



ALEVISM



CEM

Gender will not be questioned in our Cems

Everything has been perfectly created by Hakk

*No difference between male and female
to our understanding*

Discrimination is in your own thoughts.

— Hacı Bektaş Veli

THE CEM CEREMONY

The Cem Evi is the place for Alevis to come together and worship. This ceremony is called Cem. Everyone sits facing each other. The Cem is lead by a Pir, Mursit, Baba, Dede, or Ana. The person proposed to lead the Cem needs to receive consent from those attending and then the area for the Cem is declared open. The Cem is the place for Alevis to share their contributions, happiness, sadness, worship and equality. Everyone is seen as equal in the Cem. Those offended and upset with each other will be reunited and injustices will be resolved. Candles will be lit, and using the holy book with strings, which is another name used to describe the bağlama, the prayers, hymns, sayings, poems and laments will be performed. Semahs will be danced and the oppressed will be remembered.
The 12 services will be preformed.

THE 12 SERVICES OF A CEM CEREMONY

Pir (Dede/Ana)
Guide
Zakir
The Observer
Door Keeper
Sweeper
Jug Server
Candle Lighter
Fleece Keeper
Semah Performers
Water Server
Food Server

The order in which the services are performed at Cem may differ between different regions.

CEM AND THE CEMEVI

The Cemevi is the place where Alevis meet and perform their worship.

In today's world most Cemevis are also used as education centres.

Everyone attending the Cem ceremony will bring a donation of food with them. When attending a Cemevi more attention than usual is given to personal cleanliness and conduct and any behaviour that is against the rules of the Cem is to be avoided.

Everyone will salute the doorway when entering the Cemevi.

This greeting lets people leave their egos, ambitions and daily worries behind them and outside the Cemevi. Shoes will be taken off when entering. If possible everyone will sit in a circle facing each other.

Women, men, children, and young people... everyone will sit together.

Everybody is equal in the Cem. Before the Cem ceremony begins, the Zakir will sing two poems and one Duvaz, this is called tying the bouquet.

PIR (DEDE / ANA / BABA)

A Pir is an expert in the Alevi belief and culture and lives his life accordingly.

Traditionally Pirs have served the Alevi path all their lives and as a result received the right to lead the Cem ceremony. Dedes and Anas come from a Pir background and are brought up according to the Alevi way. At the start of the Cem the Guide invites the Pir into the centre of the Cem. The Pir first greets the Guide and everyone at the Cem, then he asks for consent from everyone in order to lead the Cem ceremony.

THE GUIDE

The Guide sits beside the Pir and helps him.

The Guide has vast knowledge of Alevi values and the Path and applies them.

The guide helps to maintain the communication between the Pir and everyone in the Cem.

ZAKIR

The Zakir plays the bağlama and sits next to the Dede. On the prompt of the Dede, the Zakir summons the 12 services to the Cem with his words and music. These hymns convey nice feelings and thoughts. In the Hymns the names of Hakk, Muhammed and Ali are mentioned. The Duvaz or Duvaz-i Imam will mention the 12 imams' names. Semah songs have rhythmic melodies. Mersiyes are the mournful songs or laments that are sang for Imam Huseyin.

DOOR KEEPER

The Door Keeper seals the door during the Cem ceremony and will not open the door until the end of the Cem. The Door Keeper is responsible for the security of the Cem.

THE OBSERVER

The Cem Keeper maintains order in the Cem. Through the Guide, the Cem Keeper passes on the requests of the people to the Pir. The Cem Keeper helps everyone to perform their services. The Cem Keeper holds a long stick. The stick is used only as a symbol and has a rose attached to the end of it.

SWEEPER

The Sweeper's duty is to symbolically clean and purify the Cem area. One or three people can perform this service. When there are three of them, all three will be women. When it is one person, it can be either a woman or a man. The Sweeper service can be performed several times during the Cem.

JUG KEEPER

The İbrik service represents physical purification. It is usually performed by two people, one woman and one man. Hands are washed symbolically.

LIGHT KEEPER

Following the cleaning of the place and the symbolic washing of hands, the Pir will unite everyone through enlightening their hearts and minds. The candles will be lit. Symbolically there are three candles. They represent the light of Hakk.

FLEECE KEEPER

The fleece represents the presence of Hacı Bektaş Veli. The person who stands on the fleece will perform the İkrar, Görgü and Dar services. After the arrival of the fleece the worshipping part of the Cem will begin.

SEMAH PERFORMERS

Semah is one of the most important parts of the Cem. Women and men perform the Semah together. The Semah will begin with the last part of the Mihracnama. Everyone wishing to take part can join the Semah.

WATER SERVER

Following the Semah, the Pir reminds everyone of Kerbela, Imam Hüseyin and all the innocent victims. Before the Saka water is distributed the Zakir performs one or three more Mersiyes (laments). Saka water is distributed to remember those left without water at Kerbela. Everyone takes a sip from the Saka water. If the Cem is attended by many people the Saka water will be sprinkled on them.

FOOD SERVER

All contributions received from the people will be put together and at the end of the Cem will be shared between everyone equally.

The food can be distributed during or after the Cem ceremony.

With this service all services are completed.

The candles will be put out.

The fleece is taken away.

**The 12 servers will come to the centre one more time,
and will receive approval from the Pir.**

The doors will be opened.

*The Cem ceremony is a ritual which
cleanses the minds and unites the human,
nature and the universe.*

May Hakk accept our whorship.

*“the end of the path would be
dark if the path is not science.”*

Hace Bektash Veli

CEM



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