



Ahiret (Axrete / Axiret)

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Summary

Axrete (afterlife) refers to the sacred realm in the belief system of Dersim Alevism (Raa Haqi) where post-mortem existence takes place. As one of the three layers of A Dina (the other world), Axrete is also called Haq Dina (the World of Truth). It is the final destination reached by the dead after leaving Neq Dina (the transient world). Oli Diwan, where the soul is judged after death, is also established in this realm. In the cosmology of Raa Haqi, Axrete is conceptualized not merely as a station after death, but as a moral threshold in which the transformation of the soul, the process of judgment, and the conditions of its return to the world are determined.

Keywords: Ahiret, Batın, Dersim Aleviliği, Dersim Alevism, Ölüm, Öte Dünya, Raa Haqi, Zahir

Death in the Cosmology of *Raa Haqi* and *Axrete* [1]

In the belief system of *Raa Haqi*, two fundamental realms exist: *Haq Dina* (*Axrete*) and *Neq Dina* (the transient world). *Neq Dina* is temporary; the *ro* (soul) comes into this world in order to undergo a test. In the teachings of *Raa Haqi*, there is no notion of inherently good or evil souls, because the soul originates from *Haq* and is one of the thirty divine elements granted to human beings at creation. Goodness or evil emerges through the way a person lives and the decisions they make in *Neq Dina*.

Human death is referred to as *merdene*. This concept does not merely signify a biological end; it expresses the return of the body to its origin-earth-and the restitution of the divine qualities within the body to *Haq*. According to *Raa Haqi*

narratives, *Haq* created humans from earth and endowed them with thirty attributes from Himself. When the earth was taken to create humans, it objected. *Haq* then reassured it by saying, “To ra bi oncia yenê to” (“They came from you, and they will return to you”), thereby appeasing the earth. Death is understood as the realization of this primordial agreement.

The Soul, *Helm*, and *Oli Diwan*

In the belief system of *Raa Haqi*, after the body merges with the earth, another divine component belonging to the human being—the *helm*—remains in *Axrete* until the Day of Judgment. The passage of the soul from *Neq Dina* to *Haq Dina*, as well as its return to the world, is determined through the interrogation conducted in *Oli Diwan*. During this process, two angels named *Hekır* and *Nekır* present an account of the good and bad deeds the deceased performed during their lifetime. Based on this evaluation, a decision is made regarding the form in which the soul will return to the world.

Post-Mortem Stages and Ritual Processes

The process from the departure of the soul from the world to its arrival in *Axrete* is divided into several stages.

The first three days: Death is believed to begin thirty days before the final breath is given. Since humans are created from thirty divine elements, one element leaves the body each day. On the thirtieth day, the soul departs from the body and *merdene* occurs. The moment of giving the last breath is called *ro ontene* or *jiyan da* (the withdrawal of the soul). The death of a person who has lived a good life is believed to be easy and brief, whereas the death of someone who has lived badly is difficult and painful. For the first three days, the soul does not leave the house but moves back and forth between the home and the grave. During this period, a candle is lit in the house at the place where the deceased had lain.

The third day: The soul leaves the house and returns to the

grave. The belongings of the deceased are washed and distributed. Since the soul no longer has a body, it cannot eat or drink, and it is believed that a hungry soul cannot find peace. Therefore, from the third day until the fortieth day, food is offered each evening for the deceased. This charitable offering is called *samia merdi* or *xarina mirinan* (the meal of the dead). Between the third and seventh days, the soul passes from the grave to *Axrete* for the judgment in *Oli Diwan*.

The seventh and twenty-first days: During this period, the trial takes place in *Oli Diwan*. Once the judgment is delivered, the soul no longer belongs to the deceased person. For this reason, the grave is visited and a farewell is made to the soul. What remains is only the *helm*, which stays in *Axrete* awaiting the Day of Judgment.

The fortieth day: The soul returns to the world in a new form (*don*). The family visits the grave and the mourning period ends. Men shave, and women remove their black mourning scarves.

The forty-eighth day: The family visits the grave once again. This visit symbolizes welcoming the soul that has returned to the world and wishing it good fortune.

Some Rituals Related to the Dead in Dersim

The principal rituals performed for the dead include the following:

Close to the moment when the last rays of the sun disappear (*tija merdu*), water is not drunk; it is believed that drinking water at this time would leave the *helm* of the dead thirsty.

Every Thursday evening, *samia merdu* (food offered for the dead) is given.

Each autumn, *xêre merdu* (charity for the dead) is performed.

During every *Gaxan*, on the last Thursday evening of December, oily dough is thrown into the fire while the name of the deceased is mentioned.

Every spring (*Haute Mal*), graves are visited.

Conclusion

Axrete in the belief system of Dersim Alevism (*Raa Haqi*) is not merely a place reached after death but a central plane where the transformation of the soul, moral reckoning, and cosmic continuity are established. Death (*merdene*) signifies more than a bodily end; it represents the return of the human being to their divine essence and the completion of the primordial agreement made with *Haq*. The soul is interrogated in *Oli Diwan*, and this process determines both the form of its return to the world and the waiting of the *helm* in *Axrete*. In this sense, *Axrete* constitutes a foundational domain of belief that makes possible the continuity between life, death, and rebirth within the cosmology of *Raa Haqi*.

Endnotes

[1] Editorial Note: This entry is based on the relevant entry in Erdal Gezik and Hüseyin Çakmak's *Raa Haqi - Riya Haqi / Dersim Aleviliği İnanç Terimleri Sözlüğü* (Ankara: Kalan Yayınları, 2010). The present version has been reviewed and updated by the authors of the original publication.

References & Further Reading

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