

THE CULTURAL VALUES WHICH EVOLVED FROM HASAN DEDE AND HIS SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT IN ŞEHİTLER VILLAGE

Hülya TAŞ*

ABSTRACT

Village Şehitler is 10-11 km away from Inegöl and 30 km away from Bursa. It is believed that the village was established by Hasan Dede, who was a descendant of Ahmet Yesevi. All the members of the village are Alawii. The rules put forth by Hasan Dede and other Alawii elders are still dominant in daily life. These rules also from the basis of Alawii philosophy. Since the village was invaded, burnt and pillaged by Greek soldiers during the Turkish war of Independence, there remained no written resource about Hasan Dede. This study is based on mutual talks with the villagers and focused on legends, beliefs and traditions set forth by Hasan Dede and his followers.

Key Words: Bursa, Hasan Dede, Şehitler Village, Beliefs, Traditions.

ÖZET

Bursa'da Hasan Dede ve Türbesi Çevresinde Oluşan Kültürel Değerler Üzerine Bir Araştırma

Şehitler Köyü İnegöle 10-11 km Bursa'ya 30 km uzaklıktadır. Soyu Ahmet Yesevi'ye dayanan köyü Hasan Dede'nin kurduğuna inanılmaktadır. Köyün tümü Alevidir. Köylünün yaşamında Hasan Dede'nin ve diğer Alevi büyüklerinin getirdiği kurallar geçerlidir. Bu kurallar aynı zamanda Alevilik felsefesinin temelini teşkil

* Asistant Professor Dr. Hülya Taş, Uludağ University, Depermant of Turkish Language and Literature.

etmektedir. Kurtuluş savaşı yıllarında Yunanlılar tarafından işgal edilen köyün yağmalanması ve yakılmasından dolayı Hasan Dede ile ilgili yazılı bir kaynağa rastlanılmamıştır. Bilgiler köy halkıyla konuşularak derlenmiştir Bu araştırmada Hasan Dede ve çevresinde oluşan efsane, inanç ve gelenekler incelenmeye çalışılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Bursa, Hasan Dede, Şehitler Köyü, İnançlar, Gelenekler.

The Turks formed their own system of values combining the cultural values they brought from the Middle East with the rich culture of Anatolia. After Bursa was gained by the Ottomans, mythological stories being alive in Anatolia for thousands of years were commented again by the influence of Islamic and Turkish Culture. Monasteries were replaced by dervish lodges and monks were replaced by dervishes. “Geyikli Baba” called as “Baba Sultan” as well and “Hasan Dede” are two of these dervishes “ Geyikli Baba” whose tomb is in Baba Sultan Village is in fact the symbol of an Anatolian Culture of thousand of years. However, Bektashiism¹ isn’t supported in Baba Sultan Village and all the people in the village have Sunni beliefs.

As a matter of fact, “Hasan Dede” whose tomb is in Şehitler Village, just opposite Baba Sultan Village, is an Alawii². There is no sunni in the village existing with Alawii customs for hundereds of years.

Şehitler Village where “Hasan Dede” lived is 10-11 km far from Inegöl, 30 km far from Bursa. The village is 3 km far from Bursa- Ankara Highway. The population of the village is approximately 800 people and all the people in the village are Alawii. Thus, the village protects its originality and demonstrates particularity.

The rules “Hasan Dede” and the other Alawii elder brought to village are valid in villagers’ life. These rules constitute the base of Alawiism Philosophy as well.

Before introducing the village, we believe that these rules must be mentioned since the beliefs and traditions formed emerged from this philosophy.

¹ Bektashi is a person who joined the religious order of “Hacı Bektaş Veli”

² Alawiism is the general name of religious opinions and orders seeing “the Caliph Ali” superior to the first three Caliphs

*You should have control
Over your hands, your loins, your tongue
Your spouse, your work, your food
Your self, your words and your eyes*

The sources on which Alawiism and Bektashiism are based are Islam, Islamic Mysticism and Turkish Customs. We cannot ignore the connection between Alawiism and Şamanism “Bektashiism” is an Anatolian-centered religious order. Although “*Hacı Bektaş Veli*” accepted as the founder of this order wasn’t born on this land, he lived in Central Anatolia and died in Hacıbektaş (Kara 1993:57).

One of the Bektashi Dervish Lodges opened in different regions of Ottoman state after the 16th century was in Bursa. The existence of this lodge is understood from “*Seyahatname*”

(Travel Book) by “*Evliya Çelebi*” (Kara 1993:61).

Alawiism is against racism. According to Bektashi rules, one can not be blamed for his language religion or race. People making discrimination of race, language, religion and sex are blamed in Alawiism and Bektashiism.

In Alawi-Bektashi thought, man and woman are “*two halves of an apple*”. Whatever rights a man has, a woman has some rights, too.

One of the most important ceremonies in Alawiism is “*Cem Rite*”. Cem Rite has a lot of functions in Alawiism. It is a school determining the life of Alawi Society and a moral institution checking and judging individuals. It is an institute which spreads brotherhood among the people in society.

Alawiism is learnt through serving in Cem Houses. Cem Houses are schools and knowledge places of Alawiism. One should go to a Cem House according to its rules. Everybody must obey these rules without any objection. The rules are eternal and everlasting. Obeying the rules everywhere and everytime is the primary must. The meetings called as “*Cem*” formed by the attendance of individuals who gained specific status in society (those who have come to a mature age, are married and honest) serve as the legislative assembly of the society. “*Dedeler*” (The old men) carrying the quality of leadership and known with their honesty in these meetings are involved in society management effectively. “*Dedelik* (Being an old man) institution” having a specific status in society plays an important role in directing the society, solving various social problems and bringing them to a solution. The important judicial problems inside the group can be solved by the group of old men.

The rules of Alawiism can be summarized as follows, *four doors, four posts, three sunnah, seven farz (obligatory act) and twelve farz-ı kifaye* (a duty the observance of which, by some will absolve the rest).

When written sources are studied it is seen that Turkish Moral System is extremely sound. This is valid for all the Turks both for those believing in previous religions and for the ones accepting Islam. The things that foreigners say about the honesty, the virtues and the merits of Turks from the most remarkable example of this (Eröz 1992:36).

After the short mention about the rules of Alawiism, now we believe that it is necessary to give information about the life in the village to understand the next topics better.

The villagers live on farming and growing fruits. Besides, there are villagers who trade in Inegöl. The village is surrounded by cherry, apple and pear gardens. In large areas, wheat, barley, tobacco and sunflower are cultivated. More than 100 tractors and equipment are available in the village. In addition, a lot of villagers have minibuses and taxis. Namely, the economic situation at the village is high.

The village has a primary school, a Library, a mosque, a tomb and a Cem House. There are nearly 1500 books in its Library. The official in charge of the library is also responsible for the tomb. People are called for “*namaz*” by the azan (a call for *namaz*) for five times in the mosque but they don’t desire to do so very much. There are few people going to mosque for “*namaz*”. However, most of the men in the village go to the mosque for “*namaz*” in Ramadan and Kurban Feats.

When they were asked why they went to the mosque instead of Cem House though they were Alawii, they answered that they went both to the mosque and to Cem House to workship and that they didn’t mind it.

The rate of literacy in the village is 100% Most old people are literate. Most of them finished Primary school. After graduating from Primary school, the youth go to Inegöl every day for their Secondary and High School education. The students attending High School from Sehitler Village are among the successful ones of the school. There are a lot of people born in Sehitler Village and now work in government offices, Turkish Armed Forces and high positions of private companies.

Most houses in the village are two-storeyed and with gardens. There are also more-storeyed houses and villas. There is no migration into the village but from the village. People who migrate from the village are mostly the ones going to the town and city centers to deal with trade and the ones living in the town and city centers after studying at university and finding a job.

There is 500 year–old Turkish both in the village. It is not used as it is ruined. Now, it is being restored to be changed into a museum.

The rate committing a crime in the village is nought. That is, nobody has ever been to the police station or the court due to a shameful crime or an illegal affair. The villagers may sometimes have disagreements but they can solve them easily. They have good relations with their neighbours. There is a rule saying “the villagers having problems with one another cannot join the “Cem Rite” unless they solve their problems.” They are extremely respectful to each other’s rights.

There are no divorced people in the village. A divorced woman is not accepted to “Cem House” There are only two villagers married twice

Almost everybody in village believes the equality between men and women, young girls and boys join the ceremonies in Cem Houses together and workshop together.

People in Şehitler Village are respectful to “Human rights” and laws and obey Atatürk Principles and Reforms. Both in most villagers’ houses and Cem House are pictures of the *Prophet Ali, twelve Imams and Atatürk*.

The History of Şehitler Village

İnegöl and the land around it was in the hand of Empire of Byzantium during the early times of Ottoman Empire. A Rum (Grek of Turkish citizenship) called “*Thomas*” had a farm on the land Şehitler Village is now located. An Alawii old man called “*Hasan Dede*” arrived from Ankara about the year of 1350 in this region, located here and imposed Turkish Culture, Islam and Islamic Mysticism in the region. After that, a lot of Turkish families settled in the region and so the village was founded. “*Hasan Dede*” became the founder of the village.

Since the villagers pronounced the name of the village as “*Doma*” not as “*Thomas*” it was changed as “*Doma Village*” until the year 1960.

As a result of military takeover in 1960, the names of the towns villages, streets having foreign origins were replaced by Turkish ones. The name of “*Doma village*” was changed as “*Bekceviz Village*” inspired by the name of near region The poet of the village inspired by the name of near region The poet of the village “*Nezir Erdil*” states that the villagers didn’t feel this name at ease but the village was called as this name for 12 years until 1971.

In 1972, the village Executive Committie gathered with the head man of the village to discuss about the name of the village and decided to change the name as “*Şehitler Village*” accepting the proposal of Poet (Aşık)

“*Nezir Erdil*”. Thus, the name of the village was registered as “Şehitler Village” in 1972.

Poet (Aşık) Nezir Erdil explains the reason why the village is called as “Şehitler Village” as follows: “Our village was invaded and destroyed by the Greek Army during the independence war and 150 people were killed in the battle. There is a graveyard where seven martyrs were buried down and a monument near built later in the village. During the invasion, a lot of valuable documents and goods belonging to “Hasan Dede” and the village were destroyed as well. Believing that his name was the most suitable for the village, I proposed it and struggled for a long time to make the officials accept.

“Who is Hasan Dede?” And “Where did he come from?”

We have found no information about “Hasan Dede” in the researches we have done or in written sources. Therefore, we gathered the information about him from four old men in the village, (Haydar Dede, Ali Dede, Müslim Dede, Ali Koç Dede. As they all passed away, the job is performed by their children now) the head of the village, the keeper of the tomb, the people and ex- head of the Club of Protecting Şehitler Village.

We have established that Hasan Dede arrived in the region together with “Geyikli Baba and other dervishes having the same purpose. Geyikli Baba lived in the slopes of Uludag, and Hasan Dede settled in the slopes of Mount Ağıl and they both tried a lot to spread Islam, Islamic Mysticism and Turkish customs. Finally, 14-15 thousand people from all over Turkey (both Sunni and Alawii) and a lot of politicians joined the ceremonies to commemorate “Hasan Dede” in Şehitler Village. It proves that Hasan Dede was really successful in his role to unite people of different sects.

Legendary Life of “Hasan Dede”

Several legends one told about how Hasan Dede came to Şehitler Village and his life after coming there. After collecting more than 20 legends, we have seen that they all tell us more or less the same things. Thus, we consider the ones affecting us deeply and the ones people giving their hearts to those matters told us.

Legend I(KK³1- KK2 – KK3)

While Alawii people are carrying out a Cem rite, one of the women in the same society retracted her confession. At that time, those who retracted their confession wasn't allowed to join the society in order that they could be ameliorated. The woman offended because of not being allowed to the society. One day, when there was a rite in Cem house, thinking that it was a chance to take her revenge, the woman went to the police and complained to them "Alawii people gather and campaign against the state. If you don't believe, go and see it" The state didn't approve these kinds of meetings and rites much those days.

During the rites in Cem Houses, Two watchmen are on duty in front of the house to prevent the dangers outside and to keep people inside safe. Once when the police came to Cem House, the watches at the door went inside and told the people that the police came. Hasan Dede directing the rite inside at that time put his power into actions. As a result, watchmen appeared if they were steep dogs, the house a step fooled and all the people inside sheep in the eyes of the policeman. At the moment "Allahu ekber" cried Hasan Dede sitting and bending upon the seccade (prayer rug). His head appeared as if it was steppard's when meeting the scene, the police understand that the woman told a lie and gave her a punishment.

Afterwards, saying "We'll have no more peace here" Hasan Dede took a piece of burning wood from fire there and hurled it upwards. My house will be wherever the wood falls down "He explained Hasan Dede started to travel. After a while, he came to İnegöl.

When he came to İnegöl, he saw the wood was still burning on mount Agil opposite "Sehitler Village" "Block Tree is here so my house will be this region from now on" he said and settled.

The burning tree got green and grew in the course of time. People considering the tree a miracle of Hasan dede vowed there. However, the tree and a lot holy goods were burnt down independence war during the Greek invasion. Pople named tree as "Karaağac" (Black tree). That tree now is inside the village and surrounded by glass to be protected. There is a small room near the tree for people to vow. The villagers say that there is a stone Hasan Dede sat in front of the tree and that the stone was covered in the construction of the road there.

³ KK: Resource people

Legend 2 (KK1-KK2-KK10)

The place where Hasan Dede settled in fact was the farm of a “Rum” whose name was Thomas. Within the borders of the village was a hill called “Işık tepe”(it is called as“Yıldız Cover” at the moment) Thomas and his wife saw a light on the hill every night and when they went there, they met the great old man “Hasan Dede”. They invited him to their house and he stayed in their house for some time. Every time Thomas’ wife woke up at midnight, she saw a light around the bed Hasan Dede slept on. That is, the body of Hasan Dede spreaded light around.

Thomas’ wife admired Hasan Dede, so she wished her daughter to marry him. She wanted him accept their religion but Hasan Dede refused to do it. Then, their daughter decided to be a müslim and married, Hasan Dede. They had two sons called Bektaş and Murat.

Legend III (KK1-KK2-KK3-KK5)

There was a stone Hasan Dede sat on near Karaağac. Caravans passing the road saw Hasan Dede and told him “People seeking you looked everywhere and because they couldn’t find out where you are, they feel great sorrow now. Please come back to the village with us” Hasan Dede refused to go back and said “I felt distressed and so came here. Don’t tell them you’ve seen me. If you don’t keep your promise and tell them where I am, you will die at the moment you speak.” People in caravans went back to their hometowns and one of them decided to explain where Hasan Dede lived seeing that people seeking him felt sorry. Before doing that he entrusted his children to the people there. At the moment he explained he had seen and talked to Hasan Dede, he died.

Legend 4(KK1-KK4-KK10)

About 600 years ago when Hasan Dede settled in the village, the land was arid. After coming to the village and seeing the situation, Hasan Dede wished God to recover the land. At the time, out of spring came water. Today it is still running. The water runs in the summer but stops in the winter itself. The villagers regard it as the miracle of Hasan Dede.

Legend 5(KK2-KK3-KK10)

Another legend is told about the water mentioned above as follows: Talipler cried a lot to take Hasan Dede away, therefore Hasan Dede said “May these tears become a stream then zem zem (*holy water*) and run” Hasan Dede didn’t leave his place but sent one of his sons with them.

Legend 6 (KK2-KK3)

There are twelve graves belonging to Hasan Dede's family around the village. People believe that these graves watch over the village. There is a common belief that voices of "kudüm" (arriving) are heard and these people visit each other especially in summer evenings.

Though they are not directly related to Hasan Dede, we consider the following two "hearsay" worth telling since they are related to the disciples of Hasan Dede and the eye witness are still alive.

Hearsay I(KK3)

There is tomb down the village. One can easily watch over the village there. Whenever a light falls over the tomb, it means somebody will die in the village. Ali Akça, he ex-head of the Club of protecting Sehitle Village and the head of Hacı Bektaş Veli Culture and Solidarity Society, confirmed the above event in the interview we had with him and told us something interesting happened to him:

It was a Saturday evening, the middle of the month July, 2000 when the weather was unbearably hot. We have a vineyard on a hill of the Village. We were both eating and having our drinks there. At that time, a bunch of light glided in the sky. We thought a star glided. Seeing the light fell over the tomb, we felt something bad would happen. As this event had been experienced before we started to think of the people who were ill and old in the village. None of us thought the person who would die would be the one inside our family. I left the village the next morning, I wish I had'nt. Later I learnt that one of my nephews, 37, died of cerebral hemorrhage when he went to water his garden.(He was one of the people I was together with that night) I can not understand that kind of events. I can not explain them, either" The following "hearsay" is also the one Ali Akça experienced himself.

Hearsay II (KK 3)

I was a child at the age of 10 or 12 and in "Kurtluşar Village", Çubuklar, Ankara. It was August and hot. There was draught in the village. There is a tomb called "Kızıl Dede" who was an Alawii old man. Down the tomb among the pine trees is a hell. We didn't know if there was water inside the hell and how high it was. We could see some light at the bottom. They fastened a rope around my waist and said "If you are the son of Cemal Dede it must rain soon" Ignoring my screams they lowered me into the hell

until my feet touch the water then they pulled me out! After less than an hour, big hails started to pour down.

Hearsay III(KK6-KK7-KK8-KK9)

Before 1980, A couple of unpleasant incidents occurred between Sunni and Alawii people in Turkey. Those days, some people from Inegöl and other villages came to Hasan Dede Village to damage it. A huge dragon having a head a man and a body of a snake met them before they entered the village. They went back to their village with a great fear. When the people experiencing the incident told about it hundreds of people from Inegöl came to this region to see the dragon.

This incident shows that Hasan Dede or his disciples wanted to demonstrate the village has spiritual owners appearing in the body of dragon so that the people who wished to damage the village could not do so.

Cem ceremonies in the village

The Turks in old times, as a requirement of the religious systems, used to arrange meetings, feasts, festivals by some means and they used to eat, drink, have fun or declare mourning. These were the means of social solidarity.

When looked at history records of “ Oğuz Kağan Ballad” and “Dede Korkut stories” It is seen that Turkish social life continues with council meetings, feasts and banquets. During these the occasions, besides sacrificing and eating people drink a lot and dance(Eröz1992:57).

“Cem Rite” in Şehitler Village starts with “Abdal Musa”. Three days before that day, people gather in the presence of the old man and this called “sinisaf” (court of religious order). Those cross with each other one reconciled in this meeting. Afterwards, a sacrifice called unity sacrifice is bought. Everybody gives money for the sacrifice.

A couple of years ago people used to drink alcohol during “Cem Rites” in Şehitler Village. Due to its drawbacks, The old man decided to forbid alcohol in Cem Rites and proposed cola or grobe fruit to be drunk instead. Thus, it is said people don't drink alcohol in Cem Rites now.

Morally acceteble way of visiting a tomb

People visit a holly person, a dervish lodge or tomb with the purpose of wishing for something (Köksal 1978: 229).

There are indispensable rules of visiting a saint or a tomb. The most important ones are aptes (ritual ablution), wearing clean clothes, going with the right foot into the place where saint is buried, praying, and leaving the tomb without turning the back. However, the villagers don't favour the rule of abdest and they comment on aptest in two ways. "The first one which is performed with water cleans people outwardly. Secondly, if people make a confession and fulfill their dues, they make their hearts cleaner, purer. This is the truth, the honesty. Those who do these things are considered to have aptes all time "say the villagers.

In order that their wishes can come true, people must obey the tradition of vowing. If their wish come true, people must obey tradition of vowing. If their wish come true, they revisit the place and fulfill their vow. It is believed that the person who doesn't fulfill his vow will meet a disaster later.

To find out for what purposes people visit the tomb of Hasan Dede, we went to Sehitler Village many times and talked to the visitors of different ages and to the poet, the head of Club of protecting Sehitler village. After evaluating the answers we got, we established that the village is visited mostly with the following purposes.

The tomb Hasan Dede is in the South and 300- 400 metres far from the village. It is inside a garden next to which there is a fountain. On the fountain is the poem below.

Water of Hasan Dede says:

I was unknown and running to a wilderness

Hacı Ergün digged me out

May the God give a share in his heaven to man having aptes from me

and

The prophet Muhammed intercede with the man drinking from me.

On the gate of garden are lines below

Hasan Dede says:

I am coming from Hasan

A descendent of Ali Murtaza

I have water healing for the sick You come to way Erens

Every day makes the man have what he wants.

One meet a lot of graves entering the garden. They belong to people being the descendants of Hasan Dede and many of whom have the title of an old man. The tomb is 2 metres high from the garden and walked up through

a few stairs. It is 20-25m² big and has a straight ceiling. It is concrete building built later and having no historic value. The walls are painted in green and there is a window on the right and left walls and on the south wall. To the right of window on the south wall is the picture of the Prophet Ali and to the left of it is Turkish Flag picture of Atatürk. On the grave of Hasan Dede there is a sarcophagus covered with a green silky satin cloth. The ground is covered with carpet and cushions are put around the sarcophagus. On the right wall is family tree of Hasan Dede and history of the village. The tomb is clean and looked after well. The keeper of the tomb, Murat Akçakoca is also responsible for the village library.

A visit to the tomb starts with some ceremonies at the gate. One says “*Bismillahirrahmanirrahim*” at the edge of the door. They kiss the edge three times saying “*Ya Allah, Ya Muhammet, Ya Ali, Şah Hasan, Şah Hüseyin, Fadime Ana*”. They pray and expect to be forgiven for their faults “We had faults, forgive us. Allah, Muhammet, Imam Hasan Imam Hüseyin, Fadime ana, forgive our faults we did for 365 days. We stepped on the edge, forgive us. While going through the door, first they kiss the door frame on the right three times, then they kiss the left door frame and the upper part three times. After entering the tomb, they read 2 suras; “*Fatiha*” and “*Ihlas*”.

Afterwards, they visit Hasan Dede in pious reverence. Everybody wishes for something and they end their visit reading “*Fatiha*”

It is said by the visitors that the following things done for years result positively. Although these things contrast with Islamic rules, people don't give up their habits (Aytürk-Altan 1992:48).

1- The sick believe that they will get well if they sleep in the tomb for a night.

2- “If I have a son, I will sacrifice for God every year “wished a visitor to the tomb and his wish came true. He visits the tomb every year and sacrifices.

Mediha Akçakoca, one of the people we talked to in the village, told us something happened to her similar to the event above.

“My husband and I wanted to have a child after getting married. A pure woman lives in our village. One day I met her in the street and she told me she saw Hasan Dede in her dream. “I have given the thing they needed to Murat and Mediha. If they have a boy they will name him Turabî, if a girl, they will name her Dilek. After the child is born, they will roll him in the tomb. If they don't do what I said to them, their child will not live” said Hasan Dede to the woman in her dream. They have a son and name him Turabî (Turabî is the name of Hasan Dede's elder brother). As their wish

came true, they sacrificed and chanted the Qur'an in the tomb of Hasan Dede. Meliha believes that her son is granted from Hasan Dede.

3- The sick looking for a cure put their photos into the tomb and wait for a week or three days. Later, they pick up their photos. As a result, there are some who got better after doing this.

4- Before joining the army, getting married and during the rite of circumcision people visit the tomb of "Hasan Dede"

It is not obligatory for women to cover their hair while visiting the tomb.

5- On the left side of tomb there are two high stones. The visitor having a wish pick up a small stone and throws it over the high stones. If that small stone stays fixed on it, it is believed that the visitor's wish will come true.

At the back of the tomb is a place like a small hut. Those vowing light a candle or tie a cloth around the branch of the pine tree (Ocak 1983:49-56).

The village graveyard is behind the tomb. On the right side of the tomb among the trees is Cem House and its kitchen. Near the kitchen there are stoves over which meat is cooked.

There is a poem by Aşık Nezir at the entrance of Cem House.

We get hurt and bleed with our best friends

Remember the God with love in our every breathi

See with uniqueness when you enter the square of Erens

On the 40- knotted candlestick forty of us burn

Cem House is about 50-60 m² big and the shape of a rectangular. It is a one strayed building having a straight ceiling, white walls and window frames painted in green. On its ceiling is a big imitation crystal chandelier and there is a picture of the Prophet Ali and pictures of twelve imams on the right wall. On the left front door, there are pictures of the Prophet Ali, Ataturk and Hacı Bektaşî Veli and below them are photos taken on commemoration days. There are again pictures of the Prophet Ali and Hacı Bektaşî Veli and pieces of the paper news about the village on the left wall. The ground is covered with a carpet and rugs and there are cushions on the ground. On the upper right corner is the fleece Hasan Dede sat on. He directed the Cem rites sitting on this fleece.

On the hill behind Cem House is the tomb of "Arap Dede", the brother of Hasan Dede. The tomb placed on a rock is 2-3 m² big. There are prints similar to foot prints on this rock and they are said to belong to "Hasan

Dede". Everybody even the little children in the village above which is the grave of Hasan Dede's brother pray while going past there.

Usually, the Thursday night is a holly night for Alawi people, so the meetings in Cem House are held on that day.

People outside the village visit the tomb of Hasan Dede on Saturday and Sundays. If they have a vow, they sacrifice. Afterwards, they cook and eat it there. According to Sunni belief, owners of the sacrifice don't eat the meat of it. They give it away. However, Alawi people, unlike sunnis, eat the meat of the animal themselves and offer it to their guests first. They don't give it away.

There are two kinds of fasting for villagers. The first is the one lasting for 3 days Ramadan and called as "Hızır fasting"

The dates of "*Hızır Fasting*" are the 26 th, 27 th and 28 th days of Ramadan when the Prophet Ali was and rested. To break fast, it is forbidden to drink water (To respect the memory of martyrs killed in Kerbela). It is regarded as a thanking fasting. The other last for twelve days and it is broken with a soup named "aşure" cooked on the 13 th of the month of Muharrem in Sehitle village, people don't chant *mevlüd* during the ceremonies of engagement wedding, circumcision and in religious festivals. They believe that these days should be celebrated with fun.

Beliefs of Alawism could be seen mostly during wedding ceremonies. The religious marriage is performed by "the old man" of the village. Before the first night of the couple, he old man gives them some advice and makes them swear that they'll have control over their hands, their loins and their tongue. The bride and the groom promise in the presense of the old man and their family that they'll become faithfull to each other stay together on good bad days and that far parents'll have the same rights (the bride's father and mother the groom's father and mother). They finish the promise saying "Let God Muhammed, Ali be witness, and the sky, the ground" When the bride comes to the groom's house, they sacrifice.

They believe in the evil eye. In order to keep the evil eye off, they wear blue bead and they pour the melting lead into cold water over the head of the person believed to catch on evil eye.

When seeing the moon,

I see the moon, God Amentü billah

May God forgive our ail sins" they prayed.

Special Occasions Celebrated in the Village

The most important element in Alawiism is that people should conform with the present time. Except for Ramadan and Kurban (Sacrifice) Days there are three important days celebrated. The first is “*Nevruz Day*” (The person New Year’s Day) giving the good news of spring. That day is accepted as the birthday of the Prophet Ali as well.

Almost all the people in the village gather in Cem House on that day. After the speeches about the meaning of day, they entertain with the show of “Semah”.

The second day is “*Hidrellez Feast*” celebrated by both Alawi-Bektashi societies and Sunnis in Turkey on May 6 th.

The third is the ceremonies to commemorate Hasan Dede on the first or second Sunday of May. During these ceremonies having been held since 1984, people sacrifice, cook rice and offer them to guests. A lot of visitors from other cities also join the ceremony. First, the national anthem is sung. Then they read the Qur’an shortly and call to prayer. The head of the Club and the head of the village make a speech. Then comes Semah Group and performs their shows.

Result

Hasan Dede who came from Horasan and settled in Ankara was descended from Ahmet Yesevi. We haven’t found out any written document about Hasan Dede though there are plenty of sources about muslim saints of Bursa. The villagers say that the books and the things belonging to Hasan Dede were destroyed by the Greeks during the independence war. The only written source about him is the history of Şhitler Village and they Family tree hung on the tomb wall.

The tomb of Hasan Dede is significant place to visit not only for the people having different religious opinions.

That 14-15 thousand people from various regions of Turkey (both Sunni and Alawi) joined the ceremonies the commemorate Hasan Dede end entertained together shows how successful.

People in Şhitler Village all of whom are Alawii attract the attention with their obedience to the principles and the rules of Atatürk and as a peaceful and productive society.

RESOURCE PERSONS:

- KK1- Nezir Erdil, 70, Elementary school, Farmer, Şehitler Village, Bursa
KK2- Zehra Akça, 62, Literate, House wife, Şehitler Village, Bursa.
KK3- Ali Akça, 47, Engineer, Şehitler Village, Bursa.
KK4- Yusuf Dedeođlu, 62, Elementary school, Retired, Ankara.
KK5- Hatice Dedeođlu, 55, Elementary school, Retired, Ankara.
KK6- Murad Akçakoca, 28, Elementary school, Librarian, Şehitler Village, Bursa.
KK7- Mediha Akçakoca, 25, Elementary school, House wife, Şehitler Village, Bursa.
KK8- Seyide Ergün, 37, Elementary School, House wife, Şehitler Village, Bursa.
KK9- Latife Erdil, 68, Elementary School, House wife, Şehitler Village, Bursa.
KK10- Haydar Akçakoca, 47, Elementary school, Retired, Şehitler Village, Bursa.

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PHOTOGRAPHS



Black tree



Customs followed while visiting the Tomb



Inferior part of Hasan Dede Tomb



Cem House