

## Quranic Verses Shaping Djem and False Perception of Alevism in the Society

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### ABSTRACT

*It is seen that the Alevi-Sunni relations are mostly shaped by the stereotyped perceptions of the two groups about each other. In particular, the fact that Alevism is a closed society due to the pressure they have experienced throughout history has prevented them from being perceived correctly. As such, it is seen that there are many misconceptions about Alevis and their rituals that do not match the reality but are accepted as correct by the society. Due to the lack of communication that could not be developed through this "unknown" in the historical process, Alevi-Sunni relations have always been open to manipulations. As a matter of fact, it is seen that Alevis' relations with Islam, the Djem ceremonies that form the basis of Alevism, and the content of Djem ceremonies have always remained a mystery to Sunnis. Unfortunately, this misperception also reflected negatively on the communication between the two groups. As it is known, if stereotypes arise when there is incorrect information about the target group, the best way to correct them is to create common contact environments that will bring individuals to the right information. Here in this article, the unknown Djem ritual and especially the Qur'anic verses that they refer to during the Djem ceremonies are discussed.*

**Key Words:** Alevis, Sunnis, Djem, Verses of Quran in Djem.

As it is known, socio-religious belief groups change and develop in the social process of the history. The basic principles of sect, group, community, and similar structures are shaped according to the characteristics of the socio-political environment within the framework of the phenomenon of social integration (İşcan 2006: 13). Therefore, the social relations of these groups take place in line with their own conditions. At the same time, the attitudes and behaviors of individuals, groups and societies are formed by the influence of their perceptions, thanks to their experiences and knowledge from the past. Because people generally believe in their perceptions, their perceptions are real for that person, and they can create a personal value with it (Özer 2012: 148) Data organized and interpreted in the mind by means of perceptions create values, problems and solve these problems (Bakan-Efe 2021). Because people exhibit attitudes and behaviors according to the way they perceive the messages in the outside world. It is seen that the characteristics, needs, expectations, characters, feelings, cultures, value judgments, prejudices, experiences of the people directly affect the perceptions of the people (Güney 2012: 91). However, since the perception process is automated with the effect of past experiences, people do not spend much time during perception, except for special cases, and they do not feel the need to think in detail about the subject they perceive. Unfortunately, it is seen that the Alevi-Sunni relations in the Turkish society are built on similar perceptions. For example, when we look at the perception of Alevis in Turkey, it will be witnessed that they are defined very broadly and differently, from being Muslim to being an infidel. The word has been used in various ways over

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time, and towards the 19th century, the use of Alevi has become more common. It is known that these groups were mentioned with other names in previous periods (Melikoff 1998: 53).

According to the studies carried out by Saraç, the periods when the concept of Alevi began to be used were mainly after 1826. The word "Alevi", which has been claimed to be used for the last 250 years, was not used in the Ottoman Empire. Alevism, has become a common name for the "Anatolian Bektashis and Qizilbash". "The government" has had to accept it as a common name in recent years, and it was known in the Ottoman period by countless names, such as Qizilbash, Rafida, Işık (Light), Işık Taifesi (Light Spectrum), Taife-i Bektashiyan (Bektashi Spectrum), Torlak, (-Torlakian, together with Bulgarian and Macedonian, falls into the Balkan Slavic linguistic area, which is part of the broader Balkan sprachbund. According to UNESCO's list of endangered languages, Torlakian is vulnerable) and Gürüh'u Naci (Sineless community). After the 16th century, it is also said that Turkomen who supported Ali were called Qizilbash in some of the Ottoman records. In 1826, it is seen in the Hatt-i Humayun; which abolished the Bektashi tariqa, that the concept of an "Alevi faction" was used for the first time along with concepts such as "Rafida".(Saraç 2013: 131) Melikoff explains this situation as follows:

"In the Ottoman archival documents, the term 'Alevi' is not found before the 19th century. The same was the case for Alevism just like the way 'Alawi' in Syria has replaced Nusayri. They are called 'Rafida', 'profane', 'mulhid' or ' Qizilbash' which was the name given to them throughout history. Once the meaning of rebelliousness to Allah was ascribed to "Qizilbash", it was replaced by, "Alevi", which means loyalty to Ali. (Melikoff 2013: 130-131)

Alevi have been mentioned with different names in Anatolia and various geographies. These are; Qizilbash (also in Bulgaria), Tahtacılar, Bektashis, Manavlar, Nusayris (the name given to Alevi who mostly live in Hatay and around) Ja'faris, Yol uşağı (among Romanie), Babai, Cumali, Musahipler, and Gülşeriler (Uğurlu 2011: 133-134). The term Alevi is the general name of those religious and political groups. Zaidiyyah, Isma'ilism along with Galiye Müellihe which is called Ghulat, Ali-İlahis, Qizilbashes and other groups that have beliefs such as "incarnation", "reincarnation" and "antinomianism". They consider Ali as divine and are all generally considered within the upper concept of Alevism. Included among them is the Imamiyya sect that claims that Ali is the first caliph of the Prophet Muhammad. In this sense, the tariqas that are attributed to Ali are also called "Alevi" (Subaşı 2008: 69).

### **Perception-Based Communication between Alevi-Sunnis**

This point of view stated above inevitably also directly affects the communication between the two groups. Because, communication is understood as producing meaning and sharing the produced meanings with others,( Dökmen, 2015: 19; Kılıç 2002: 16) transferring feelings and thoughts between people through symbols, certain media and channels (Zillioğlu 2014: 21; Aziz 2016: 28) distributing culture to human communities (Kaya 2017: 1) and spreading information (Fiske 2015: 15). According to a general definition, communication is defined as a dynamic process in which news, information, feelings, thoughts and attitudes are exchanged between individuals, groups or at the social level through a system of symbols (Kocabaş 2000: 12). As it is known, people who communicate act under the influence of the primary and secondary groups they are in. Both sides shape the communicative functioning process under the influence of the social structure, social relations and especially primary group relations in which they are involved. Therefore, it is necessary to consider the social structure in which the communication process takes place (Güngör 2011: 70).

In religious communication, it is also necessary to foresee that the social structures they belong to will be effective when both parties perceive each other. In particular, institutions such as religious structures, sects, and cults are determinative in the way people communicate in this area. The structures formed within the religious tradition have led to the development of different

perspectives on many religious issues in the past and today. Accordingly, we can see that even people who think they speak the same language sometimes have difficulty in understanding. Therefore, this sociological reality should always be taken into account. When we get down to the basis of communication conflicts that occur from time to time in the fields of religious communication, we can easily see the effect of these affiliations.

### **Perception of the "Other" in the Society**

It is true that the main factor that determines the way of communication is perception. As a matter of fact, the communication of individuals or groups with others directly constitutes their place in their own mind codes, namely their perception. As Akash states, theological differences, historical factors, the politicization of religion by manipulation by politicians, and the tendency of religious groups to condemn and criticize others excessively are problems in terms of healthy communication. However, stereotypes and prejudices are also a serious obstacle to communication and dialogue between religious groups (Akase 1998: 28). In fact, these issues are intertwined, and they constantly feed each other. The phenomenon we call perception is not only caused by people's expectations, desires and needs. In addition, previous experiences, learnings, social norms, values, social and cultural atmosphere etc. plays an active role in this process. In fact, it is also known that all of the factors mentioned here affect each other more or less, but constantly, depending on their location and situation (Cüceoğlu 1994: 121-123, 131-135; Morgan 1980: 265-280).

Each group sets out with some claims that distinguish it from the other. The continuity of that group is possible by differentiating it from the other to a large extent and gaining a unique meaning. At this point, it is a fact that each group member draws attention to the different and different aspects of himself, not to the aspects that are similar to the other group members (Bilgin 1996: 86). In a social psychological sense, structures defined as "religious groups" such as Alevi and Sunni, sects, communities, sects, etc., give their members a different religious-world view and a certain religious social identity. In this way, they present ready-made perception patterns of how they should perceive and evaluate the world (Melsin 1988: 48; Vergote 1999: 91).

In this sense, the attitudes of an Alevi towards a Sunni or a Sunni towards an Alevi should not be confused with what meanings are attributed to them. Likewise, the reasons and the content of the prejudices and stereotypes of Muslims towards Christians and Jews towards Christians can be shaped by feeding from different factors. As far as is known, the main factor here is social identities. External factors such as being a minority or a majority, mutual competing for limited opportunities, historical factors, traditions, lack of education, political, economic and military reasons are effective here. However, internal factors such as anxiety, insecurity, low self-esteem, disappointments and feelings of relative deprivation, dogmatism, fundamentalism, particularism and ethnocentrism also determine how to behave towards other religious groups. Undoubtedly, some of them are the cause of prejudices and stereotypes (Assaad Elia Azzi 1998: 26; Vinsonneau 1997: 160; Ruth 1997: 35; Yapıcı 2002: 20-28), while others affect their severity and intensity. This is also the reason why the content is positive or negative. However, the question of why certain expressions keep repeating seems to be more closely related to socio-cultural and historical factors (Şelek 1996: 279).

As it is known, if stereotypes arise when there is incorrect information about the target group, the best way to correct them is to create common contact environments that will bring individuals to the right information (Yzerbyt-Schadron 1996: 41; Leyens-Yzerbyt-Schadron 1997: 69). Here in this article, the unknown Djem ritual and especially the Quranic verses that they refer to during the Djem ceremonies are discussed.

### **The Issue of Caliphate**

Before discussing the issue of Djem ceremonies, perhaps first of all, it is necessary to briefly touch upon the issue of the caliphate, which is seen as the main source of the problem between Alevi

and Sunnis. As it is known that the Prophet Muhammad died without leaving any clear instructions to his Companions as to who would be the Caliph after him (Hambel 1982). The caliphate problem that emerged after this was tried to be solved by his companions within the framework of their own political culture (Halm 1991: 6). After the death of the Prophet, the Ansar gathered in Saqifah bani Sa'idah (Ben-i Said Garten) and nominated Sa'd bin `Ubaidah for the Caliphate (Ibn Sa'd 1998: 82). When `Umar bin Khattab learned this meeting, he came to Abu Bakr and reported the situation and they went there together. Abu Bakr was elected as the new caliph by taking allegiance of the limited number of Ansar and Muhajir who were there as a result of long discussions (Ibn Hişam: 1936).

While others giving allegiance to Abu Bakr, Ali Abi Talib was not there because he was busy with the funeral of the Prophet (el Mesudl 1938: 284). Later, Hazrat Ali came to Abu Bakr and said, "O Abu Bakr, didn't you think we had a right in this business?" It is known that he complained (Ibn Ebi'l-Hadid 1965-67: 47-48). Ali explains the reason why he did not pay allegiance to Abu Bakr as follows: "Wasn't I dealing with the funeral of the Messenger of Allah while people were arguing with each other over his caliphate?" (Ibn Kuteybe n.d: 17-18). Ibn Qutayba and Ibn Esir stated that Ali had paid allegiance to Caliph Abu Bakr after his wife, Fatima, died (Ibn Kuteybe: 115; Ibnu'l Esir: 4).

After the death of the Prophet Mohammad, the conflicts ensued from the Caliphate problem could not be eliminated, on the other hand, Islam, which spread to wide geography, faced new interpretations. Inevitably, many new sects emerged in Islam in this process (Zehra 1970: 18). In the history of the Alevism, Ali as superior to companions of the Prophet Muhammad, and those who believe that the caliphate right belongs to Ali and his lineage via assignment and provision (Ekici 2010: 207; Eşari 1980: 5; Şehrisant 1975: 146; Fığlalı 1984: 9-15; Abdülhamid 1994: 15-16).

It is clear that the first caliphate election was made very quickly so that there would be no strife among the Muslims. And it is seen that Ali and his relatives objected to this choice. However, even the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphs, Muawiyah II (Uğurlu 2011: 81-82) and Makmun (Kaya 2008: 16-17), stated that the first caliphate was the right of Caliph Ali. Even Abu Hanifa (Tekeli 1994: 14), the founder of the Hanafi Sect, was of the same opinion when asked this question. As a result of this onflict can be said clearly that Alevism was born from the issue of Caliphate and Imamate in Islam which emerged with the death of Prophet Mohammad (Gölbaşı 2007: 42).

## **Djem**

The general opinion after all researches is that the problem in Alevi-Sunni relations stems from different perceptions of Alevism. In the studies carried out to date, it is seen that the Sunni group, which does not know what is done during the Djem ceremony, due to the closed society characteristics of the Alevis, has many misconceptions about it. In some communities, the *Djem* ceremony is perceived as a collective dance event, as it is performed with Saz. In fact, in the field researches, it is seen that not only Sunnis but also Alevis do not know that the poems and other verses used during the *Djem* are verses from the Quran. Because the Turkish language is used during the Djem, it is seen that even many Alevis do not know that the translations read are verses. Therefore, it is possible to say that some explanations such as what the Djem ceremony is and what it includes will positively affect the perception of Alevis in the society.

The combination of the word "ritual", which means custom, tradition and form of worship in the Persian language, and the word "*djem*", which means to collect and meeting in Arabic, produce the concept of "djem ritual" that means meeting ceremony, which is used to express the worship understanding of the Alevis (Üzüm 1997: 37). This composition is briefly expressed as *djem*, and *djemevi* is the place where the djem ritual is performed. It is also called the "square of the forties" (Gülçiçek 2004: 176).

According to the approach of Zelyut, an Alevi researcher, the coming together and gathering of Alevis is called djem. The name of this ceremony is known as *djem ritual*. The most

important ritual of Alevi-Bektashi rituals is djem. The djem, which is accepted as the secret of Alevism (Uluçay 1993:32), is originally the religious meetings of the Turks with kumis under strict discipline rules in the periods before they adopt Islam (Üzüm 1997: 104) and with the adoption of Islam, they have become assemblies that are partially shaped by Islamic elements.

On the other hand in accordance with the statements of Kaya, from the point of Alevi djem is the symbol of unity and solidarity (Kaya 2008: 81-82). According to İlhan and Sofuoğlu (1997:118), confession means to give a promise and to accept and decide on. It is replying to the question in verse "Am I not your Lord?" as "Yea, verily. We testify" (Surah Al-A'raf) and saying that "We are Muslims since pre-eternity, thank goodness!". Doğan (1998:83) defines the djem as a form of worship with whirling and music that attaches importance to the unity of society, love, rapprochement, and coalescence and that eliminates the incompatibilities. Vaktidolu (2011:60) describes this ceremony as aggregation and integration. According to another thinker, djem is sacred. It is said that djems are gathered based on the hadith *qudsi* of God stating "When two people come together, the third one is me and when three people come together, the fourth one is me" (Özlük 2013: 77-78).

Besides, Sezgin (1990: 69) draws attention to another issue. Djem ritual is a meeting of a *tariqa* which is performed in large communities. Djems are the meetings similar to the whirling rituals performed in Mevlevi. In a sense, this meeting is similar to the "Şeb-i Arus" 'Wedding night' (-the day of meeting with the darling rituals in Mevlevi). However, Birge states that the origin of the word djem is controversial academically (Birge 1965: 176). According to Üşümezsoy (2011: 96-97), the djem ceremony involves whirling in a certain order. This shows the equality within the congregation. In other words, it is a ceremony where there is no president and everyone is equal. In other respects, Kutluay (1993: 14) compares the djem ceremony with the "seclusion" ceremony of Hodja Ahmad Yasawi. The claim that women and men were participating to *dhikr* together in the assemblies of Hodja Ahmad Yasawi led to gossips and found odd by the circles that were strictly attached to the provisions of sharia.

In meanwhile, it is known that there are various types of djem ceremonies. These may vary according to the purpose of gathering, time and place. The general rules of the djems are listed respectively: everyone performed full ablution, they are dressed cleanly, take the shape of the ring, men, and women together, side by side but in separate groups, kneel neatly and in a disciplined way. The entries and exits are carried out in a quiet, silent and disciplined manner. Each family brings dry food within the bounds of possibility. The twelve servants must be ready and perform their duties in due form. In the ring prayer, each believer regards the one straight ahead of him as the qibla. The djem ritual is based on the command of verses 1-2-3-7 of the *Surah Al-Muzzammil* of the Quran in which the day is allocated to work and the night is allocated to worship (Gülşan 2004: 95-96). The manners of djem is a ritual in Alevi villages, performed especially in winter, during which the followers refresh their confessions and those who are estranged and at loggerheads reconcile and repent (Üzüm 1997: 105). As stated by Fiğlalı (1996:334), the query djem, which differs slightly in some points, is also explained at length in the references.

Again, according to the findings of Noyan (1987: 236-296), djems are performed in a "square" (meydan) which is a house or djemevi, if any, that is suitable for the people or even those who come from the environment to sit comfortably. In Bektashism, the person who will get reception and in Alevism the companion couples should perform full ablution properly for the confession djem. According to the Alevi researcher, Zelyut (1990:187), men and women everyone should perform ablution in the manners djem and on the other side, those who are to be mannered should perform full ablution. However, according to the beliefs of the Alevi, one cannot be purified completely by means of water. The real purification is the spiritual purification (Bozkurt 2005: 168). It is observed that this is emphasized meticulously. Üzüm (1997: 105-106), while describing the process of djem ritual, carefully underscores the following points:

In the evening, men and women who come to the place where the djem ceremony to be held give the food that they bring along to the service owner, such as tea bread, nuts or fruit, and

then they pray side by side as their two hands on their chest or their right hands on their chest and their left hands left freely, their toes of right feet are placed on their left feet and their bodies are bent down slightly. This is also called "standing" (dara durmak). Dede prays: "Allah! Allah! Lokmas may be accepted. Wishes may come true. Allah-Mohammed-Ali may accept them. They may be registered to the books of Imam Hasan, Shah Huseyn, and Haji Bektash Veli. Light of the Prophet, Grace of Ali, our patriarch, and sultan Haji Bektash Veli. Hu for them of the real saints." Participants of the djem entreat by moving forward on their knees. After that, men sit in a way to form a ring in the direction of the dede by leaving a large gap in the center. There may be three, five or more rows in the ring with regard to the crowdedness of the congregation. There, everyone is facing each other. Women sit in a suitable place on the back side of the ring formed by men. After that, the djem ritual begins to be duly performed.

Uğurlu (2011: 129) underlines that Alevis perform their worships face to face in djemevis under the supervision of Dedes and Babas as well. In this respect they adduce the following verse as evidence: "So wherever you [might] turn, there is the Face of Allah. Lo! Allah is All Embracing, All Knowing..." (Surah Al-Baqara, 115). The worships and prays of the Alevis are Turkish. According to the approach of Doğan, due to the structure of djem ceremonies, Alevism has a minstrel tradition as well. Alevis use *saz* in djem worships. They think that *saz* is a means of enthusiasm for people to concentrate more on worship (Şahin 2001: 40).

Another researcher Özlük (2013: 56-57) says that some of the practices during the djem ceremony have religious meanings and basis and he gives examples on this issue. For example, David realized his mistake and weltered and wept for nine years. At the end of nine years, God accepted the repentance of David and forgave him. The court and punishment of exile in the djem date from David. It is performed in commemoration of him. Again, standing and making a confession is inherited from Adam. It is like the Sunnah of Adam in some way. When Adam requested God to meet with Eve, he promised that he would never obey the devil. Promising is to make a confession. It is made in commemoration of Adam. Another practice is related to Job:" . . . He told Job. Job said: "Rahime, my wife, you have been cheated by my enemy, devil, if I recover from this illness, I'll hit you ninety-nine stick. I swear." Later, Job came around. He had to fulfill his promise. He didn't want to strike his wife, but he had given promise once. He ruminated. While he was ruminating, he heard supernatural voices. "What are you thinking about. Fulfill your promise. Go and pick up ninety-nine wheat stems. Combine them together and strike your wife with it." Job gathered those ninety-nine wheat stems and struck his wife. Today the stick or steel punishment in the Alevi djems is a practice applied in memory of Job. According to the stick punishment, the follower who is decided to be shunned is struck once with the gathered wheat stems in proportion to the amount of the penalty imposed. Otherwise, it does not mean beating him with a stick.

Another important outstanding concept in the djem ceremonies of Alevis is standing (Dara durmak). According to Cebecioğlu, the word *dar* means tree in the Persian language. Terminologically, it is used to represent the gallows in the meaning of the pole that Mansur Al-Hallaj was hung (As it is known that the Mansur Al-Hallaj event is an argument that some Alevi groups use it when explaining some practices during Djem ceremonies). In sufism, it is mentioned among the terms of Bektashism. It is the name of the place where the follower makes a confession at the square to sacrifice (Özcan 2013: 105) his life.

Eröz has collected the facts that he obtained after his scientific-sociological researches on Alevism into a book in the expectation that Sunni communities, who have no detailed knowledge about the djem and the djem ceremonies, will read and understand them. In this work, Eröz says:

"To the contrary of the Sunnis bad suspicion called "the candle dimmed out" women (sisters) are under the spiritual control and patronage of the congregation in the various phases of life and in the djem ceremonies which are held in a chaste and respectful manner. The honor of women (sisters) is the honor of the congregation. In the Qizilbash-Alevi-Bektashi djemevis, the sacredness and honor of the family institution are indisputable. It is necessary to indicate

here that these closed meetings are not the assemblies of viraginity, debauchery, and immorality. They are the assemblies of worship which are called "Square of God" and God and the truth are believed to be born there. This worship is equivalent to the prayer in the sharia. This is called entreating." (Kaya 2008: 271)

### Verses of the Quran Reciting in Djems

It is seen that many people and even a large part of Alevis do not know that the rituals and sayings during the djem are based on verses from the Quran and that the frame of the djem ritual is formed by the Quran. As it is stated above that people who have Sunni beliefs think that these ceremonies are rituals where sazes are played and the Turkish songs are sung and dances are performed during the ceremony; whereas some of the Alevis do not know that the Quranic verses are recited during the djem because of the fact that the ceremonial language is Turkish. All prays in djem are known to be Turkish by everyone. This is a deliberately preferred language, as the people who participate in the ceremony wanted to understand what is recited during the ceremony. During the djem, the meanings of the important creeds such as the *Shahada* and *Tawhid* are explained, those who execute the djem ceremony do not need to recite in Arabic, prays, even verses are recited in Turkish. Even, they predicate this practice on a verse from the Quran: The verse 44 of the Surah al-Isra' commands that the seven heavens and the earth and all that therein praise Him. "And there is not a thing but hymneth his praise; but ye understand not their praise. Lo! He is ever Clement, Forgiving." *If everything in the sky and on earth glorifies Allah, in which language are they commemorating God?*" Each creature commemorates God in his own language, and people may commemorate God in their own language, and the Quran is inspired in Arabic to the Arabs so that they can understand it. The djem ceremony continues in Turkish with the idea that there is also a verse on this subject.

Since the djem ceremony continues in Turkish and the Turkish meanings of prays are recited, both the Alevis and Sunnis have the idea that no verses are read from the Koran in the ceremony. However, according to the findings of Özlük (2013: 83), the majority of the recitations of Dede during the ritual consist of the Turkish meaning of verses in the Quran. In this context, according to his determinations, verses of the Quran recited in the djem ceremony are listed as follows: Verses 10-18 of the *Surah Al-Fath*; verse 26 of *Surah al-Yunus*; verse 208 of the *Surah al-Baqarah*; verse 19 of the *Surah Ali-Imran*; verse 23 of the *Surah al-Fath*; verse 62 of the *Surah al-Ahzab*; verse 5-77, 78-79 and 110 of the *Surah al-Isra'*; verse 123 of the *Surah al-Nahl*; verse 205 of the *Surah al-Najm*; verse 23 of the *Surah al-Shu'ara*; verses 1-2-3-6-7 of the *Surah al-Muzzammil*; verse 9 of the *Surah al-Tur*; verse 72 of the *Surah al-Sad* and other verses which are not mentioned. In fact, it is seen that Alevis continue to perform their worship, beliefs, and customs pursuant to these verses.

Uğurlu (2011: 134-136) identified the following verses that are recited in Turkish during the djem ritual of the Alevis or that are the sources that constitute the principles of the djem ceremony: Verse 36 of the *Surah al-Nur*; verse 58 and 115 of the *Surah al-Baqarah*; verse 159 of the *Surah Ali-Imran*; verse 77 of the *Surah al-Hajj*; verse 10 of the *Surah al-Hujurat*, and verses 27, 28, 29, and 30 of the *Surah al-Fajr*.

Ideas of Doğan (1998: 118-119) on this issue are not different. According to him, the procedures in the djem ceremonies of the Anatolian Alevism are based on verses of the Quran and for this reason, every service in the djem ceremony is performed by reciting the appropriate verses. In this context, in the course of the djem ceremony, while candles are lit verses 35-36 of the *Surah al-Nur* are recited, and during the companionship ceremony, verse 100 of the *Surah al-Taubah* is recited. In addition, the initiation of the djem ceremony in the evening is based on verse 11 of the *Surah al-Naba'*, verse 26 of the *Surah al-Insan*, and verse 191 of the *Surah Ali-Imran*. Even the fact that the djem ceremony is carried out by a Dede and that it is a descendant of the Prophet are also found to be predicated on the Quran. At this point, verses that are referred by the Alevis are verse 181 of the *Surah al-A'raf*, verse 71 of the *Surah al-Isra'* and verse 23 of the *Surah al-Syu'ara'*.

According to the determinations of Doğan (1998: 119-127), dedes make use of the following verses by using their meanings or by pointing out them while giving advice during the djem and perform the ceremony in accordance with the following verses: Verse 33 of the *Surah al-Ahzab*, verse 77 of the *Surah al-Qasas*, and verses 22-23-25 -26 of the *Surah al-Isra'*. These are the advice given by the dedes to the public and these are also given according to verses 104-113-114 of the *Surah Ali-`Imran* of the Quran. In addition, verse 62 of the *Surah al-Najm* and verse 26 of the *Surah al-Insan* 62 are verses that are referred while shaping the djem ceremony. In addition, dhikrer who is one of the important attendants of the djem and his dhikr is also based on verse 191 of the *Surah Ali-`Imran* and verse 205 of the *Surah al-A'raf*.

As can be seen, the role of the Dede in Djem or some practices performed during Djem are also based on some Quranic verses. In summary, however, the Djem ceremony is shaped according to the following verses:

**Table 1:** List of the Verses of Quran used during the Djem.

	Surah	Verse	Total of Verses (52)
1	al Isra'	5-22-23-25-26-44-71-78-77-79 and 110	11 Verses
2	Ali-`Imran	19-104-113-114-159 and 191	6 Verses
3	al-Muzzammil	1-2-3-6 and 7	5 Verses
4	Surah al-Fajr	27, 28, 29, and 30	4 Verses
5	al-Baqarah	58-115 and 208	3 Verses
6	al-Fath	10 and 18	2 Verses
7	al-Ahzab	33 and 62	2 Verses
8	al-Nur	35 and 36	2 Verses
9	al-Insan	26 and 62	2 Verses
10	al-Najm	62 and 205	2 Verses
11	al-A'raf	181 and 205	2 Verses
12	al-Hajj	77	1 Verse
13	al-Hujurat	10	1 Verse
14	al-Fath	23	1 Verse
15	al-Taubah	100	1 Verse
16	al-Naba'	11	1 Verse
17	al-Nahl	123	1 Verse
18	al-Qasas	77	1 Verse
19	al-Tur	9	1 Verse
20	al-Sad	72	1 Verse
21	al-Syu`ara'	23	1 Verse
22	Yunus	26	1 Verse

To conclude, it is possible to say that the relations between Alevis and Sunnis are based on the mutual perceptions of the two groups about each other. However, it is seen that the fact that Alevis are a closed society by their nature has affected this perception negatively in the historical process. It is a reality that the Sunni group knows very little about Alevism and they have almost no information about the djem ceremony. It seems that, this affect the relations negatively. Additionally, the Sunni group did not have correct information about the Djem ceremony also laid the groundwork for the emergence of false rumors. Alevi-Sunni relations in the historical process are unfortunately built on these perceptions.

Therefore, it is seen that Sunnis do not know that Alevis refer to more than fifty Quranic verses during Djem. In addition, it is not known that almost everything during the djem was based on a story or verse from the Quran. It is partially normal that Sunnis do not know this, but it is understood that many Alevis do not know this either. This is due to the fact that the language of the Djem ceremony is Turkish. Naturally, in the interpretations made while trying to understand the Alevis, it is even seen that they are portrayed as a non-Islamic community. However, Alevism,



and Djem, which is one of its main institutions of Alevism, the structures in the djem, the participants and their duties, and almost all of what is read during the ceremony are based on the Quran and hadiths. If Alevism were known in this way by the society, there is no doubt that the perception about Alevis would change positively. This is the same for Alevis as well as for Sunnis. It can be foreseen that the Alevis' perceptions about the other group will change along with their views on Islam, as they know this fact.

Alevis were performing their rituals in secret due to negative historical experiences. Therefore, until the last years, djem and its content were not known to Sunnis. This situation led to some prejudices in Sunni side would accuse the Alevis of being irreligious. Therefore, it is thought that the existence of Djemevis and the knowledge of the content of djem ceremonies by Sunnis will make positive changes in the perception of Alevis and will have a positive effect on the rapprochement of these two groups. This will help Sunnis to reach first-hand and accurate information about Alevis and Cem, and will eliminate these prejudices that exist among Sunnis. Therefore, djem ceremonies provide the opportunity for Sunnis to learn about the Alevis directly from the first source. The benefit of this awareness in terms of social peace in the society is indisputable. In addition to the fact that the content of the djem ceremony is known by the Sunnis, the dissemination of the construction of Djemevi, the state's not preventing these institutions, and informing them about Alevism, especially through the written and visual media, will also positively affect the Alevi-Sunni relations.

It is indisputable that the future of Alevi-Sunni relations will be positive if the Sunni community can be informed about the basic practices and rituals such as the djem ceremony of Alevism. Because it is a fact that the conflict between the two groups from the past to the present has arisen due to the incorrect meanings attributed to the practices during the djem ceremony. The "Candle Extinguished" incident, the belief of drinking alcohol at Djem, and the belief of Alevis dancing together during the djem have led to a false perception against Alevism over the years. Therefore, in recent years, the increase in the number of Djemevis in the society, the participation of Sunnis in djem ceremonies, the direct information of the society about Alevism and Cem through the Alevi media will positively affect the relationships of these two groups in the future.

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