

## The Iranian Islamic Revolution and Its Impact on the Authentic Identity-Seeking of the Alevi Community in Turkey

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### Abstract

The Alevi communities, who, according to the leader, are known as the "Orphans of the Family of Muhammad," still maintain a belief in following the school of Ahl al-Bayt (the household of Prophet Muhammad). Thus, throughout history, Alevi, due to their susceptibility to various religious currents, policy-making, and targeted political-cultural planning, have experienced a complex and multifaceted identity and nature. Therefore, it is the responsibility of those in this field to undertake a religious and customary obligation to take fundamental steps towards reviving the authentic religious identity of the Alevi community through precise, comprehensive planning that focuses on commonalities with the Alevi society, such as the specific belief in the Imams, commemorating certain religious celebrations and ceremonies, and ultimately adhering to the principles, pillars, and values of the school of Ahl al-Bayt. The present study aimed to examine and evaluate the influence of the Iranian Islamic Revolution on the retrieval of the authentic identity of the Alevi community in Turkey, based on the descriptive-analytical method and the "Diffusion/Dissemination Theory" from the perspective of ideological leaders. Overall, Alevi leaders believe that today, by the blessings of the Iranian Islamic Revolution and a correct understanding of the school of Ahl al-Bayt, efforts are being made to introduce the true essence of its principles, teachings, and authentic practices to the Alevi community. In this regard, a great responsibility lies with the Alevi leaders and scholars to safeguard the Alevi community from threats and harms through educating them about the teachings of Ahl al-Bayt and bringing them back to the embrace of the school of Ahl al-Bayt through awareness.

**Keywords:** Islamic Revolution, Iran, Turkey, Alevi, Diffusion Theory, Identity.

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### Introduction

If we overlook the impact of the policies of the first two decades of the Turkish Republic on the Alevi community (external influences), essentially from the 1950s onwards, the political transformation of the Alevis began with the migration (internal influences) of the Alevi community from their primary places of residence where traditional relationships prevailed. The most significant impact of migration on the Alevi community is the loss of the previous position of the dedes (religious leaders) who were at the center of religious life. The dedes hold the central position in the transmission of Alevi cultural symbols. With migration, the community became disconnected from the dedes as religious and ideological leaders, and this situation led to the secularization and marginalization of the Alevi community. Another consequence of this migration was a tendency towards left-wing movements and parties, which separated the Alevi community from its authentic identity for years and pushed it to the margins.

However, during the 1980s and the years following 1990, while the religious/ideological identity was rapidly growing in Turkish society, the Alevi community began the process of institutionalization and organization. As a result, numerous associations, foundations, and organizations were established. During this period, these organizations shifted towards a more political arena as they lost the influence of spiritual leaders and contributors who lacked the resources and were unable to renew and develop themselves due to political pressures. While most of these formations were political entities distant from the traditional Alevi culture and beliefs in the Twelve Imams, some of them attempted to return to the traditional Alevi structure. Currently, this traditional structure is one of the central aspects of the complex identity of Alevi communities and seeks to revive its identity by returning to the school of Ahl al-Bayt, contrary to the secular aspect that seeks to explore its identity beyond Islam and the Shia religion.

Essentially, this group strives to revive the true Alevi identity in two fronts: "The articulation and consolidation of Alevi biological components" and "De-otherization through oppositional discourses." In this regard, the dedes (religious leaders) and ideological leaders are considered pioneers of this process, primarily influenced by contemporary events in the Shia world, especially the Islamic Revolution in Iran and the emergence of new phenomena such as the Arbaeen pilgrimage, which has become an international affair. They fundamentally believe that with the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, the Alevi community has gained an opportunity and awareness to familiarize itself

with its historical identity based on authentic sources and overcome one of its historical weaknesses, which has always relied on oral history.

In Iran, there have been limited studies and research conducted on the Alevi community in Turkey, and the main focus of these studies has been on introducing Alevi identity based on racial, religious, and other aspects. In this regard, notable works include the book "Alevis in Turkey" by Nuri Donmez (2010 AD/1389 SH), the book "The Alevi Community in Turkey" by Mehdi Jamali Far (2012 AD/1391 SH).

Additionally, there is an article titled "Alevis in Pursuit of Political Identity-seeking" written by Rahmatollah Fallah (2006 AD/1385 SH), which primarily emphasizes the issue of political identity-seeking among Alevis. The article "Analysis of Alevi Discourse in Contemporary Turkey" by Piruzfar, Torabi, and Momeni (2020 AD/1399 SH) offers a relatively different perspective on analyzing the discourse of the Alevi community in Turkey. The article "From Babaism Rebellion to Qizilbashism: A Look at the History of Appearance and Growth of Alevis in Anatolia" written by Ahmadyashar Ojaq and translated by Shahab Vali (2006 AD/1385 SH) is considered a valuable work that delves into the history of Alevi identity in Anatolia, the penetration of Shia thoughts and opinions among this group, and proposes the idea that the establishment of Shia beliefs within Alevi groups mostly occurred in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries through the influence of the Hurufi and Safavid propagations in Anatolia, transforming Alevitism into Qizilbashism. Recently, a historical book titled "Alevi States" has been translated from Turkish into Persian by Sadeghian and Bahjati (2021 AD/1400 SH), providing valuable insights into the governmental structures of the Alevi and Shia communities throughout history and introducing the Alevi community's identity in Anatolia.

The present research is qualitative. One of the most crucial characteristics of qualitative research is using the multiple methods or techniques such as interviews, observations, interpretation of personal and historical documents. Additionally, qualitative research work is a complex, dense, and reflective process that reflects the researcher's images, understanding, and interpretations of the world or the phenomenon under investigation (Manuchehri, 2008 AD/1387 SH: 162) and (Yusefi, 2009 AD/1388 SH: 226).

In general, the choice of method should be made with the consideration of whether that method is suitable for investigating a specific research question or not (Bryman, 1988 AD/1367 SH: 108-9). In this article, the authors have creatively attempted to use various qualitative research techniques by combining and integrating them in line with their research. The data for this study were collected through

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documentary and interview methods. The data obtained from interviews were gathered through interviews conducted by the authors with ten leaders of the Alevi community and were analyzed using the diffusion/spread theory of content analysis.

### 1. Theoretical Notes

#### 1.1. Diffusion/Dissemination Theory

The "Diffusion" or "Dissemination" theory is one of the common theories explaining the spread of innovations and the dissemination of ideas and thoughts. Although its initial origins lie in the field of human geography, it has also been widely used in political science and international relations (Barzegar, 2003 AD/1382 SH: 1). In general, this theory has the power to explain and describe any intellectual or physical innovation, as well as the causes of its dissemination, the pathways and channels of its spread, the reasons for its cessation, the reasons for its re-expansion, and the stability of some waves and the decline of others (Peter, 1983 AD/1362 SH: 303-304).

Another related concept associated with diffusion theory is spatial diffusion, which is a process through which people's attitudes and behaviors change. Spatial diffusion refers to the expansion of a phenomenon from its primary centers among people who are ready to accept it. Therefore, in spatial diffusion, two distinct subjects can be distinguished: The existence of a phenomenon or phenomena, and the process of spreading the movement of the phenomenon from its original source, which leads to spatial diffusion. This phenomenon may be a mode of behavior, specific political or social beliefs, or a material matter such as the popularity of a fashion trend or a particular commodity (Shakuei, 1996 AD/1375 SH: 301-303).

Hager Strand has identified several types of diffusion:

- 1) Relocation Diffusion: Relocation diffusion occurs when individuals or groups with a specific idea physically move from one place to another, allowing innovations and inventions to spread to new territories. Religions have been disseminated through the relocation of religious missionaries (Jordan and Raventry, 2001 AD/1380 SH: 162-163).
- 2) Hierarchical Diffusion: In this type of diffusion, phenomena and innovations are transmitted and expanded through a hierarchical structure, with categories and classes in an organized sequence. Ideas spread from an "Important Person" to another person or from one important urban center another (ibid., 2001 AD/1380 SH: 163).
- 3) Contagious or Contagion Diffusion: This type of diffusion is in contrast to hierarchical diffusion. In contagious diffusion, the general spread of ideas occurs without considering hierarchical structures. This process is

heavily influenced by "Distance," so individuals and nearby regions is more likely to have greater contact compared to distant individuals and regions (Hazrati, 2010 AD/1389 SH: 281).

**1.1.** Strand refers to six principles as the fundamental principles and components of this theory:

**1)** Phenomenon's Primary Field and Environment: The first factor is the field and environment in which the phenomenon occurs. This environment, whether natural or social, possesses specific characteristics.

**2)** Dissemination Time: The second factor is time, as a phenomenon spreads to different regions over time. Time can vary from days to years and can occur in separate periods.

**3)** Subject or Disseminated Phenomenon: The third factor in the dissemination theory refers to the subject and the disseminated phenomenon. The issue or event that spreads from one area to other regions can include technological and scientific innovations, new agricultural and industrial findings, social phenomena such as behavior, language and clothing trends, contagious diseases, or cultural and political activities such as revolutions.

**4)** Dissemination Source: Phenomena such as innovations and diseases spread from specific locations and sources to other geographical areas. The dissemination source has specific characteristics and conditions for the creation and formation of the phenomenon, which extend to other regions regarding the public acceptance.

**5)** Dissemination Destination: These are the areas and locations where the subject and the disseminated phenomenon have spread over time, reaching the people in those regions.

**6)** Path of Phenomenon Movement: The disseminated subject follows specific paths, and these paths, due to their unique conditions, guide the dissemination of the phenomenon towards its destination (cited from Barzegar, 2003 AD/1382 SH: 40).

**1.2.** Alevi Identity: "Alevism"<sup>1</sup> is one of the sects that have branched off from the Shia religion. Despite their multi-dimensional and composite

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1 . Alevis today constitute a part of the Shia community, which most historians believe emerged in the third century AH (9th century CE). They are Alevis who currently live in countries such as Turkey and Syria, as well as parts of the Balkans and Europe (Ahmadi Arkami and Nami, 2019 AD/1398 SH: 1). Yashar Ojagh believes that many Alevis and Alevi scholars consider the confrontation between Imam Ali and Muawiyah over the caliphate as the beginning of Alevism. However, it seems that Alevism emerged and flourished in the Anatolia region during the 15th and 16th centuries with the spread of Shia thoughts and beliefs to the region (Yashar Ojagh, Vali, 2006 AD/1385 SH:7).

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identity and nature,<sup>2</sup> they still have a belief in following the school of Ahl al-Bayt (the family of Prophet Muhammad), and fundamentally, in Alevi discourse, Alevi symbolism and emphasis on reclaiming the comprehensive identity<sup>3</sup> of the Alevi community are rooted in the high values and credibility they possess (Caylak, 2020 AD/1399 SH: 4-6).

Celenek believes that Alevism is one of the most authentic religious/sociological movements that have taken shape within Islamic tradition. It is a rich cultural alloy that includes Islamic beliefs, the ancient culture of the Turks, Sufism, love for Ahl al-Bayt and other elements. Although each of these components has played a role in the formation of Alevism in different ways, Islamic beliefs and foundations constitute the main body of this structure (Celenek, 2021 AD/1400 SH).

According to the authors of this article, there is essentially a unified language called "Ahl al-Bayti" among Alevis, which is essentially a secret code; it is a common language. This common language is a valuable asset that can bring the Alevi community together despite different ethnicities, languages, and sometimes conflicting tendencies, and provide a unified form. The description, emergence, preservation, and permanence of this belief and symbolic code require the preservation, promotion, and development of the common identity symbols derived from the religious and doctrinal nature of the Alevi community and based on the needs of the contemporary world.

Therefore, although Alevis are currently divided in terms of beliefs and religious-social behaviors<sup>4</sup>, they are fundamentally Ja'fari in their jurisprudential sect. In this regard, one of the Alevi dedes, Moharram Naji Orhan, says: "Alevism is neither a religion nor a sect nor a path. Rather, Alevism is a collection of beliefs: the religion is Islam, the sect is Ja'fari, and the path is the Nazanin path. The meaning of the Nazanin path is not a specific path, but it is the name of a way that comes from Muhammad (PBUH) and Ali (AS)" (Donmez, 2010 AD/1389 SH: 49-64).

2. The study of historical background and ethnology confirms that Alevi beliefs have been influenced by Shamanism (the ancient religion of the Turks), Sufism, and a blend of Shia Islam in the region of Anatolia in Asia Minor. However, the intellectual context of the Anatolian region (especially Christian traditions) has also had an impact on some of their beliefs and practices (Piroozfar, Torabi, and Mo'meni, 2019 AD/1398 SH: 18).

3. This identification has always been pursued by Alevi leaders in recent decades. For example, in the 1989 Manifesto of the Alevis, originally "Alevism, an Islamic Religion" is mentioned as the first clause (Jamalifar, 2012 AD/1391 SH: 86).

4. 1. Alevis who adhere to the religious and belief traditions of Alevi doctrine remain; Alevis who have become followers of the Hanafi school of the Sunni tradition; Alevis who have become followers of the Twelver Imami Shia jurisprudence; Secular Alevis (Madadlu, 2021 AD/1400 SH: 130).

Faruk Bilici, in his book "The Functions of Alevi-Bektashi in the Republic of Turkey," states: "In fact, Alevism is the same as Shiism, which over time, due to the long periods of confinement and pressure from the despotic rulers of the six-hundred-year Ottoman Empire, has been unable to access authentic and precise Shia sources and has mixed with various folk beliefs and superstitions. In this sense, Alevi must delve into and understand the teachings of Shii accurately to discover their true essence and realize that the Alevi community is essentially the same Shia community." (Piroozfar, Torabi and Momeni, 2019 AD/1398 SH: 16)

**1.3. Alevi Identity and Iran Islamic Revolution:** Although some researchers and scholars believe that the policies towards Alevi during the Ottoman period continued in the Republican era, and essentially, the effort to assimilate Alevism identity within the dominant culture, official ideology, and Sunni Islamic teachings is a common aspect of these two governmental structures towards the Alevi community<sup>5</sup> (Caylak, 2020 AD/1399 SH: 27).

Nevertheless, evidence and indications suggest that during the Republican era, space was relatively provided for the expression of the existence and role-playing of the Alevi community; so much so that during the 1980s and the years after 1990, while religious/theological identity was rapidly growing in Turkish society, the Alevi community began its process of institutionalization and organization, leading to the establishment of numerous associations, foundations, and organizations. During this period, Alevi centers and organizations turned to a more political realm as they lost the influence of spiritual leaders and individuals who were unable to renew and develop themselves due to resource constraints and political pressures. On the other hand, during this period, which was originally the era of the "Cold War," the Alevi community entered political life under the shadow of left-wing philosophy, and the political actors of that period also assessed the Alevi community through the polarizing discourse of the Cold War. Consequently, the changes that occurred globally in the post-1980 era created significant differences both in the Alevi community and among the political actors. The contrasting style gave way to more flexible discourses. Alevism emerged from the shadow of the left and began organizing directly with its own identity.

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2. Some commentators believe that in the early periods of the Turkish Republic system, the philosophy of establishing a "Classless, groupless, and cohesive social structure" and the ideal of standardizing a "Nation" placed minority identities, especially the Alevi community, which fundamentally opposed such policies and actions and occasionally demonstrated resistance, at risk of massacre (Oran, 2011 AD/ 1390 SH: 3-4).

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This new orientation also led to a change in the political demands of the Alevis, so that the demands of the Alevi community before 1980, which were of a class and economic nature, shifted after 1980 towards expressing the political demands of the Alevi community and political actors with an Alevi ideological identity.

After 1980, with the victory of the Western bloc in the Cold War process, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the impact of globalization, parallel to the changes in the political and social life of Turkey, a transformation began in the Alevi community as well. Depending on this change, new political actors emerged and there was also a change in discourse among old political actors. With the change in the style of political actors, the polarization of society, which had reached intense confrontation before 1980, began to expand. The understanding of nationalism that had replaced religion in the early years of the republic gave way to Turkish-Islamic synthesis after 1980. Emphasis on Turkish-Islamic synthesis as an ideological basis of the political regime necessitated the creation of alliances with suitable social groups to achieve targeted results. Support for these structures also involved the exclusion of the Alevi community through economic and bureaucratic means.

With the occurrence of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, the deep state of Turkey (shadow government) and anti-Alevi political actors developed new projects for the Alevi community. Professor Yilmaz Turkdogan's Academy prepared a research in 1982 called "The Bektashi Identity of Alevi," which had the following content: "The collapse of the Soviet bloc and the Shia revolution in Iran, which occurred simultaneously, influence the Alevi community, which has been left in a void due to the loss of the Left, in terms of religious (Shiism) and cultural (Iranian) dimensions; it is necessary for the government to take serious measures in this regard."<sup>6</sup>

**1.4.** However, the wave of the Islamic Revolution was so heavy that beyond religious differences, it also involved Sunni and Alevi communities.<sup>7</sup> In such a way, the Islamic Revolution created changes in

6. Basically, the influence of such perspectives and approaches was that violent events like the Malatya incidents (1978), the Sivas incidents ((1978 AD/1357 SH), the Gaahramanmaraş incidents (8888 A8 /7777 7H), the Çorum incidents ()))) ) the Sivas-Madımak incidents (3333 AD/2222 2H), and the Gaziantep incidents (5555 AD/ 4444 SH) against Alevis happened in those years. Although after these events, Alevis directly began organizing under the name "Alevism," and essentially, these incidents accelerated the formation of Alevi organizations and led to the publicization of Alevi identity (Çaylak, 2020 AD/ 1399 SH: 21).

4. Although some claim that the main impact of this wave was on the Shias in Turkey, it is in this regard that Hayriye Dekmeci believes that Shias have become one of the



the relationship between Alevis and Shias and received sympathetic responses from the Alevi community as well (Madadlu, 2021 AD/1400 SH: 133-131). Therefore, the present study aimed to evaluate the impact of the Islamic Revolution of Iran on the Alevi community from the perspective of 10 spiritual leaders of the Alevi community.

## **2. The Impact of the Islamic Revolution on the Authentic Identity Seeking of the Alevi Community according to the Alevi Scholars**

For centuries, the dedes have played a role in guiding and leading the Alevi community. All dedes are Sayyids (descendants) and are from the lineage of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Therefore, in Alevi books such as "Buyruk," after discussing the fundamental issues of Alevism, the issue of scholarly leadership (Dedeism) is raised. According to the Alevis, the system of dedeism has continued since the time of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and Imam Ali (AS), which is why a dede must be a Sayyid, and someone who is not a Sayyid cannot become a dede.

Another condition for becoming a dede is knowledge. The scholar must possess knowledge in the following areas: they must know about the "Four Gates and Forty Stations;" the Dede or elder must have comprehensive knowledge of the twelve pillars, seventeen waistbands, three traditions, and seven obligations; they must behave according to the path (Tariqat) and continue the path based on truth; their interactions with others must be respectful; they must uphold the commandments of the Quran, and so on. Moharram Naji Orhan, one of the contemporary dedes, says: "A dede who wants to assume a position and continue the path must be just, knowledgeable, perfect, righteous, and have a generous heart. The doors of his house and his table should be open to everyone." (Donmez, 2019 AD/1398 SH: 61-64)

In general, Alevis seek to enhance their cohesion, prevent weakening and destruction of their faith in the Anatolia region and other Alevi-populated areas worldwide. They strive to improve their position by strengthening their religious authorities (spiritual leadership) and adhering to conservative ideologies. To achieve this, an effort has been made in this section to evaluate the impact of the Islamic Revolution in Iran on the genuine identification of the Alevi community from the perspective of Alevi religious dedes.<sup>8</sup>

### **2.1. T-G, Chief of the Alevi Assembly and Cultural Association**

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major players in the international community in the final years of the twentieth century." (Salim and Husseinzadeh, 1396 AD/1375 SH: 217)

8 . It is worth mentioning that the findings of this section are the result of interviews and specialized and general conversations with a large number of Alevi leaders, whose names have been abbreviated here due to certain considerations.

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Dede T-G, who is the chief of one of the assemblies and the Alevi Cultural Association in Istanbul, believes that from the Ottoman period until now, due to various pressures and suppressions, the Alevi community has distanced itself from the school of Ahl al-Bayt and the path of Muhammad and his family (PBUT), and as a result, they have been oblivious to the principles, branches of religion, and especially the Holy Quran. Only with the emergence of the Islamic Revolution in Iran did the Alevi community become familiar with the school of Ahl al-Bayt and its sources and became aware of its true nature and identity.

This Alevi leader believes that unfortunately, today the Alevi community has lost a large part of its young generation; they don't have much understanding of their own identity. Therefore, it is the primary responsibility of the leaders and dedes of the Alevi community to protect this generation from the threats and assimilation attacks by educating them about the teachings of Ahl al-Bayt and bring them back to the embrace of the school of Ahl al-Bayt. In this regard, in recent years, efforts have been made to revive the culture of Arbaeen, which the Alevi ancestors used to observe in villages called "Fortieth." Even in recent years, in various Alevi-populated areas in Turkey, the "Arbaeen Walk" is held on the day of Arbaeen, which is considered a "Historic Step" in Alevism. Nowadays, the culture of Arbaeen has turned into a path of awakening in the Alevi community, to the extent that every year we witness the presence of a large number of Alevi citizens from all over the world, from Anatolia to the Balkans, from Europe to Latin America, in international Arbaeen ceremonies, and it has essentially become one of the main components of Alevi life.

#### **2.2. F-Y, The Head of the Alevi Endowment**

Dede F-Y, the head of one of the Alevi endowment communities in Ankara, with a historical perspective, believes that originally the migration of Haj Bektash Veli from the city of Nishabur in Khorasan to the Anatolian region should be interpreted as an "Awakening Migration" and the familiarity of the people of Anatolia with the religion of Islam and the school of Ahl al-Bayt (AS). Therefore, due to the severing of communications between the Alevis of Anatolia and Khorasan, this connection declined, and for this reason, the resurgence did not affect the overall Alevi community.

Furthermore, this Alevi Dede stated that unfortunately today we witness tensions and numerous conflicts in the Islamic world, and different sects and paths do not come together under a unified umbrella. He highlighted that Haj Bektash Veli, about 800 years ago, was able to bring together different groups and paths through ethical and spiritual teachings, creating a historic movement in the Anatolian region. Our

expectation from the Islamic Revolution of Iran is that it can invest in each of these teachings and religious and cultural affinities and once again bring them together under a unified umbrella.

### **2.3. D-CH, Alevi Researcher**

Dede D-CH, the researcher and scholar of Alevi studies in various cities of Turkey states that the religious-political centers of the Alevi community, including congregational houses, associations, and federations, are essentially responsible for preserving and transmitting the principles and tenets of the Alevi School and Ahl al-Bayt through these mechanisms. He says, "If the Alevi community today witnesses a significant asset called "Religious-Cultural Centers," it is thanks to the occurrence of the Islamic Revolution and the awakening of the Islamic nation."

According to this Alevi researcher, the Alevi centers, from congregational houses to gateways, from federations to associations, actually play the same role as the scientific and seminary centers of Qom and Najaf in educating and training students and followers of the Ahl al-Bayt school. In fact, considering that the Alevi community has been deprived of educational schools throughout history, these centers have taken up the educational and training responsibility of Alevis and have successfully carried out this important task up until now. Alevi centers essentially provide spiritual and psychological support to the Alevi community and keep it vibrant at all times.

This Alevi researcher concludes by emphasizing that we must realize and be vigilant that if the Alevi centers are not managed with knowledge, rationality, correct teachings of the Ahl al-Bayt, the Quran, and so on, and if they lack reliable educational content, they will deviate. As Haj Bektash Veli said, "A path without knowledge will lead to darkness." Therefore, the main mission of the Islamic Revolution is to equip these centers with educational resources and teachings of the Ahl al-Bayt and promote proper education. If this becomes operational, we will undoubtedly witness the growth and flourishing of these centers in educational and training affairs, and thus, naturally neutralize all threats and dangers, including assimilationist and deviant policies.

### **2.4. M-A, Head of the Alevi Cultural Association**

Dede M-A, the head of one of the Alevi associations, first speaks about their expectations from the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Islamic Revolution, based on which positive actions and stability should be taken to strengthen the communications and address the weaknesses and gaps in the Alevi community. These actions include "Strengthening communication among Alevi groups and centers in different parts of the world," "Increasing awareness of the Alevi school of thought and culture

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among the global public opinion and international institutions," and "Familiarizing the younger generation of the Alevi community with their identity and self-discovery." Regarding the latter, the new generation of the Alevi community must understand and be aware that Haj Bektash Veli comes from a land that has always been prominent in the fields of knowledge, ethics, civilization, mysticism, philosophy, and was essentially one of the most civilized countries in the region and the world throughout history. The new generation must know that it is a great honor for them to have spiritual and ideological leaders with a Khorasani identity who established a school of thought in the Anatolian region, the principles of which have been promoted and propagated centuries before the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1947) among the people of Anatolia and gradually spread to other regions, including the Balkans, and provided the grounds for people's recognition and familiarity with the principles of equality, brotherhood, humanity, unity, and solidarity. Therefore, today, the teachings and ideas of Haj Bektash Veli and other Alevi leaders and saints should be taught to the new generation through various means, and fundamentally, different segments of society, individuals, and various groups should become acquainted with this philosophy of humanity and divine orientation.

In the end, he emphasized the importance of preserving and strengthening the communications between Iran and the Alevi-Bektashi community, stating: "The process of communication between the Alevi community and the Islamic Revolution of Iran should develop in various dimensions. Extensive cooperation in historical, cultural, and artistic areas will ensure that the bond established by the spiritual and ideological leaders between the people of Iranian land and Anatolia is preserved and perhaps even stronger and more robust than before."

#### **2.5. B-K, International Endowment Alevi Researcher**

According to B-K, the Alevi community is divided into two categories:

1) Alevi centers with a focus on "Dede and Dedeism": This group primarily includes traditional and classical Alevis with an emphasis on Dede, highlighting the historical process of Shah Ismail Khatai and Qizilbash. They believe that education and upbringing in the rituals and traditions of Alevism should continue to be centered around Dede and Talib.

2) Alevi centers with a focus on "Cultural Centers": This group has placed special emphasis on a specific and modern ideological identity. While outwardly respecting the basis of Dedeism, they emphasize cultural aspects more and their centers resemble cultural centers rather than worship centers.

An important point to note is that the Islamic Revolution of Iran has only been able to influence the first group. Meanwhile, the ideas of the second group have been well-received in Western countries, where Alevism is recognized as an "Independent Belief." If this trend becomes widespread, the essence of Alevism's identity will deviate. The Islamic Revolution must once again bring the unified language of the Ahl al-Bayt (AS) to the forefront of the Alevi community. This language is essentially a secret code, a common language. It must be utilized to confront deviant ideologies. This common language is a valuable asset that can unite this vast population despite different ethnicities, languages, and various tendencies, forming a cohesive society.

#### **2.6. N-D, Alevi Researcher**

Dede N-D emphasizes that Haj Bekdash Veli, based on reports, educates and trains 36,000 students who are scattered in various regions, with 360 prominent individuals among them engaged in promoting the teachings of the Ahl al-Bayt school of thought and the teachings of Haj Bekdash. This process had practically stopped after the collapse of the Ottoman government and the establishment of the republican system, or it was carried out secretly. However, after an interruption of about a century, the Islamic Revolution of Iran revived this educational system and the training of students flourished once again among Alevi centers. Today, we witness valuable professors who promote the teachings of the Ahl al-Bayt in various Anatolian regions.

In other words, from the 1980s onwards, concurrent with the victory of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, a new era in the history of Alevism emerged, which can be referred to as the "Proliferation of Alevi Centers" period. Various reasons are mentioned for the emergence of this trend, one of which is intentional support from the Turkish government in establishing such centers, with the intention that the Alevi community, which has faced a long period of estrangement, would become occupied within these centers and not seek their true identity. However, this false assumption was baseless, as both the Alevi community benefited from numerous religious and political centers, and these centers, through the blessings of the Islamic Revolution and the publication and distribution of Ahl al-Bayt resources became acquainted with the teachings of the Ahl al-Bayt and have now become of significant importance.

#### **2.7. Dede S-G, Alevi Missionary**

Dede S-G, while emphasizing that humanity today more than ever needs spiritual guides like Haj Bektash Veli, believes that this matter has burdened our responsibility and mission more than ever before. Especially since the Islamic Revolution and the blessings of the Islamic Republic of Iran have made it easier to access authentic sources of the teachings of the

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Ahl al-Bayt (AS), Alevi leaders and intellectuals have faced an intensified duty and mission.

In this regard, first and foremost, they should update and enrich their knowledge and scholarship based on authentic sources. Secondly, they should educate and train the Alevi community according to new knowledge. Therefore, it seems that a new chapter is forming in the Alevi community, which will be transformative unlike previous periods. However, we must not forget that there are extensive obstacles to this new process, and they will even become more intensified because there are some who, due to secular tendencies, fundamentally oppose the religious and belief identity of Alevism, labeling it as separate from the Islamic nature and the Ahl al-Bayt (AS).

#### **2.8. Dede A-J, Alevi Researcher**

He believes that throughout history, the main concern of the Alevi community has always been their assimilation, disappearance, and the destruction of their identity. This is because they did not have sufficient access to written sources and knowledge in the course of history. However, today, thanks to the blessings of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, they have access to all the original sources that were written centuries ago by scholars of the school of Ahl al-Bayt (AS). This is the greatest gift of the revolution to the Alevi community. According to this Alevi scholar, due to the intensification of the process of modernization, urbanization, and the lack of access of the Alevi community to their own identity resources, the new generation of this community is rapidly experiencing identity erosion. Fortunately, with the occurrence of the Islamic Revolution and the emergence of its enlightening ideologies, as well as facilitating access to resources, education, and training of religious scholars, the Alevi identity has regained its vitality and has been reborn. Therefore, today, one should no longer worry about the assimilation of the Alevi community. Today, no Alevi can claim that they have neglected their true identity regarding the lack of access to resources. Today, thanks to the revolution, valuable works authored by Alevi scholars have been produced, and valuable works have been translated from various languages and made available to enthusiasts. Today, Alevis have their own specialized publications, and numerous works are being published, all of which are accessible to everyone. This event is considered a turning point in the history of Alevis and signifies the transition from an oral society to a written society.

#### **2.9. Analyzing the Findings and Data**

According to the theory of diffusion, it can be said that the influence of the Islamic Revolution on the Alevi community has been spread through three main methods. Firstly, through displacement, influential individuals

and important figures in the Alevi community were identified and attracted through various means. These individuals, considering their elite status and greater influence, became agents for spreading the ideas of the Islamic Revolution by accepting its innovations and returning to their country. They played a significant role in disseminating the ideas of the Islamic Revolution in a hierarchical or even cascading manner.

Based on hierarchical diffusion, considering the neighboring country of Turkey and cultural and historical affinities, the spread and transmission of thoughts and ideals of the revolution naturally took place. An important point to note in this type of diffusion is that the acceptance of innovation by an influential individual quickly spreads to the entire community, resulting in a higher rate of dissemination in hierarchical diffusion. This process is more compatible with the fabric of the Alevi community because hierarchy is prevalent in Alevi society, and the influence of an important person, namely the "Dede" or spiritual leader, is very significant throughout the community. This factor played a crucial role in the dissemination and promotion of the ideas and ideals of the Islamic Revolution and the teachings of the Ahl al-Bayt school of thought among the Alevi community in Turkey.

In the dissemination of ideology, the influence and transmission of revolutionary ideals, thoughts, and teachings of the school of Ahl al-Bayt (AS) have significantly manifested in the past two decades. This is primarily regarding the development of virtual and internet innovations, which have greatly reduced distances and essentially eliminated the gap in meaning and application. Therefore, we are currently witnessing the widespread expansion of ideas without hierarchical considerations and, fundamentally, with a high speed of dissemination.

In this type of dissemination, we observe the transmission of the principles of the Islamic revolution and the teachings of Alevi faith through the production and republishing of works and books related to the school of Ahl al-Bayt (AS), which has a broad range of dissemination. Referring to the statements of Alevi leaders and analyzing them in general, several key points regarding the impact of the Islamic Revolution of Iran on the genuine identity formation of the Alevi community can be noted:

- The Iranian Islamic Revolution and its impact on the familiarity of the Alevi community with the school of Ahl al-Bayt (AS) and their recognition of its identity sources, principles, and pillars;
- The Islamic Revolution of Iran and its impact on facilitating access to educational resources and the training of Alevi religious scholars;

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- The Islamic Revolution of Iran and its impact on reviving the old and forgotten traditions and rituals of the Alevi community, and efforts to rectify deviations;
- The Islamic Revolution of Iran and its impact on increasing the familiarity of the Alevi community with holy sites and strengthening spiritual connections;
- The Islamic Revolution of Iran and its impact on the growth and development of religious-political centers of the Alevi community (including congregational houses, associations, and federations), equipping these centers with educational resources and Ahl al-Bayt teachings, and establishing proper education;
- The Islamic Revolution of Iran and its impact on neutralizing threats and dangers to the Alevi community, especially assimilationist policies and tendencies;

Therefore, Alevi leaders had certain expectations from the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Islamic Revolution, which are mentioned below:

- Despite the initial strengthening of communication between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Alevi community, there are still many weaknesses. It is expected that the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Islamic Revolution will play a role in strengthening communication, addressing weaknesses and gaps in the Alevi community through positive and sustainable actions, such as "Strengthening communication among Alevi groups and centers worldwide," "Increasing global public awareness of Alevi school and culture," and "Enhancing the understanding of the younger generation of the Alevi community about their identity and self-return."

- It seems that the communication between the Alevi community and the Islamic Revolution of Iran is mostly one-sided, so it should be developed in various dimensions. Extensive cooperation in different historical and cultural-artistic areas helps preserve the bond established by religious and mystical leaders among the people of Iran and Anatolia, and perhaps even make it stronger and more resilient than before.

- According to the Alevi leaders, one of the weaknesses of the Iranian Islamic Republic system and the Islamic Revolution of Iran in relation to the Alevis is that they have only been able to influence a limited group within the Alevi community, while many other sections of the Alevi society remain unaware and unbenefited from the blessings of the revolution.

- Another weakness of the Iranian Islamic Republic system and the Islamic Revolution in relation to the Alevis is that so far it has failed to establish connections based on common interests in the Anatolian region. The expectation from the Iranian Islamic Revolution was that it would



invest in each of these common interests and doctrines (including Islam, the school of Ahl al-Bayt, the identity of Alevi leaders like Haj Bektaş Veli, etc.).

### Conclusion

The Alevi community's identity has always been subject to various damages and challenges throughout history. However, influenced by two crucial factors, it has managed to preserve its identity: The Dedeism system of spiritual leadership, and the educational system. One of the threats and damages that the Alevi community and identity have consistently faced is assimilationist and eliminationist policies, which today, according to the beliefs of Alevi leaders and researchers, have been largely neutralized and ineffective regarding the Alevis' access to authentic sources of the school of Ahl al-Bayt and Ja'fari jurisprudence. It seems that the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran was a turning point in the beginning of the Shia political life, which led to political and social transformations in other Muslim societies, especially in Shia-populated areas. Many scholars believe that following the Islamic Revolution in Iran, Islamic values, particularly Shia values, were revived worldwide. Therefore, with the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran and the increasing regional power of Iran, the fate of the Alevis in the Middle East, especially in Syria and Turkey, has also been influenced, essentially considered as an opportunity for them. Therefore, in the present paper, attention has been paid to the viewpoints of some of the influential leaders of the Alevi community in Turkey, who emphasized the blessings of the Islamic Revolution in Iran and the correct understanding of the teachings of the Ahl al-Bayt, and efforts are being made to introduce the principles, pillars, rituals, and genuine traditions to the Alevi community so that the Alevi society can witness a return to its true self.

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