the Copernican revolution distressed the Church's obedience to the concepts of Aristotle, revealing them as wrong. The Dutch academic Desiderius Erasmus exhibited, with a return to original Greek manuscripts, that

the Roman Catholic obedience to Jerome's Vulgate (translator of Bible) was a mistake in theology. The mistakes of translation cause the confliction between reason and authority, as both of them were then understood. (Guinness, 1973, p. 5) Therefore, this meant turning back to the Bible as the source of authority

instead of the Catholic Church; for others it was a split from theism altogether. The essential separation among the Reformation and the Renaissance that struggle for the similar simple difficulties, maintained the priority of science constructed on mind and empirical investigation with a changed set of assumptions (theistic versus naturalistic). (Shapin & Schaffer, 1985, pp. 146-147) Renaissance Humanism was primary a rebellion against the afterlife of medieval Christianity and concerned itself with living the best version of this life rather than living for the afterlife. Instead of the obsession with immortality, it was focused on making the best of existence in this world.

Rabelais and Erasmus are two prominent writers of the Renaissance. Erasmus is an important figure who started humanism by returning to the essential Scriptures. Erasmus is described as "the crowning glory of the Christian Humanism" (Olin, 1987) Suffering holy man was an ideal human for the Church to maximize their profits from this type of human; conversely, Renaissance man transformed self-denying into self-actualization. Famous Italian artists, such as Leonardo da Vinci and Michaelangelo, also affirmed the life in this world. Furthermore, Renaissance founded a rebellion in contradiction of the authority of the Catholic Church and the religious restrictions on thought. Human mind took back its superior place from creed.

5.2.1.1 Erasmus

Erasmus was one of the most influential activists during European Renaissance. At the same time, his ideas had a strong influence that can be drawn into the modern age. His essays were translated into different languages and distributed widely. Although his books were placed in the list of Forbidden Books by the Catholic Church, his studies got attention and attained their rightful place during

the Enlightenment. Erasmus studied to develop the systems of scholarship independently from the strictness and formalism of medieval traditions. Moreover, thanks to his studies he was accepted as the pioneer of modern philosophy. He wrote several works that would seem to provide a starting point for a philosophy of language.

Erasmus' epistemology is characterized by scepticism. He promotes comparing arguments on both sides of a question, before deciding on a conclusion. However, his scepticism does not cover the writings of faith. Erasmus reveals his skeptic inclination in *A Discussion of Free Will*. In this book, Erasmus used ethical standards to accept the question of free will. He argued that rejecting the existence of free will can extinguish the moral foundations of human behavior and that confirming the power of free will is socially beneficial. Erasmus criticizes some thinkers who deny the freedom of the will and make God responsible for our sins because it is inconsistent with God's righteousness and goodness. Unlike Martin Luther, he takes the view that human being is free to accept or reject the loveliness of God. He writes: "By free choice in this place we mean a power of the human will by which a man can apply himself to the things which lead to eternal salvation, or turn away from them". (Erasmus as cited in Rummel, 2017) Erasmus supports a combination of loveliness and free will so that salvation is both by merit and grace. Erasmus's view on salvation through good actions is rather intelligent: he considered that if good actions opened the way to personal salvation, it all relied on the free will (freedom of choice) of the one who achieved them. Human beings are free to live and be happy. Moral laws are applied not because a God commands them, but because they serve a good purpose. The violation of the rules only leads to worries, while leading a moral life leads to friendships that bring closer to happiness. The capability to achieve one's moral duty relies on divine loveliness, however, and is an aspect of the quality of mind related to the free will. Thus, human beings have a capacity for moral duty as well as the power to act well. (Rummel, 2017)

Erasmus' studies on the Christian New Testament are the most important works of him; moreover, he edited many classical and early Christian texts. Regarding Erasmus scholarship and his orthodoxy, most humanists see his editions as a major achievement though many theologians revile it. These studies represented the humanist desire for returning to the sources of Christian belief. For Erasmus, knowledge has no importance without being centered on or contributing to an understanding of Christ. He always remained faithful to Catholic doctrine, although he honestly criticizes virtually everyone and everything. In his famous book *In Praise of Folly*, he attacks the misconceptions and other traditions of European people in general and the church. It is an ironic investigation of the public and the many abuses of the Church.

Folly also cruelly represents the opposing misbeliefs of princes, and pompous cardinals and popes. The political attitude constructed on peace and the protection of the people by their leader; War is not compatible with the purity of the gospel, and we must not seek to derive the right to go to war from gospel precepts. There are many necessary evils in human affairs, which are tolerated because they prevent greater evils; yet they are not approved as gospel teaching. (Erasmus as cited in Rummel, 2017)

Erasmus' political understanding is directed by his idea of universal peace and the concepts of consensus and consent, which he grasps as the foundation of the government. In politics, Erasmus upholds agreement, negotiation, and peaceful assistance. He prefers to teach individuals by exhibiting their faults such as the contradictions between the actions of society's leaders and their acknowledged values of actions. He offers to educate the human beings and places stress not only on intellectual achievement, but also on physical and moral improvement that usually draws on ancient Greek and Roman scepticism.

Actually his thought which is known as "Christian Humanism" is a philosophy that was about the relation of Christianity and conventional behaviors. Erasmus enlarges the limits of the field of education in the history of philosophy. By accepting philosophy of religion, he shows some consideration for previous traditions such as Platonism and Epicureanism, because philosophy is a moral responsibility required by all believers, not only special university training. In

this context he founded an ethics of discourse to guide himself and others to what he regarded as the true love of wisdom. He identifies the equality of the worldly desires with the Stoic traditions, which harmonize with Plato and Socrates.

Erasmus quotes Plato and classical manuscripts in order to give a historical and pan-cultural aspect to Christian values. Indeed he drew on a number of models, both pagan and Christian, to describe human nature. Thus he also introduced the concept of a threefold division body, soul, and spirit an idea for which he cited Origen. Scholars have also pointed to the Stoic underpinnings found in Erasmus' thoughts on the quality of mind and even argued that he consciously embraced the Stoic concept of the simultaneous working of two opposite but equally essential types of value: spirit and instinct. In the *Enchiridion*, however, Erasmus makes it clear that he does not privilege one philosophy over another. Rather he deliberately presents various concepts of human nature by way of offering a survey of philosophical positions. He illustrates in a general way the superiority of spiritual over material concerns. His message to the reader was: human should be able to main as a Christian and for the love of. Grayling clarifies that what makes Erasmus a humanist; "is not simply his love of the classics and his application of them in his life and thought, but more importantly his belief in man's rationality and his ability to take moral responsibility for himself". (2004, p.113)

For Erasmus, Christian living included not only personal, but also public piety. In its social dimension, piety equals *caritas*, the love of one's neighbor. *Caritas* in turn parallels love of God. Caring for one's neighbor is "how our heavenly creditor taught us to pay our debt". (Erasmus cited in Rummel, 2017) He accepted humanistic belief as a step for self-improvement and elevation for humans, and believed in human being's ability for self-improvement and the main role of learning in increasing human beings above the level of animals.

Erasmus differentiates humankind from all other creatures. Animals continue to be animals because they are no more than that with which nature endowed them. As we can see, there are significant similarities to Alevi thought in these ideas of love, public piety and universal peace, the emphasis on the use of reason and free will, and the attention drawn not the importance of moral improvement.

Thanks to the mind with which God gifted human beings, human beings can advance their primitive nature and attain education on grounds of free will. Owing to this condition of free will, Erasmus' teaching is liberal that the teacher should have the understanding to use gentleness, rather than brutally imposing doctrines. Erasmus' researcher Johan Huizinga coined the term "Erasmian" to denote "gentleness, kindness, and moderation". (1957) In contemporary usage, "Erasmian" has come to signify not a liberal thinker, but an attitude as sympathy and tolerance.

5.2.2 Secular Humanism

After the 19th century, there began a separation between Humanism and religion under the impact of the Enlightenment and its principles of self-determination, autonomy and rationality. Human beings were posited in the center of the universe instead of God whom Nietzsche pronounced dead. Modern Humanism connotes an extensive progress, because of the inclusion of ancient Greece and Rome, the European Renaissance, the French Enlightenment, the highpoint of nineteenth-century Western culture and many important intellectuals of today. The word 'humanism' was popularized by mid-nineteenth-century cultural historians. Modern humanism differs from Renaissance humanism even though they both support freedom, equality, tolerance, compassion, and fairness as basic human needs and rights and both oppose religious fundamentalism as well. Renaissance humanists were scholars of the humanities. In understanding ancient non-Christian documents of humanity, humanists immersed themselves in several pagan traditions about the nature of humanity, and then they started to discard Christian views. (Erasmus, 1974, p. 142) Humanism was progressively

transformed from being firstly a research of the humanities to convert to the ceremonies of humanity (worship, prayer). Renaissance humanism started the process of secularizing the Western world. The word secular is appropriate to describe humanism and humanists because humanism was the product of a secularized society. Secularism reflects the characteristic of Western history and culture for modern history.

Homo homini deus est (“The human being is a god to humanity” or “god is nothing [other than] the human being to himself”), Feuerbach had written. (Davies, 1997, p. 28)

Humanism believes in a naturalistic metaphysics that considers all forms of the supernatural as legend. Nature is seen as the totality of being and as a constantly changing system of matter and energy. Humanism depends on the facts of science. Human beings are an evolutionary creation of the Nature. The mind is not separated from the brain. People have no conscious existence after death. People have the power to solve their own problems, through reliance on reason and the scientific method applied with bravery and vision. Human beings have the freedom to select and act with certain objective borders, and are the shapers of their own fate. For ethics or morality, human value experiences and relationships in this-earth and holds as its highest purpose the this-worldly happiness, freedom, and progress (economic, cultural, and ethical) of all humankind, irrespective of nation, race, or religion. The individual reaches the good life by combining private pleasures and persistent self- improvement with essential work and other activities that conduce to the benefit of the community. The extensive possible progress of art and the awareness of beauty contain the gratitude for Nature’s loveliness and brilliance, so that the aesthetic experience may become a universal reality in the lives of all people. Accomplishment of social program stands for the establishment of democracy, peace, and a high standard of living. The complete social implementation of reason and the scientific method regulate the democratic procedures, and parliamentary

government, with full freedom of expression and civil freedoms, throughout all areas of economic, political, and social life. (Bragg, 1933)

Individuals can obtain their own highest good in working for the good of all and themselves. Humanism emphasizes the prominence of love, shared experience, human happiness; tolerance of other points of assessment and styles of life; commitment to social justice and humanitarian help; a universal focus exceeding national, sexual, and ethnic obstacles, a perfect world community; an emphasis on reunion of divergences; credence in a society that is free, open, multicultural, and democratic.

5.2.2.1 Feuerbach

In the mid-nineteenth century Ludwig Feuerbach (1804–1872) played an important role in the history of post-Hegelian German philosophy, and in the transition from idealism to various forms of naturalism, materialism and positivism that is one of the most important improvements of this age. Feuerbach perceives God as an alienated projection of the human species-essence, which contains not only feeling, but reason and will. The direction of his intellectual views about religion continued to evolve after the publication of *The Essence of Christianity*, namely, away from an emphasis on species-consciousness conceived along Hegelian lines, and toward what Van Harvey has suitably referred to as the “naturalist-existentialist” concepts that prevail in his later writings on religion. (Harvey, 1995)

Feuerbach stresses in his essays corporeality, the senses, finitude, intersubjectivity, and drive psychology. These themes became entrenched in the history of contemporary philosophy through their being developed into more advanced concepts by thinkers such as Marx, Nietzsche, Freud, among others. (Harvey, 1995) To the extent that he is well known in our day by non-specialists of the history of nineteenth-century religious thought, it is mainly as the object of Marx’s critical opinions on Feuerbach, published after his death by Friedrich Engels as an add-on to his book, *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical*

German Philosophy. (Engels, 1994) Feuerbach deserves to be remembered as the thinker who made humanism philosophically serious. Marx's early philosophical texts (including *The German Ideology*), reveal the degree of Feuerbach's impact on Marx and Engels.

Feuerbach first expresses the human backgrounds of religious belief and designates the processes by which human being alienates itself from its real, practical apprehensions. Feuerbach focuses on the human being at the center of his system, not for stating our power over nature but for uniting human beings in their shared identity as a rational, alive, and imaginative species.

The publication of Feuerbach's book *The Essence of Christianity* in 1841, translated into English by George Eliot, triggered a scandal in Europe and assisted many young atheists and communists to express their opposition to the church, government and dogma. (Gooch, 2013) In *The Essence of Christianity*, Feuerbach aims to achieve two things: First, to attack the Hegelian assertion for the identity of religious and philosophical truth by displaying that Hegel succeeds in reconciling religion with philosophy only by depriving religion of its most distinct content. Second, to place the so-called positive philosophy in a most fatal light by presenting that the unique source of the worship image of God is the human being, that flesh and blood belong to personality fundamentally. (Gooch, 2013)

Feuerbach supported a combination of rationalism and empiricism by focusing on real existing human beings conceived as a kind of social, public and political subject. Feuerbach presents a detailed consideration of human nature, its requirements, achievements and desires, arguing that a "philosophy of the future" can be accomplished only after this examination. Feuerbach searches for "a philosophy of positive religion or revelation", and then conversion into his former idealistic pantheism. He criticizes both Hegelian speculative theology and the positive philosophy from "the same standpoint" taken by Spinoza in his theological and political papers. (Gooch, 2013) Spinoza notes that the biblical

authors imagined God as ruler, legislator, king, merciful, etc., although all these things are merely attributes of human nature and far uninvolved in the divine nature. (Spinoza, 2016, p. 63) Drawing on this insight, Feuerbach concludes that religion is an alienated form of human self-consciousness insofar as it involves the relation of human beings to their own essence as though to a being distinct from themselves. (1881)

God deliberated as the theoretical object of rational reflection, is an eternal and impassible entity that is unaffected by human pain and finally indifferent from reason itself. (Feuerbach, 1881) Feuerbach points out that the human consciousness that is assured up with consciousness of such an impersonal being is in no way a religious consciousness; it is much more characteristic of skeptics, materialists, naturalists and pantheists. (Feuerbach as cited in Gooch, 2013)

Feuerbach puts his central idea as: “The true sense of Theology is Anthropology”. (1881) Instead of considering the heavens and the illusions of holy belief in order to comprehend faith, the precondition to ask these questions around is another question: what is it in human being that needs to believe? Why do human beings want immortality? Why do human beings project all those things they respect in themselves as the capacity to forgive, to create, to love on to something divine they cannot prove? Feuerbach responds by establishing that every aspect of what people give the name ‘God’ to corresponds to some basic feature of human nature. People attribute these human capabilities on to something beyond them since human potential extends much further than what mortal individual beings can accomplish. Feuerbach argues that because the individual human being is mortal, finite, and seemingly unimportant, human beings suppose there must be a thing that is a perfect model of human being—i.e., one that is infinite, immortal, all-seeing, instead of being finite and mortal. However, human beings should take these qualities back from belief and apprehend them in their correct place like human desires, not religious powers. He rejects the distinction between the predicates of the divine and human nature. He says: “in theology, the predicates are not accidents, but express the essence

of the subject, there is no distinction between subject and predicate, the one can be put in the place of the other”.(1881, p. 11) This insight lies at the basis of his transformative criticism of Hegel, namely, changing the places of the subject and the predicate.

Feuerbach's desire to revise the anti-natural and speculative tendencies of both Hegelian philosophy and theology was at the cornerstone of his fundamental project. The metaphysical foundations only support the external points of religion, but in its essence, speaking of God means speaking of human beings' abstract universality; the second person of the Trinity (i.e., Jesus), by virtue of his having subjected himself for the salvation of humanity to a humble birth and an ignominious death, “is the sole, true, first person in religion”. (Feuerbach as cited in Gooch, 2013) God is actually forced by his love for humanity to abandon his divinity and become human. Feuerbach takes as proof that “Man was already in God, was already God himself, before God became man” belief in divine compassion involves the attribution or projection onto God of a moral sentiment that can only be experienced by a being capable of suffering, which “God as God” is not. (Feuerbach as cited in Gooch, 2013)

According to Feuerbach, “religion takes the apparent, the superficial in nature and humanity for the essential, and hence conceives their true essence as a separate, special existence: that consequently, religion, in the definitions which it gives of God, at least in those definitions which are not negative in the sense above referred to, only defines or makes objective the true nature of the human word.. (1881, p. 12)

Feuerbach's reasoning concludes with religious belief as in its agreement with the human essence. If theological assertions are evaluated in their accurate meaning, they are acknowledged as declaring not theological but anthropological realities. When religious believers apply to God that actually means applying to the human beings' essence (a fantasy depiction of God). Furthermore, if theological assertions are evaluated to refer to a non-human divine being, they are ordinarily taken to be self-contradictory with the essence of human being.

Instead of atheism, Feuerbach's assessments are labeled “anthropomorphisms” because the divinity of human being refutes “the false or theological essence of

religion” and confirms “true or anthropological essence” (Feuerbach as cited in Gooch, 2013) For example, animals don’t have religion but human beings do because religion distinguishes human beings from animals. If a human being is aware of himself/herself as human, he/she is not only as a rational being, but also as willing and a feeling being. The capacity for thought is perceived as the capacity to participate in internal dialogue, and as a result to be conscious of oneself as containing both I and also others.

The religion reveals that God is man, man is God; it is not I, but religion that denies the God who is not man. God is not distinguished from man as a human form, human feelings, and human thoughts, the object of its worship and veneration. Consciousness is a kind of self-verification, self-affirmation, and self-love. Consciousness is the characteristic mark of a perfect nature; it exists only in a self-sufficing, complete being. This self-satisfaction is a necessary, unintentional result of the completeness; for instance, human beings see their appearances on mirror, they have self-satisfaction in their appearances the beauty of their form since a beautiful form has automatically happiness in self-thought.

The beginning point of Feuerbach’s thinking of belief is human nature. Human beings are constructed in such a way that they are intelligent and learning, and capable of being both subject and object. Human being is unknown without an outer object such as the physical world and other human beings. (1881) Because human beings know themselves and develop consciousness of their own nature, they comprehend that they are species. Gradually, humans reason, will, and love in association with exterior objects and turn out to be self-conscious; this self-consciousness is defined by Feuerbach as a being becoming objective to itself. In this process of self-consciousness, becoming both subject and object are confused, this mistake causes the separation of their objective nature as something that is distinct from themselves. The positing of the human essence as external to human beings lies at the root of the theological alienation of human beings from their own essence. Feuerbach argues that human beings are rejecting

their nature and thus alienating themselves from what is actually human. The superhuman holy being of religion is no more than the unintentional projections of the essential qualities of human nature, and this projection, in turn, is explained by a concept of human consciousness that is quite Hegelian.

Feuerbach thinks that the unseen truth of religion can be comprehended in the form of an atheistic humanism that rejects the fantastical supports of religion in order to hold the historical tasks of human self-realization and the creation of the political and cultural institutions.

The essence of ethics is the love of man to man. Feuerbach objects to the religions that put more importance on anything other than the claim that “God is love” because such religions would be basically immoral as they would prioritize duties to this impersonal God above duties to fellow human beings. On this line of thought, Feuerbach distinguishes between love and faith so that ‘love’ represents love of human being and faith represents mindless devotion to an impersonal God. Then he contrasts them as follows: if love is the essence of belief, belief is its empty form. Belief splits God from human being and therefore human being from human beings, thus splitting them. Such religion contains fanaticism and intolerance towards all issues; so religion is immoral. Feuerbach says: “So faith assimilates only believers and repels unbelievers. It is good towards believers and wicked towards non-believers”. (1881, p. 290) Moreover religion cannot be a measure to discriminate between good and evil since it is unbalanced and constructed on an accidental emotion or mood. Chance is usually the main subject of religion that is something unintended and involuntary, something free from human understanding and desire, but it is something that controls the fortune of human being.

Feuerbach advocates faith without God that is faith of the love of man to man. Love unites morality and religion because Feuerbach considers that the basis of morality and religion are true only for love. To illustrate, God is the essence of human beings, beliefs support the love God; therefore, eventually preaches

human to human love which is the principle of ethics. “Love is a connection and an intermediary between perfect and imperfect, sinful and sinless, general and individual, the law and the heart, God and human. Love is God Himself and there is no God out of love”. (1881, p. 79) Love to human beings should be the best rule for beings. It seems impossible to love other individuals if they are not considered divine and as containing God in them. “The love of man to man is God and that is the higher practical basic principle”. (1881, p. 308)

According to religions, the purpose of human beings is to achieve salvation for oneself and others as obedience to the orders of God and to worship God in order to be happy in eternal life. Human behaviors have to be compatible with the rules of belief; so human desires, passions, wishes are underestimated for the love of God. However, the mind grows like the body; like the body, it receives characteristics from both parents; it is affected by diseases of the body and by drugs; it is intimately connected with the brain. There is no rational and scientific reason to suppose that after death the mind or soul acquires an independence from the brain, which it never had in life. (Russell, 1961, p. 21) The mind-body dualism is a kind of illusion without any experimental evidence. The postponing of happiness for eternal life is kind of deception of human nature because of self-denying. Therefore, Feuerbach focuses on the goal of human nature that praises self-actualization:

To will, to love, to think, are the highest powers, are the absolute nature of man as man, and the basis of his existence. Man exists to think, to love, to will Now that which is the end, the ultimate aim, is also the true basis and principle of a being. But what is the end of reason? Reason of love? Love of will? Freedom of the will? We think for the sake of thinking; love for the sake of loving; will for the sake of willing— i.e., that we may be free. True existence is thinking, loving, willing existence. That alone is true, perfect, divine, which exists for its own sake. But such is love, such is reason, such is will. The divine trinity in man, above the individual man, is the unity of reason, love, will. Reason, Will, Love, are not powers which man possesses, for he is nothing without them, he is what he is only by them; they are the constituent elements of his nature, which he neither has nor makes, the animating, determining, governing powers. (1881, p. 21)

After modernization, instead of relying on religion, doctrine, or mysticism, secular humanism concerned itself with critical thinking, and human experience,

the growth of moral responsiveness and the capacity for free choice and an understanding of the consequences of one's actions. Humanism becomes a religion that has compatible thoughts with materialism, naturalism communism and socialism. Without supernatural powers, humanism plays the roles of religion in meeting the social needs of human beings such as moral education, shared holiday and celebrations, and the design of a community and fulfilling the special needs of individuals.

5.2.2.1.1 Comparison between Feuerbach and Alevism

When comparing Feuerbach's opinion to Alevism; differences can be pointed out; yet, there are also similarities in terms of the features of religion humanism such as the equal essences of human and God, human nature and self-consciousness. One of Feuerbach's supreme strengths is that he points out that belief relates only to human subjects. Both Feuerbach's love and Alevi love classifies human being and God together; propounding that they have the same essence. Alevism does not split God from human being and therefore human being from other human beings as not an orthodox belief because of the unity of piece and whole or human-universe-God.

Every moment of the changing world	He is mysterious,
Is the secret of Ali, the ruler,	The ruler is holy in all regards,
The prince of brave warriors, the lion of God	If you study in his school,
The pole of ages, prince of heroes, Ali. Ali.	Both knowledge and studying are

All this phenomenal	If you want to know this secret,
Journey is his journey.	Have control over your instincts,
The club of mysterious divine lads	Turn to Ali,
The praise of Ali's secret.	He'll guide you in the dialect.

My friend—both phenomenal and esoteric,
His secret treasury is hidden,

The world notices that

Its mystic journey is Ali. (Sipos & Csaki, 2009, p. 554)

In both Feuerbach's thought and Alevism, human beings morally evaluate qualities in their own values before human beings attribute them to God. The moral norms of human being are determined by the conception of God.

Like Alevi-Bektashi thought, the essence of man unites supernatural and the perfect human essence of God and the initial idea is actually reached in the end by human beings. Human being is the start of religion, human being is the center of religion, and human being is the final goal of religion. Alevi view places human being on the center of religion and universe, the starting point of universe is the love of human and the end of universe also related to human being.

In the attitudes of the mind, consciousness of the object is different from consciousness of self; yet, in religion, consciousness of the object and self-consciousness coincide. The object of the senses is outside of the human being, the spiritual object is within him, and thus as little abandons him as his self-consciousness or his conscience; it is the near, the closest object. God is more related to human, and more easily known by human being. In Alevism, human being is the center of both consciousness of the object and self-consciousness since without self-knowledge, human being cannot obtain the knowledge of God and universe; moreover, God is more easily known by human being due to the placement of Gods essence into human beings. Like Feuerbach's humanism, the removal of the separation in Alevism between the creator and the created puts human in the center of the universe; so Wahdat al-Wucud leaves its place to human rights and democracy. (Melikoff, 1993, p. 320)

Feuerbach believed that human beings would overcome their alienation if they directed their love and worship to other human beings instead of a transcendent deity. In this respect, both Feuerbach's humanism and Alevism have social and political implications in directing the act of worship to community service rather than useless acts of ritualistic religious obedience.

Another important point of comparison between Feuerbach's views and Alevi thought is that both believe that there is no qualitative difference between the human being and God, but only a quantitative difference: God is infinite, while the human being is finite. However, this is also the point where the two views begin to diverge, because according to Alevi belief, God is really infinite. According to Feuerbach, on the other hand, the infinite nature of God is a projection of the human imagination.

This difference between Alevism and Feuerbach's humanism also leads to differences in what the welfare, advancement and happiness of humanity consists in and is attached to according to them. Feuerbach is concerned with human 'beings' advancement, desires, and happiness, but in Alevism human beings should purify desires, passion and self by rational part of soul; so happiness or welfare are not on the forefront.

5.3 Comparison between Alevi Humanism and Western Humanism

As the discussions above make clear, there are significant similarities between Alevi thought and Western humanism such that Alevism can be rightfully called a humanistic creed. As mentioned above, Western humanism was primarily a reaction against the underestimation of the human mind by the Church and the emphasis placed on an afterlife, which reduced the importance of the human being. Alevi heterodoxy also rejects the imposition of religious dogma Alevism does not directly accept all Islamic moral values without hesitation. Moral values are evaluated by reason and logic. Alevism is based on esoteric and mystical values that are the product of human mind and needs. The greatest treasure given to the human being, the mind, is considered to be his/her most distinctive characteristic. There is no area of moral values that the human mind is afraid to explore, to challenge, to question, or to doubt, notwithstanding the order of Qur'an. The human mind is the most reliable guide for understanding the universe and making human choices. The mind is likened to a parachute; the

parachute causes the death of human beings who do not open it. (Özcan, 2011, p. 15)

In addition, as in Western humanism, Alevism also emphasizes improving life on this earth. Contrary to other belief systems, the starting point of Alevism and its historical evaluation always put the human being at the center. For example; all religions generally assert that God created the universe for the sake of human being; however, they postpone the human happiness to an afterlife. In this point, Alevi thought eliminates the separation of heaven or hell and this world. (Özcan, 2011, p. 82) All kinds of awards and punishments are placed in this world for human beings. Hence, as discussed in Chapter 4, Alevism does not promote living this life for the other world. In parallel to this, Alevi-Bektashi thought differs from the classical religious system, and its syncretic and heterodox structure of folk Islam furthers and contributes to the development of humanistic thought.

According to the monotheistic religions, God created man and the universe to be known; however, these religions could not explain why God needs to be known. However, Wahdat-al Wucud emerges with a more logical argument. God wants to know himself better and reaches higher consciousness with the structure and living of the infinite beings. The main source of God's self-knowledge is the mature human who possesses reason, thought, love and intuition.

The soul of human being is wandering from person to person, purifying, maturing, and then returning to God with love; thus this understanding places heaven and hell in the world, destroys the afterlife, and saves people from servitude and the fears of God and hell. Human being determines his/her destiny that is peace with God. (Özcan, 2011, p. 27)

However, there is an important difference between Western humanism and Alevism. Even though Western humanism was also originally not atheistic, today, the concept of humanism is rarely put forward without the rejection of all supernatural beliefs and religion. This difference can be made more specific in

the understanding of the human mind and reason in Alevi humanism as opposed to Western humanism. While Western humanism seems to put an emphasis on a highly secular, positivistic understanding of science and the use of human reason, in Alevi-Bektashism, the esoteric understanding of God and the human mind has a substantial mystical component.

Arabi mentioned three stages of truths; knowledge of mind, knowledge of universe, knowledge of secret. Intellectual knowledge is in education, knowledge of universe examines all creatures, but knowledge of secret encompasses all truths. There are five stages of secret; certainty based on reason, divine enthusiasm, deep love, intuition, understanding the union of universe. (Özcan, 2011, p. 108)

According to Topçu, some philosophers argue that science and religion conflict, and they accept only scientific knowledge as absolute truth. They shy away from metaphysics, which is the real subject of philosophy, according to Topçu, so that the three faculties of the human being, which are sensation, mind and intuition are reduced to sensation for the sake of positivism, and end up creating a type of human being consisting of senses. (1999, p.118) The connected stages between the human being and the universe are not recognized because of the denial of religion (or mystical knowledge). They separate the human soul from the wholeness of the universe.

According to logicians, the definition of thought is the relationship between consciousness and objects, which presupposes a continuation of the outside world in our inner world. Why is there no objective reality and certainty in our inner world as in the outside world? Why do people who perceive have very different and opposing ideas concerning the same things? Because psychology reveals that one feels before thinking; self-esteem, passions and ambitions influence our thoughts. Therefore, this kind of thinking is not about fitting ourselves to objects, but about fitting objects to ourselves. As a result, the human being does not recognize the reality independently of his/her perception, and

universalizes his/her own individual experiences. However, the universe's existence does not depend on our consciousness, the truth in itself. Human beings see the world through the eyes of their appetites. (Topçu, 1998a, p. 19)

Topçu contends that actual faith consists of continuity of belief, in other words, an unshakable belief. This continuity of faith is achieved with philosophy. Thus, human being transcends himself/herself through philosophy and enters the mystical universe. At the level of the senses, there is belief in the most concrete matter. This immanent 'belief is continued by philosophical thought; so that it occupies the spirit and reaches supremacy from immanence; that belief is called faith. (Birgül, 2011)

On the contrary, our mystical understanding of faith requires no mystery; it is not a necessity, but as a result that human reaches with all his/her existence as his/her soul and his/her body and his/her intelligence and movement. There is nothing irrational in faith. It is the highest movement of mind. (Topçu, 1998b, p. 145)

Yunus: "there is an 'I' inside me, inner than myself." is meant 'I', in which mind turns to the self-grasping. This eternity, which is hidden in the deepest of the thinking person, is the common source of religion and morality. (1999, p. 157) This irresistible orientation to eternity is called 'love and the mystical field mentioned begin here. Because he thinks with universal principles, the mind that places the eternity against the mortal is fascinated to eternity, drawn to it. As a matter of fact, Topçu defines love as follows: "Love is transferred from the world of beings to eternity" (1999, p.57) Thus, the mind, which is incapable of grasping the infinite, is turn to heart; because love, not the mind of object At this stage thought leaves the place of inspiration and being understood as a whole. (1998c, p. 18) Topçu says: without love, human cannot know the truth, and full love, reach it's the love of eternity. Truth is the love of the soul; soul loves to truth that makes thinking. Since thinking is philosophy, the love of the soul for truth is the foundation and existential cause of thought. (1999, p. 57)

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Humanist philosophy is generally criticized for neglecting nature and other existences. “The attitudes and values that shape people’s concepts of nature come primarily from religious worldviews and ethical practices’. (Tucker and Grim, 2009) Humanism focuses on humans’ well-being so people assume they have a right to consume and manipulate other existences and the planet’s ecosystems for their benefits because greater happiness of human beings means more need for natural resources as food, water and energy. Consequently, as Hawken argues: “we now occupy a human planet, one in which most evolutionary forces are guided or misguided by our hand....Human agency will alter the fate of all living beings because no part of the planet is unaffected by our activities”. (Hawken, 2007) Human being is a part of universe with all existences. The health of planet’s ecological systems depend on clean air, pure waters, a rich variety of plants and animals, fertile soils; yet the actions of human beings destroy the community of life. However, the universe is as important as human beings in the Alevi worldview because every creature carries God’s divine light.

As explained in this thesis, Alevis oriented themselves in a world where God is brought down to the earth’s surface by the union of God and human being. This world that Alevis possess is the syncretism of some features of monotheistic religious traditions with heterodox pantheistic views. The historical moment for Alevism, resulted in simultaneously combining pagan and pantheistic elements with ancient, pre-monotheistic spiritual elements and the elements of the monotheistic religions. That seems to have encouraged a mission for “hidden” references that was combined with an emphasis on the mystic pantheism of the

oneness of being (Wahdat al-Wucud). As one of the most heterodox mysticisms, the theory professed that ultimate truth and perfection can lie only in a pantheistic synthesis.

According to pantheism, the universe or nature as the entirety of everything is identical with divinity, or that everything composes an all-encompassing, immanent god. (Taliaferro, 1994, p. 340) Spinoza's famous book, Ethics spread pantheistic theory to the Western world. Spinoza uses the word 'God' to define the unity of substance that apprehends the monist view, and monism is a fundamental part of his philosophy. According to Spinoza, "God is the infinite, necessarily existing that is, uncaused unique substance of the universe. There is only one substance in the universe; it is God; and everything else that is, is in God. A substance is prior in nature to its affections. God, or a substance consisting of infinite attributes, each of which expresses eternal and infinite essence, necessarily exists." (Spinoza, 2016)

Similarly, in Alevi-Bektashi belief, plurality is only the external appearance of entities; it is just mirror images of the one in numerous forms, and the one is God. The existences of all the universe and human beings are included in the one. There is not anything except God.

Moreover, human beings become the manifestation of God in human form. There is no fundamental distinction between the creator and universe so that everything exists within a single reality. Alevi mysticism is established on a feeling of pantheistic wholeness, while any monotheism is the result of intellectual thought. The comprehensive sentiment relies on itself, while monotheism and any form of theism are the outcome of a search for a starting point.

To the Bektashi, as to the pantheistic mystic in Islam generally, the physical world is a reflection of Reality in Adem, non-existence; and the sense of duality, *ikilik*, is the veil which hides the reality of God's existence from men. Men feel themselves separate from God and look upon the world about them as also being separate from God. Since in this seeming separateness the only touch of reality lies in the fact that man and the universe are emanations of Divinity there is, therefore, in

man a spark of Real Existence which is ever seeking to be reunited with the source from which it came. This tendency to find birlik, or oneness with the only real being, expresses itself in a struggle with self. As self is conquered the sense of 'oneness' is made possible (Birge, 1937, p. 110)

The unifying oneness of Being is perceived by the imagination and differentiating manyness of knowledge and discernment is perceived by reason. The Real is one in Essence and many in names, the names being the principles of all multiplicity, limitation, and definition. In effect, with the eye of imagination, the heart sees Being present in all things, and with the eye of reason it distinguishes its transcendence and the diversity of the divine expressions. From stone to sun everything is sacred.

6.1 Universe

Makalat stated that the first human Adam was created from the soil of various geographical regions: eg, as the body of Adam was from Medina, the head from Jerusalem, the face was created with the Kaaba soil, and finally the heels from Greece, the feet from the land of Europe. (Coşan, 1996, p. 44) The creation of Adam from the lands of various geographical regions provides for the feature of being a citizen of the universe and enables the fraternity of the world; this diversity contributes to the idea of wealth in the world. (Bal, 2005, p. 24) In the Alevi-Bektashi thought, the human being is to protect the universe, everything that exists in the universe as God's own; therefore, human being shows love and respect to all existing things with the unity of human and universe. Human beings are not independent from the universe because human beings and the universe are intertwined.

This unity and solidarity can be associated with the idea of brotherhood. This idea essentially shapes man with virtues and society. Almost all practices, sayings, pictures among Alevi-Bektashi communities advise people to overcome their ego, to reach God, to behave fairly, to live in unity and not to discriminate. Cem ceremonies where we can also see the effects of shamanism and the semahs in these ceremonies are examples of these practices. In this application, the aim

is to defeat the self that is inherent in human nature, to reach God and to clear the heart. “Let us die before our death, Let us sever ourselves from the worldly vanities, embark the ship of fena (the annihilation of the personality) and build out the city of the soul.”

6.1.1 Microcosm-Macrocosm

Due to the idea that everything that exists in the universe was placed in the human being by the divine way, the human is expressed as microcosm and the universe as macrocosm. At the same time, everything in the universe is actually for the human being, leading to the expression of human being in the form of the world of Kubra (human body, microcosms) within great universe. (Temren, 1995, p. 152) For the unity of human-universe-God, Adam contains in his body samples of whatever exists in the universe. According to the information of Makalat, both the universe and the human being resemble each other in terms of seven points: the sky as a human skin, trees as the fingers of the hand, the grass as the hair, the bushes as the arms, the mountains as the head's bone, cloud and rain as anxiety and tears. (Coşan, 1996, pp. 34-35)

Aşık Daimi's discourse shows the belief that Haqq is in Adam, which is found in the Alevi-Bektashis' perspective centered on the human being.

I am the mirror of the universe, since I am a human being,
I am the Haqq's wealth of existences since I am a human being,
Human in God, God in Human, if you are looking for the right person,
There is a lot of ingenuity in human beings, since I am a human being,
I can write the Torah I can string the Bible I can sense the
Qur'an since I am a human being. (Özmen, 1998, p. 454)

6.2 The Cult of Ancestors-The Cult of Nature

In the primitive period of every society, everything in nature was considered to be a living being and it was believed that there were some hidden forces in nature. The physical entities in nature had emotional impact on particular

communities. The acceptance in the natural powers of the old Turkish religion was known as a system of cult of ancestors and the cult of nature in a dual appearance as land and sky cults. (Ocak, 2000, p. 60) In the life of Alevi Bektashis, there is the belief that everything has a soul and can feel. The written Chinese documents give details about the cults of the sky-god, sun, moon, earth, water, ancestor or fires: many of these cults belong to ancient Central Asian Shamanism. (Inalcık. 1994, pp.50-51) Everything in nature, such as mountain, hill, stone, rock, tree and water has powers to realize all wishes. However, the cults of nature in Turks never directly deified natural entities nor saw them as divine. It was believed that the whole nature comprises secret spirits' powers. Mountains, hills, trees and rocks are beings that can feel, hear and cause goodness and badness. In other words, what is capable of doing these is actually the secret power within them. (Uçkun, 1999, p. 369) For instance, Alevi groups respect the existence of the spirit thing within stones or rocks, instead of the matter of stone or rock. (Ocak, 2000, pp. 122-123) Water is also an important element of natural cults. The holy water represents vital activities such as hearing, speaking, getting married and having children.

The mountains and hills are high and near the sky so they have been believed to be the signs of the transcendent and the deific from the ancient periods of time. In Anatolia, God is placed in the Sky; when people open their hands for their prayers, they head for the Sky. The high mountains are respected in terms of being near god. The mystical and holy creatures live in mountains and hills that were converted to sheiks in Islam. Alevi-Bektashi dervishes believe in having been created from territory and going to the earth. The places of their tomb are actually on a mountain or hill, surrounded by trees, probably covered with cloths on the branches of the trees. In many parts of Anatolia, people believe that cutting big trees is not a good thing and brings bad luck. (Fıçlalı, 1996, p. 66) Lastly, just as a seed contains within itself a tree; the human being at least in their ideal states, hold within themselves the macrocosm. (Birge, 1937, p. 118)

“This universe is a tree; Man became its fruit. That which was intended is the fruit; do not think it was the tree”. (Birge, 1937, p. 118)

In Alevi Bektashism, death was believed to be as natural as birth as a regular phase of life. But there is also the idea that the dead can enter another body or an animal and to move from one land to another. Thus death is not interpreted like an absolute end. In semah, the action of turning the palms toward the sky and soil shows a circulation in life and death; so a new way of life allows the recreation of ancestors. (Eröz, 1992, pp. 68-69) The cult of ancestor is grounded on the dead’s defense of their family from evil and supporting them after their death. In the imagination of Ali as the sun, and praying for his appearance, Ali is identified with the day of the sun’s birth; this belief can be traced to the Sky-God of the ancient Turks. (Melikoff, 1993, p. 44) “The creator put me in the center of the wheel of time and turned me round like the potter turns the clay. He turned me into man, then plant, then an inanimate matter. How many times I have been born of a mother’s womb! How many times I have been a fisherman, then a bird!”. (Sipos & Csaki, 2009, p. 43)

6.3 Communism-Socialism

Alevism’s production as a humanistic philosophy is “characterized by the classic Alevi features of tolerance, love, and respect for all men created in god’s image and in whom god exhibits himself, notwithstanding of race, religion, or nation. Love, support for those in want, kindness, solidarity, sharing, honesty, self-knowledge, freedom, equality, fraternity, democracy all are seen as unique humanitarian Alevi characters” .(Zeidan, 1995) The formation of Alevism is quite mystical, so their members can be both ‘believer’ and ‘Marxist’, or both ‘sufist’ and ‘laic. (Albayrak, 2008) According to Keçeli, the Alevilik progress, Marxism adapted to Shamanistic basis of Alevi social groups suited the creative foundation of the esoteric philosophy. This relation between the social association of Shamanistic cultures and Islamic Mysticism is a required step in a link of reasoning completion with the celebration of Alevilik as an attitude as

related to in Laicism and Humanism. Mysticism, put forward as the teaching of the matured-perfect human being through a comprehension of the nature of reality, has an ethical aspect, the responsibility of profiting humanity. A person with inner knowledge though tries to be favorable and helpful for the entire humanity. (Keçeli, 1996, p. 19)

The Marxist/ Communist approach to the true nature of Alevism, drawing attention to the emphasis on production, ownership and power in Alevism, has also been noted by Ocak in his analysis of Alevi literature. (Ocak, 1991) Ocak groups various writers and books on Alevism, according to the different approaches, methods and theories they develop about the essential character of Alevism, and he characterizes a typical Marxist perspective as follows: “By considering the phenomenon from a more materialistic perspective, argues that Alevism-Bektashism is fundamentally a socio-economic system with its roots in a Communist spirit but in time, through deterioration, its surface has gone to ashes, and that it is necessary to sweep up the ashes and regain its former structure.” (Ocak, 2000) The Communist spirit in question, the original Alevi social organization, is understood as lack of private ownership, social classes and the state, and as a production system based on equality. This attitude is identified with the term consent by the semah teacher, a concept which he illustrates with the story of a society where nothing can be purchased with money and everyone consumes according to their needs.

In Eastern Europe during the 1950s and 1960s, and in recognition of the rediscovery of Marx's early writings, many socialists reinterpreted their philosophy as a form of humanism, emphasizing the subjective consequences of economic and political oppression. This not only generated a reinvigorated critique of the alienated state of capitalist society, but also became a stimulus for communist regimes to loosen their grip on their populations. (Davies, 1997)

In his writings dating from the early 1840s, Marx claimed that mere atheism constituted "theoretical humanism." He asserted, by contrast, that communism

was "practical humanism" or a truly "radical" humanism. Marx meant by this that the sources of inhumanity were not products merely of the human mind but also of the distribution of property into private hands and of an economic system that forced the vast mass of humankind to toil under conditions of extreme alienation. Communism, which he saw as social ownership of the means of production, would yield the material conditions under which all of humanity could flourish in a free and creative manner. All creed systems, and specifically the monotheistic creed, arose with the intention of protecting the autonomy and achieving the human rights of the oppressed, every creed systems, in period, in the hands of the persecutors, have come to be something not reminiscent of its unique position. The belief system has converted to mere formality. (Keçeli, 1996, pp. 7-10)

6.4 Modernization and the Reconstruction of Alevism

Religions are never stable and they transform, and are all the time reformed after novel circumstances by the hands of authorities with the control to reorganize the world. The people in the modern world are exposed to a capitalistic transformation leading to individualistic actions, pragmatic relationships and the losing of human being' values, so that humanity is arguably experiencing a social, cultural, economic and political breakdown in the last century. Although globalization is mainly an economic concept, it also affects culture globally.

The process of globalization has also accelerated the Alevis' modernization, which is generally taken to have begun after the founding of the republic and migration to cities, especially in the 1950s. Owing to the great percentage of intentional or compulsory migration from regions that were dominantly Alevi, Alevism can no longer be categorized as only a rural phenomenon. Consequently, analyzing Alevism in the context of urbanization and urban Bektashism is a significant assignment.

Şahin indicates that this process actually began earlier; owing to the missionaries who chose Anatolia as a field of study in the 19th century and exposed Alevis to

modernizing effects much earlier. This process is the first Alevi Renaissance and the second Renaissance period of Alevi has started since 1990. (Şahin, 2002)

Urbanization began the dissolution of Alevi culture in the 1950's, but Alevism-Bektashism came to redefine itself. Alevi groups made an effort to protect their characteristic features from the effects of urbanization and modernization, while Alevi worship and rituals were confronted with the challenge of recreating the public standard of Alevi identity.

The modification of Alevism is an essential movement because of its nature of involving both religious or cultural and political approaches; thus it is suitable for diverse position groups at the same time. The studies on the development of

Alevism in the social and religious arena concentrate on the source of its principles and ceremonies, in addition to its socio-cultural and religion-political tendencies, such as the heterodox Middle Eastern religious elements, Sunni Islam, Shi'a Islam, and secular modernity. The distinct plurality of the socio-political and religious approach includes the opposing ideas of modern Alevism as representing the authentic essence of Islam, a secularized style of Islam or an extra-Islamic belief altogether.

The transformations of modern Alevism and Bektashism; hence the interesting sides of the process are appropriately called by Martin van Bruinessen "the reorganization of heterodoxy in the Middle East and Southeast Asia.". (1997) Kehl-Bodrogi restructures the historical relation of Alevism to modernization as she encountered it in her field exploration among central Anatolian and Western Alevi groups and in their religious poetry. The writer also dedicated some texts to the current progresses in Alevism. (1988)

Since the establishment of the Republican period, the Turkish thesis claimed Turkishness as a main indicator of Alevism, comprehended as an exact Turkish belief system which succeeds in relating Islam with components of authentic Turkish customs containing Shamanism, thus evolving a creed much more

appropriate for Turks than Arabic Islam and containing authentic Turkish characteristics such as tolerance, humanitarianism, egalitarianism, and an attention on the internal creed of the reserved by Alevism. Alevism is seen as the exact conserver of authentic Turkish values, religion, and linguistics without Ottoman pressures to Arabize or Persians. (Zeidan, 1995)

A number of authors, especially socialist writers, established into view the thoughts that Alevism is not correlated to Islam, and that the convictions prior to Islam come together within Alevilik with an Islamic appearance. Even in the Quran, which we accept as truly created by God, there are terminologies which look like expressions from faiths before Islam; from ancient Greek concepts, to begin with. With these resemblances, can we say that the Islamic belief is not a novel belief system, and that it is a repetition from other creeds? The Quran is in itself the essence and the brief of earlier traditions. (Keçeli, 1996, p. 6)

On the other hand, the syncretistic and heterogeneous form of Alevi principles is abused for various purposes. During the transformation in the Alevi movement, both the secular approach and the religiosity among the Alevi community are reinvigorated by the very performers of the movement founded on an identity construction.

6.4.1 Laicism

After the Republic was established, all sects were closed and banned, so the Alevi traditional religious leadership called dedelik and the gathering houses of worship termed cemevi were exposed to pressure in post-Ottoman modernity. On the other hand, some would argue that the philosophy of Alevism, which is a belief system converted to a philosophy, exemplifies the rational fundamentals of Laicism, and that the Alevi social missions are established on the social underpinning of laicism. (Korkmaz, 2000)

Indeed, during the Republican period, the Alevis took position in support of laicism, Atatürk's revolutions, women's rights, and the new standards of living,

and later the social democratic movement. Alevi society brings together their traditions, in some cases they stress on their being the protectors of secularism, in the sample of Kemalist Alevis.

Zeidan gives details about Alevism's social demonstration: Alevism is presented as the belief of mind and knowledge which underline training, advancement, purport of secularism, equality and science, supports special and public morality, and suitable with modernity, commonly the connection between Alevis and Atatürk. (1995) Owing to the relationship between Atatürk's ideas and Alevism, in Atatürk's Republic, Alevis turn into keen republicans and are characterized as standing in the left sphere of the republican and socialist foundations. (Elwert, 1995, p. 67)

Further, Aydın explains that Alevi people distinguish themselves from Islam owing to the Sunni dominance. The leaders of Alevism have been tortured by authorities throughout history, like the primary imam Ali. However, Alevi groups have never restricted themselves to practice of devotion in mosques, pilgrimage to Mecca, reading Quran and fasting in Ramadan, isolation of men and women, banning of alcohol, credence in hell, holy war or any other. Moreover, the tolerance for all seventy-two nations, seventy-two creeds create their identical images of God. (Aydın, 2008, pp. 308-309)

Some Alevis can be both religious and laicist at the same time since the principle of laicism is not related to the individual belief system. The concept of laicism is related to the government foundations being non-religious but this does not require private individuals to be anti-religious. However, the meaning of laicism is thought to be similar to secularism.

In the secularist and modernizing policies of the Republic, enlightened people draw attention to the need to reform Islam. Alevi and Bektashi secularist politicians defend the socio-political non-Islamic sphere. In this context, Alevism is exhibited as an open-minded revolutionary approach while Sunnism is presented as a bigoted, hidebound form of Islam. Alevi politics on the left band

focus on traditional Alevi insubordinates, nonconformists and the oppositional character refined in extended fights against authoritarian politics and religions by way of ignoring the religious and esoteric elements of Alevism. The secularization and the appearance of secularized Alevism, the acceptance of leftist thoughts, and the common politicization of Alevism spread among trans-national relations of Alevis as well.

The Alevi identity is linked with Marxist and communist terms. In the 1960s and the 1970s, Alevis, especially the Alevi youth, became alienated from their religious-cultural characters, due to the fact of migration. Therefore, Young Alevis were inclined to re-interpret their religious customs and cultural identity in terms of historical materialism, and they connected themselves with the anti-imperialist, socialist and Marxist movements. They started to consider Alevism as a radical ideology and a practiced communism. (Vorhoff, 1998)

Socially Alevism is seen as a positive revolutionary force always fighting against oppression and all forms of evil in society, representing the poor and marginalized nomads, peasants and worker classes in their struggles against their exploiters, and demanding equality and justice. Ali was the defender of the poor and oppressed. Hasan and Husayn were martyrs in the cause of the dispossessed. Religious differentiation was transformed into political differentiation and Alevism became the representative of socialism, progress, social justice, and a classless society, branding Sunnism as reactionary. (Zeidan, 1995)

6.4.2 Objections to the Secularist Interpretation

The theme has become an important issue in the sociopolitical split that has been practiced in Turkey, and it is clarified in terms of the debates of Alevi or Sunni left or right, Turkish or Kurdish. As a result, everybody focuses on the validity of their own arguments' understanding. Contemporary Turkish writings are seriously impressed by ideological preconceptions, present-day interests and particular opinions.

Ahmet Yaşar Ocak (1996) claims that the books on Alevism which have looked before 1990, books taken to be general documents are inadequate in terms of the evidences of academic struggle and chooses to confirm them simply selectively.

From the past to the present, there have been many manuscripts printed and theses put forward on the genesis and roots of Anatolian Alevism by Orientalists, missionaries, travellers, and local and foreign researchers. Alevi sources are not only very composite, but also Alevi communities themselves have many diverse dimensions. The Alevi culture is mainly oral, so the written sources cannot provide agreement. Excessive qualitative changes can be distinguished between scientific and popular texts on Alevism and the Bektashism.

The assertions which submit that Alevism and Bektashism are secular, national, and democratic faith system, cannot be assumed to reveal either a historical or a scientific actuality since none of them are consequences of a scientific attitude, but rather assertions with prejudiced and ideological goals since to be secular is not a description appropriate for religion, but to the government outlook towards belief in democratic structures (Ocak, 1996, p.116)

Alevism gives a chance to evaluate various explanations because of having pluralist view with altered portrayal all of which might be both in conflict and in harmony with Alevism conditional according to understanding. Scholarly works have been published only in European languages; they are for the most part unreachable to those Alevis eager to rediscover their past and traditions. Self-identification may be a nationalist one, a nationalist identity may convert itself into a religious one, or religious systems may reconstruct themselves as a class movement. The process of transformation simply provides to change from religious to social, to political revisions. The mission for Alevism, the heterodox, syncretic and progressive assessment is a discerning investigation, emphasizing on chosen limited times and subjects, while eliminating undesirable others.

6.4.3 Self-Identification of Alevis

The conversion of Alevi characteristics from a belief system to a political origin started to prepare its worships' extinction. But in the early 1990s, the so-called Alevi Revival began. The socialist systems in Eastern Europe were damaged which made leftist concepts less striking to the Alevi groups. Later the

Islamization of Turkish civilization led the Alevis to want to separate themselves from the Sunnis, and to the reconstruction of their own principles and doctrine, plentiful of which had previously been vanished. Traditional Alevi ideals like endogamy, purposeful separation, and mystical brotherhood were reevaluated. The old religious foundations were to be restudied in the bright of novel situations. Alevi associations and traditional societies were raised as conferences, surge of books on Alevism printed. The Alevism contained in the esoteric religious components, and the cem gathering is communal.

An influential and academically respectable current in post-1980s Alevi self-definition has been developing the interpretation of Alevism as a mystical heterogeneous belief in terms of containing some pre-Islamic Anatolian and Turkic traditions, a distinct version of Islam which has been at some period of its improvement influenced by Shia concepts and constituted a humanistic and secularizing value system ahead of its time. (Bilici, 1996, p. 53)

Alevism is a new reconstruction, which reinvents itself by current reconciliations. “What results is neither a new Islam nor a non-Islamic community” (Colpe, 1997, p. 46) Islam has its influences but one must be careful about drawing a picture of Alevism as only a form or a cult within Islam or as a novel form of Islam because the social and cultural concepts of Alevism must be placed in the center. As previously revealed, labeling Alevism only as a cult, culture, philosophy, syncretism, an innovative form of Islam, exception from Islam, Sufism, or political opinion can be deficient in description due to multifarious extended factors on the production of Alevism. Because of being the symbol of folk Islam in the Turkish public, Alevism is intermingled by a lot of attitudes.

Alevism is termed as a value system, humanism, a religion, a form of Islam, a cult, a path, a custom of living, a worldview, and philosophy. The diverse interpretations about the concept of Alevism take shape in interaction with modernization, globalization, and cultural background institutions such as

education. In the process of rediscovery and redefinition of Alevism, there are many intellectual analyses of the cultural restoration, but study on Alevi faith, ritual, social organization and specific subgroups should not be neglected; in particular the form of Alevism that has not yet completely been consumed by modernity. As Elwert states, nations and ethnic communities are social foundations, which have to be recovered and reconstructed by following posterities as accomplishing innovative purposes with old concepts. The transportation of concepts works only if missions are provided. (1995, p. 67) Alevism's syncretic and heterodox structure due to having different historical, socio-political, anthropological, religious, traditional backgrounds has already been emphasized. Alevism is composed of diverse structures and has established the basic standardized rituals of Alevism by disregarding and alteration of standard applications. The redefinition of Alevism as a public religion requires conceptualizing syncretism in relation to self-identification. Today Alevis continue to express their desire for correct representation and legitimate confirmation. They demand respect to their individualities and principles while competing with the government's tendencies of Sunni Islam.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study is to discuss the link between Alevism and humanism in detail. The main problem of the thesis is whether Alevism and Humanism are related. The concepts of humanism; being centered on people, tolerance, respect and morality are analyzed in Alevism history. The teachings of Hacı Bektash Veli, who has a great influence on Alevism, can connect humanism and Alevism. The power of this connection is investigated and questioned. The concepts in Hacı Bektaş Veli' philosophy has been seen as compatible with human-centered philosophy, not only for centuries. This thesis was written to demonstrate the logical and problematic aspects of the connection between Alevism and humanism. Different views on the similarities and differences of Alevism and humanism were evaluated.

The thesis mainly focuses on Alevi thought, which contributes to the development of human centered thinking, which is a part of philosophical culture as a crucial aspect of Turkish philosophy in the history of thought. The influences of a thinker such as Haji Bektashi Veli on the Alevi doctrine still continue after seven centuries. Although Haji Bektashi Veli placed human being at the center, before seven centuries, it continued to illuminate the way of humanity. This thought system was raised in ancient times when human being and life lost its importance and people's happiness were not even taken into account. Beyond all kinds of discriminatory concepts, the connection of this system of thought with humanist philosophy is tried to be addressed in this thesis.

Even today, the definition of Alevism is still a matter of debate. According to some people, it is only a cult, or for others, it is a kind of culture. This painting is

formed by the combination of different mosaic stones because it cannot belong to one of the contained stones. Alevism holds many different elements, cultures, beliefs and philosophies. It is a dynamic doctrine that is open to continuous development and changes incorporating various features of the old cultural and traditional structure with the Sufi belief system as well as Islamic position. But Alevism synthesizes different geographies, cultures, traditions, religions and practices in the process of its historical formation. The syncretic and heterodox structure of Alevism may also provide different perspectives that are compatible with modernized philosophies such as socialism, communism and humanism.

Humanism is the basis of many thoughts and cultural transformations, occurring throughout the world. It requires a constantly evolving science about the human being and the world, resulting in a secular policy that accepts the human mind as a value in terms of morality. According to humanism, all problems can be solved by people without addressing supernatural things and human is at the center of life, so modern humanism eliminates religion and the idea of God. Humanism is a rational structure that regards human being as the highest value, arguing that free human actions and morality can be rational and natural without any supernatural existences. It takes place as the philosophical movement that states that human beings are free from the need for supernatural powers and that their moral and creative progress can be comprehended naturally by using the mind.

At first glance, it may not seem possible to bring together humanism and Alevism due to the belief in supernatural powers. The principles of Alevism and humanism may seem distinct from each other because all religious theories begin with faith in supernatural powers. However, humanism emerged as a secular movement that rejects all religious structures. Humanism basically is a human centered system of thought in accordance with rationality and logic, which tries to value human beings. In the Middle Ages, a movement was developed to break the chains of the human beings who were underestimated, ridiculed, oppressed, despised; in addition human happiness and well-being were not possible in this world, postponed to the afterlife. Humanism represented a kind of rebellion

against the church's conflation of scientific proofs and faith, and the disdain for human mind and intelligence. In the beginning of the humanist movement, its' purpose was actually trying to reform religious orders and human centrism.

After modernization, contemporary humanism was based on the secular worldview, separation of all the metaphysical philosophy and supernatural things. Humanism is actually much more than just a philosophical movement that puts human being at the center with the metaphysical opposition. It is not only a simple human centered structure, but also a complete transformation that includes society, politics, education, economics and administration.

Some of the differences separate Alevism from other beliefs and brings it closer to humanism: not postponing happiness to after life and accepting this world as the suffering place. Alevism does not blindly obey a belief system; it asks questions about religious faith because it gives importance to reason and logic. In this thesis, Alevism and humanism' similar and different futures are tried to be analyzed.

Alevism emerged from a heterodox and syncretic tradition with the interaction of many elements in its formation, such as Sky-God, Shamanism, Manism and Zoroastrianism, unlike the Sunni form of Islam. On the other hand, this syncretic and heterodox structure represents a rich humanist philosophy. Haji Bektashi Veli had a multinational perspective; he tried to eliminate various ideas as racist, nationalist, gender, and colorist for the achievement of cultural interactions and bringing humanity closer. In the Alevi society, the universe is created for the sake of humankind who is valuable because of being human, regardless of race, language, gender or color. In Haji Bektashi Veli's thought, people resemble God for their essence is the mirror of God in the world. The center of human is the mind, but it rushes aimlessly like a ship without direction in the absence of love.

In Wahdat al-Wucud philosophy, the unity of human-universe-God flourished the great Alevi character; everything exists in the universe, placed in the divine way of human beings; the human body is a miniature of the ongoing universe as

a relation between micro cosmos or macro cosmos. There is a battle in the human body, like the conflict between good and evil in the universe. What is expected is that the good side (soul) will prevail over the bad side (soul); but the realization of this is ensured by the love of the existences. God created the cosmos for human beings, and the human being has a part of God's light. Human free will chooses between right and wrong in a moral life because it is the center of the universe. It is desirable that the human being, who is the superior of the creatures, has a free choice and takes moral decisions, loves and respects all people and nature to live a happy and peaceful life.

As with humanism, individuals have the free will to dominate their actions and be conscious of their own activity in the Alevi thinking system. Only human beings and God are seen to resemble each other closely in terms of free will because the essence of human dignity only deserves free activity. For the value of humankind, supernatural forces do not entail any decrease of human value so rational mankind is at the center of the cosmos with her/his free will. Humankind is a free existence that makes choices between moral or immoral behaviors, the concepts of sin and good are the results of free and rational activities. The purpose of creative God does not despise and torment a human being in Alevism; God is a compassionate creator who raises humankind to his equitable place and protects human beings' dignity.

In Alevism, it is not possible to turn away from this world and focus only on the afterlife since heaven and hell take place in this world as a result of human actions. Alevism is based on a humanist, philosophical system of thought; the aim of human is not weakness, servitude or slavery but gaining power for self-actualization. Like humanism, religious, economic, social, political and legal problems are evaluated on the basis of human centrism in the Alevi worldview. Unlike other beliefs, the creator God created the universe not only for being known, but because he wanted to reach his own consciousness, to know himself by seeing his reflection in magnificent human being as sharing same light of essence. In addition, supernatural powers and a creative God do not require

underestimating or limiting humankind, but they provide human with an ability of higher understanding.

If the concept of 'Alevi humanism' is evaluated in the present meaning of Alevism and humanism, these two expressions may seem to be contradictory thoughts. In the Alevi thought, the belief of supernatural existences is mentioned as religious faith. Yet, Alevism contains rational viewpoints different from ordinary religion. Alevism contains much more complex elements than an ordinary belief system that restricts the human mind by accepting supernatural powers and making this world a long-suffering place. The basic characteristic futures of Alevism are compatible with humanism because of a lot of similarities as human centrism, the value of human, human mind, love etc. Therefore, when Alevi human centered philosophy is called merely a humanism that leads to confusion; it is more appropriate to call it 'Alevi humanism'.

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APPENDICES

A: TURKISH SUMMARY/TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Türkiye'nin kendisine özgü bir felsefesinin olup olmadığı yıllardır tartışma konusu olmuştur. Akademiye bakıldığında ise felsefe Batı geleneğine göre modellenmiş gibi görünmektedir. Modernleşme ile pozitivist felsefenin yarattığı etkiyle birlikte felsefi düşünce sistemleri metafizik öğelerden ayrıştırılarak ele alınmaya da çalışılmaktadır. Fakat felsefi düşüncelerin gelişimi salt rasyonel bir şekilde değil, metafizikle iç içe geçerek olmaktadır. Günümüzde her ne kadar İslam felsefesine ilgi artmış gözükmekteyse de doğu felsefesine ve mistisizmine hala nadiren ilgi gösterilmektedir. Bu üstünkörü bakış, Türk halkının kendilerine ait özgün bir felsefesi olmadığı, sadece Batı felsefesi ile İslam felsefesi arasında salındığı izlenimini veya yanılsamasını yaratıp böylece aşağıdaki soruları ortaya çıkarır: Türkiye kendine özgü bir felsefeye sahip midir? Türkiye'de neden orijinal ve sağlam bir felsefe yok? Düşünce tarihinde yankı uyandırmış Türk filozofları var mıdır?

Türkiye'nin coğrafi konumuna bakıldığında, İslami düşüncenin etkisinin yanı sıra Yunanistan ve eski Yunan felsefesine çok yakındır fakat buna rağmen yeterli bir felsefe oluşturmamasının sebeplerinden biri olarak Türklerin yaşam tarzı gösterilmektedir. Türkler göçebe bir toplum olmalarının yanı sıra Moğollardan sonra kendi zamanlarının en iyi savaşçılarıydı. Genel olarak bu sebepten dolayı felsefeyi ve bilimi tercih etmediklerine inanılır. Ancak Türkiye'nin felsefi bilginin farklı dallarından olan insan odaklı düşünme tarzına katkıları göz ardı edilmemelidir. Bu tez, özellikle felsefi kültürün bir parçası olan insana dayalı düşünme şeklinin gelişmesine katkıda bulunan ve düşünce tarihinde belirleyici bir Türk felsefesi olarak gördüğü Alevi düşüncesine odaklanmaktadır. Hacı Bektaşî Veli gibi bir düşünce adamının, Alevi öğretisine etkisi yaşadığı çağdan

bugüne kadar hala devam etmektedir. Hacı Bektaşî Velinin insanı merkeze yerleştirdiği düşünce sistemi yaklaşık yedi yüzyıl geçmesine rağmen, etkisini sürdürerek insanlığın yolunu aydınlatmaya devam ediyor. İnsanın ve canın önemini yitirdiği, insanın mutluluğunun, huzurunun akla bile gelmediği savaşların egemen olduğu bir devirde insanı yücelten bu düşünce sistemi farklı kitlelerin gönüllerini alarak onlara yaşama gücü ve umut verdi. Her türlü ayrımcı kavramın çok daha ötesinde insana insan olduğu için değer veren bu düşünce sistemin hümanist felsefe ile bağlantısı ele alınmaya çalışılmaktadır.

Alevî düşünce sistemini İslamiyet, Hristiyanlık ya da Yahudilik gibi diğer inançlardan ayıran özellikleri nelerdir? Günümüzde bile Aleviliğin tanımının ne olduğu hala tartışma konusudur. Bazılarına göre sadece bir tarikat, bazısına göre İslamiyet ile eş, kimilerine göre ise bir kültürdür. Farklı mozaik taşlarının bir araya gelmesiyle oluşan bu resim, yani Alevilik içinde barındırdığı taşların tek birine aidiyet gösteremeyecek kadar çok değişik unsurları, kültürleri, inançları ve felsefeleri kucaklar. Alevilik, İslam'la uyumlu bir pozisyonun yanı sıra tasavvufî inanç sistemiyle birlikte aynı zamanda eski kültürel ve geleneksel yapısının çeşitli özelliklerini de barındıran sürekli gelişmeye ve değişime açık dinamik bir öğretilerdir. Fakat Alevilik tarihsel oluşum sürecinde ayrı coğrafyaları, kültürleri, gelenekleri, dinleri ve uygulamaları sentezler. Aleviliğin senkretik ve heterodoks yapısı günümüzde ki sosyalizm, komünizm ve hümanizm gibi modernleşmiş fikirliyle uyumlu çok yönlü bakış açıları sağlayabilmektedir.

Hümanizm, Rönesans'tan sonra on altıncı yüzyılda esas olarak İtalya'daki entelektüeller arasında gelişen insan merkezli bir harekettir. İnsanı en yüksek değer olarak gören rasyonel bir yapıdır, insani eylemlerin ve ahlakın doğaüstü bir alana başvurmada rasyonel ve doğal olabileceğini savunur ve insan özgürlüğüne öncelik verir. İnsanoğlunun özgürlüğünü ve etkinliğini ön plana alarak, bireyin doğaüstü güçlere ihtiyacı olmayıp, zihnini kullanarak tabii bir şekilde ahlâkî ve yaratıcı ilerlemesini gerçekleştirebileceğini bildiren felsefî akım olarak yer almaktadır. Hümanizm aydınlanma çağıyla daha felsefî bir yapıya kavuşur ve bir yaşam prensibi haline gelmektedir. Hümanizm dünyanın

bütününde ortaya çıkan düşünce ve kültürel dönüşümlerin tabanını oluşturduğu için kültür çalışmasına ihtiyaç duyar. İnsan ve dünya hakkında sürekli gelişen bir bilimi gerektirerek, insan zihnini değer olarak kabul eden bir ahlak anlayışının temellerini atan laik bir siyasetle sonuçlanır. Hümanizme göre, tüm sorunlar doğaüstü varlıklara hitap etmeden insanlar tarafından çözülebilir ve insan hayatın merkezinde yer alır, bu nedenle modern hümanizm dini ve Tanrı düşüncesini ortadan kaldırmaktadır. Çağdaş ateist, materyalist, sosyalist, natüralist ve Marksist düşünceler genellikle hümanizmle ilişkilidir. Hümanizmin ilerlemesi, modernleşmeden sonra evrenin yorumlanması için seküler bir yol izlemektedir.

Aleviliğin sekülerliği barındırması ise çok tartışılan bir konu olması nedeniyle bu tür görüşleri ileri süren kişiler genellikle Alevilik-Bektaşilik ve tasavvufi İslam arasındaki bağlantıyı göz ardı edip, Aleviliğin senkretik (farklı inançların bir araya getirilmesi), gnostik ve heterodoks yapısını vurgularlar. Tasavvufi bağlantı göz ardı edilip salt seküler tarafa çekilmek istendiği için bazı yazarlar Aleviliğin hümanizm ile uyumluluğu iddiasını eleştirmektedir. Alevilik ve hümanizmin özellikleri ele alınarak aralarındaki bağlantı ayrıntıları ile birlikte bu tezde yorumlanmaya çalışılmaktadır.

Dayandığı ilkeler sebebiyle doğaüstü güçleri biryana bırakıp dünyaya dönmeyi içerip, insanı odağına alan hümanizm ile herhangi başka bir dini yan yana getirmek ilk bakışta pek de mümkün görünmeyebilir. Zira bütün dini inançlar doğaüstü bir gücün varlığına iman ile başlar. Ancak hümanizm sanıldığı kadar aksine oluşum aşamasında dini inançları topyekûn reddeden seküler bir akım olarak değil, inanç sistemleriyle uyumlu bir şekilde insana hak ettiği değeri vermeye çalışan bir düşünce sistemi olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Orta çağ da zihniyle dalga geçilip ezilen, hor görülen, mutluluğu öteki tarafa ertelenen insanın zincirlerini kırmaya yönelik bir hareket filizlenir. Kilisenin bilimsel ispatlarla ile inancı çatıştırmaya karşı, insanın zihnine ve zekâsına olan küçümsenmeye karşı bir isyandır. Fakat hümanizm başlangıç aşamasında dini inancı reforme edip rasyonel insanı merkeze almaya çalışılmaktadır.

Modernleşmeyle hümanizm akımı günümüz de ise tamamen seküler tarafa çekilerek bütün metafizik görüşleri bir kenara bırakan bir akım olarak ele alınmaya çalışılmaktadır. Hümanizm temelde metafizik karşıtlığına dayanarak, salt insanı merkeze koyan bir felsefeme akımından çok daha fazlasıdır. Sadece bilimde, yaşamda basit bir insancı görüş değil içerisinde toplumu, siyaseti, öğrenimi, iktisadi, yönetimi barındıran bütünlüklü bir dönüşümüdür. Burada ise yalnızca bir tek değerlendirme var ise o da insanın zihnidir. Alevi hümanizmi kavramı, bu iki ifadenin günümüzdeki anlamıyla ele alınca birbirleriyle uyumsuzluk yarattığı kanısına varılabilir. Fakat Alevilik sıradan dini bir inanç sisteminden ayıran farklı görüşler içermektedir. Alevilik amiyane tabir ile doğaüstü güçleri kabul eden insan zihnini kısıtlayıp özgür seçim hakkını elinden alarak bu dünyayı çile hane haline getiren sıradan bir inanç sisteminden çok daha karmaşık öğeler içermektedir. Alevi insancı açısından insana eziyet edilip onu yok sayan bir anlayış mümkün değildir.

Alevi düşünüş sisteminde de tıpkı hümanizm gibi, bireyler evrendeki varlıklar içerisinde özgür olarak kendi etkinliğinin bilincine vararak bireysel eylemlerinin hâkimidir. Yalnızca insan, kendi haysiyetinin en son özü olarak, sahip olduğu özgür iradesiyle Tanrı'nın özgür etkinliğine paylaşan bir varlıktır. İnsanın layık olduğu değeri vermek insanı aşan her değeri reddetmeyi gerektirmez. Böylece zihin sahibi olan rasyonel insan, özgür iradesiyle birlikte kozmosun merkezinde yer alır. İnsan özgür istenci ile eylemde bulunan bir varlıktır, böylece günah ve sevap gibi kavramlar ise özgür iradenin sonucunda ortaya çıkar. İnsanı küçümseyen ve eziyet eden bir yaratıcı algılayışı değil, insanı hak ettiği yere yükselten, onu koruyup kollayan, merhamet sahibi bir yaratıcıdan bahsedilebilir.

Diğer inançlarda yer edinen bu dünyadan yüz çevirip sadece ahirete odaklanmak tanda bahsedilemez Alevilikte. Çünkü cennet ve cehennem, insanın eylemlerinin sonucunda bu dünyada yer alır. Hümanist bir felsefi düşünce sistemine dayanan Alevilikte, insanın amacı zayıflık değil, gücünü kazanıp; doğru olan salt bir kulluk ya da kölelik dışında kendini gerçekleştirmesidir. Bununla birlikte hümanizmde olduğu gibi Alevilikte de inançsal, iktisadi, sosyal, siyasi ve hukuki

sorunlar insan temel alınarak, merkeze koyularak incelenir. Diğer inançlarda ki gibi yaratıcı sadece bilinmek için değil, kendinden bir pay alan akıl sahibi yüce bir varlıkta yansımaları görerek kendi bilincine ulaşmak yani kendini tanımak istediği için evreni yaratmıştır.

Ayrıca doğüstü bir güç olan yaratıcı bir Tanrıyı içeren bir hümanizm insanı küçümsemeyip, kısıtlamayıp insana daha üstün bir kavrayış sağlaması kuvvetle ihtimaldir. Ancak salt Avrupa'ya özgü bir ifade olan hümanizm diye tabir etmek kavram kargaşasına sebep olabilir, bu yüzden Alevi hümanizmi olarak nitelendirmek ise daha uygun bir ifade olabilir.

Alevilik, oluşumundaki Gök-Tanrı, Şamanizm, Manizm ve Zerdüştlük gibi nice elementlerin bir araya gelerek etkileşimleri nedeniyle İslam'ın Sünni formundan farklı olarak heterodoks ve senkretik bir yapı olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Öte yandan, bu senkretik ve heterodoks yapı bünyesinde zengin bir hümanist felsefe barındırır. Hacı Bektaş Veli milletler üstü zengin bakış açısına sahipti, farklı ırklar ve ulusların birbiri hakkında ki yanlış fikirlerini ortadan kaldırarak çeşitli kültürel etkileşimin sağlanması ve insanlığın yakınlaştırılması için çaba gösterdi. ‘İyi insanlar dilleri, dinleri, ırkları ne olursa olsun iyi insanlardır.’ ve ‘72 millete tek bir gözle bakın.’ Bektaşî Veli'nin hümanizmini gösteren iki ünlü sözüdür. Alevi toplumunda kâinatın uğruna yaratıldığı insan, ırkıdan, dil veya renginden bağımsız olarak insan olmasından dolayı değerlidir. Ayrıca Alevi toleransı, kötülüklerine ve hatalarına rağmen tüm insanları kucaklar. Hacı Bektaşî Veli'nin düşüncesinde, insanlar tanrıyı, tanrının dünyadaki aynası olarak özlerinde himaye ederler. İnsanın merkezi akıldır, ancak sevgi olmadan akıl dümeni olmayan bir gemi gibi amaçsızca savrulmaktadır.

Alevilikte büyük yankı uyandıran ve kökleşip yeşeren bir düşünce olan vahdet-i vücutta, yani insan-evren-Tanrı'nın birliğinde, evrende var olan her şey insanoğluna ilahi yolla yerleştirilir, öyle ki insan bedeninde süregelen evrenin bir minyatürü gibi makro kozmosun içinde mikro kozmos olarak ifade edilir. İnsan vücudunda, kâinattaki iyilik ve kötülük arasındaki çatışmaya benzer bir

mücadele barındırmaktadır. Beklenen ise iyi tarafın (ruhun), kötü tarafa (nefse) üstün gelmesidir; fakat bunun gerçekleşmesi ise var olanlara duyulan sevgi ile sağlanmaktadır. Tanrı insanlar için kozmosu yarattı, onun nurundan parçaya sahip olan insan, evrenin merkezi olduğu için ahlaklı bir yaşamda doğru ile yanlış arasında seçim yapabilmek için özgür iradeye sahiptir. Yaratılanların akıl sahibi olması sebebiyle en üstünü olan insanın, özgür seçimleriyle ahlaklı kararlar alıp, bütün insanlara ve doğaya karşı sevgi ve saygı besleyip, mutlu bir yaşam sürmesi arzu edilmektedir.

Aleviliği diğer inançlardan sıyrıp hümanizme yaklaştıran farklardan biri; mutluluğu ölümden sonraki hayata erteleyip, bu dünyayı çile çekme yeri olarak kabul etmeye karşı duruşudur. İnsanı körü körüne bir inanç sistemine bağlı kılmayıp akıl ve mantığa verdiği yetkiyle dini sorgulayıp kendi sistemini oluşturan Alevilik hümanizm ile birçok açıdan örtüşüyor gibi gözükmektedir. Hacı Bektaşî Veli'nin öğretisi ile şekillenen Aleviliğin, batı hümanizmi ile çarpıcı bir şekilde benzerliklerinin yanı sıra farklılaştığı yönler bu tezde araştırılmaktadır.

Bu tez yedi bölümden oluşmaktadır. İlk bölüm giriş bölümüdür, ikinci bölüm ise Alevilik-Bektaşilik hakkında temel bilgiler vermektedir. Bu bölümde Alevilik ve Bektaşiliğin genel değerlendirmesi, kökenleri, ibadet ritüelleri, esoterizm, dedelik kurumu, kardeşlik ve düşkünlük ayrıntılı olarak verilmektedir. Bu bölüm aynı zamanda Alevilik-Bektaşilik 'in senkretik ve heterodoks yapısının açıklamasını da içermektedir. Çünkü Alevi inancının oluşumu hakkında bilgi verilmeden, ona dair bir yorumda bulunmak pek de mümkün gözükmemektedir. Bu doğrultuda, Alevi-Bektaşî geleneğinin Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin kuruluşuna kadar olan değişimi ve dönüşümü hakkında bilgi verilmektedir.

Anadolu'da hümanizm üçüncü bölümün konusudur. Bu bölümde tasavvufun gelişimi ve arkasındaki tarihsel olaylar hakkında ana hatlarıyla bilgi verilmektedir. İnsanların tezahürü, insan-evren-Tanrı'nın birliğinde vurgulanarak, Alevilik-Bektaşilik ile ilgili çalışmalarda Alevi-Bektaşî

karakterinin anlam ve inşa mücadelesinin bir sembolü olan Hacı Bektaş Veli'nin hayatı ve düşüncesi de sunulmaktadır.

Dördüncü bölüm de ise Alevi inancında insan felsefesinin temelleri hakkında bilgi verilmektedir. İnsanoğlu, Aleviliğin ontolojik ve epistemolojik düşüncesinde evrenin merkezine yerleştirilir. Sevgi, Alevi düşüncesindeki insan aklının ve bilgisinin destekleyicisidir, böylece sevgi ve akıldan uzaklaşan insanların mutlu olması ve ilahi amaca ulaşması mümkün gözükmemektedir. Alevi düşüncesinde ve hümanizm de ortak olan kavramların, Alevi inancında hangi temeller üzerine inşaa edildiği hakkında detaylı bilgi verilmektedir.

Beşinci bölümde Alevi hümanizminin batı hümanizmi ile karşılaştırılmasına odaklanılmaktadır. Batı dünyasında Tanrı merkezli düşünceden insan merkezli düşünceye geçiş, Hıristiyan hümanistler tarafından sağlanarak insan felsefesine katkıda bulunmaktadır. Batı hümanizminde en göze çarpan figür, insan rasyonalitesi, ahlak ve özgür irade kavramları ışığında eski el yazmalarını araştıran Erasmus olmaktadır. Dine karşı materyalist ve natüralist dünya görüşlerinin gelişimi, seküler hümanizmin gelişmesine yol açmaktadır. En önemli seküler hümanistlerden biri olan Feuerbach, özgürlüğü doğallaştırma çabası olarak da varsayılan son yazıları da dâhil olmak üzere eski hümanist felsefenin yerini almak için felsefi bir antropoloji aramaktadır. Alevi felsefesi her ne kadar hümanizmin başlangıcı ile benzerlik gösterse de seküler hümanizmin dini inancı eleştirdiği kavramlara da dayanak oluşturarak, sonraki aşama ile de benzerlik sağlamaktadır.

Altıncı bölümünde Aleviliğin felsefeye ilişkin diğer boyutları belirtilmiştir. Hümanizmin insana önem verip doğayı ve ekosistemi ihmal ettiği noktada Alevilik insan-Tanrı-evren birlikteliğiyle doğaya hak ettiği değeri vermektedir. Doğayla ilişkisi açısından Alevi-Bektaşî inancının panteistik özellikleri incelenmektedir. Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin kuruluşunu takiben kentsel alanlara göçle başlayan Alevi yeniden yapılanma süreci ve bugüne kadar Alevi-Bektaşî kimlik oluşumu tartışılmaktadır. Alevi-Bektaşî geleneğinin farklı aşamalardaki

yapısı, onun deęişen özellikleri ile ilgili olarak belirtilmiştir. Ayrıca, bu bölümde Türkiye'deki ekonomik, sosyal ve politik dinamikleri şekillendiren ve Alevi-Bektaşî'nin kendini tanımlama sürecine yansımaları açıkça anlaşılabilir aşamalara değinilmektedir.

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