Hard / Erd (Earth / Soil)

Erdal Gezik
e.gezik@gmail.com

Published Date:
15 April 2026

Downloaded Date:
17.10.2026

Suggested Citation: Gezik, Erdal (2026). Hard / Erd (Earth / Soil). Alevi Encyclopedia — ISIL: DE-4607. https://doi.org/10.68413/alevian siklopedisi.bm27f (Access Date: 17.10.2026)

The Alevi Encyclopedia is registered under the code **ISIL: DE-4607** within the scope of the **International Standard Identifier for Libraries and Related Organizations**.

ISSN 3055-9928

ISIL URI /isil/DE-4607

LOBID
lobid.org/organisations/DE-4607

Permalink id.zdb-services.de/resource/organisations/DE-4607

Address: Alevi Ansiklopedisi Körnebachstr. 49-51, 44143 Dortmund

info@aleviansiklopedisi.com

Summary
Hard / Erd (earth/soil) in the belief world of Dersim Alevism (Raa Haqi) refers to the space in which material life is sustained. However, it is not understood merely as a physical ground but as one of the fundamental elements of the cosmic order and moral responsibility. Together with asmen/hiw (sky), the earth constitutes one of the two principal pillars between the worlds of Haq and Neq, and life gains meaning through the continuous transformation and movement between these two elements. Human beings are created from the earth and, through death, return to it, thereby becoming part of this cycle. For this reason, hard is regarded as a trust granted by Haq to humans for sustaining their livelihood; the limits, rules, and sanctions regarding its use are defined within a moral framework. The relationship established with the earth is based on a holistic understanding of life that encompasses the responsibility of not only humans but all living beings toward Haq. Protecting nature, avoiding excessive consumption, refraining from harming living beings, and not polluting the earth are considered fundamental obligations on the path toward reaching Haq. In this respect, Hard / Erd occupies a central place in Raa Haqi cosmology as both the material foundation of existence and the bearer of the ethical order.

Keywords: Alevi Cosmology, Alevi Kozmolojisi, Batın, Earth, Hard, Herd, Soil, Toprak, Zahir

Earth and the “Dervish Earth”[1]

Hard or *Erd* (earth/soil) refers to the place where material life is sustained in the belief world of Dersim Alevism (*Raa Haqi*). Together with *asmen/hiw* (sky), *hard* constitutes one of the two fundamental pillars between the worlds of *Haq* and *Neq*. Life moves continuously between these two elements, and beings exist within this cycle by transforming their forms. The saying “Werte hard u asmen’de tuawa vind niveno, qılıx vurneno” (nothing disappears between earth and sky; it merely changes form) expresses this cosmic transformation. In this context, the earth is regarded as a

Copyright © 2026 Alevi Encyclopedia and the author(s). All rights reserved. Unless otherwise indicated, this work is published under the Creative Commons Attribution–NonCommercial–NoDerivatives 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0). Proper attribution must be provided for all uses. Any commercial use, adaptation, translation, or republication requires prior written permission from the Alevi Encyclopedia and/or the author(s).

trust granted by *Haq* to humans so that they may sustain their livelihood; its mode of use, purposes, and limits are therefore bound to specific rules and sanctions. According to the belief, *hard* is allocated to humans during the day and to the invisible realm during the night.

The earth is also considered an inseparable component of the substance from which human beings are formed. According to the creation narrative, when the human being was to be created, a piece of earth was requested; the earth initially refused and turned back all the angels. However, when Azrael promised that the taken piece would eventually return to the earth, the earth accepted. The reunion of the human being with the earth after death is therefore seen as one of the fundamental stages of the cycle of creation, and the notion of "coming from the earth and returning to the earth" is regarded as a mystery that the human mind cannot easily comprehend.

In the *Raa Haqi* belief, earth, world, and life are perceived as a unified whole. After sunset, the phrase "*hard mor biyo*" (the earth is sealed) is used, and people avoid going outside as much as possible after this time. The last light remaining on the mountain peaks at sunset is believed to belong to the dead, and this moment is called *tija merdu*; during this time, water is not drunk. When speaking about a deceased person, the phrase "*hardo dewres asmeno kewe cire xevere mevero*" (may the dervish earth not carry the news to the blue sky) is used, pointing to the relationship between the earth and the other world.

Because of its selfless service, its devotion to humans, and its connection with the other world, the earth is also called *hardo dewres / herde dewres* ("Dervish Earth"). It is emphasized that everyone should use the earth only to the extent of their own needs; excessive and disproportionate use, referred to as *tomekarlık*, is regarded as the usurpation of the rights of others.

Protecting, keeping clean, and safeguarding nature are

considered among the fundamental responsibilities of human beings. In the *Raa Haqi* belief, *Haq* is reached through living beings; therefore, when humans orient themselves toward *Haq*, they are also considered responsible for including other living beings on this path. For this reason, any harm inflicted on a living being is understood as an obstacle to reaching *Haq*. In accordance with this understanding, living trees are not cut, and wild animals and fish are not hunted.

Like humans, nature is also believed to bear responsibility toward *Haq*; it is believed that nature prostrates itself once every year, and those who witness this moment are thought to have their wishes fulfilled.

Conclusion

Hard / Erd (earth/soil) in the belief world of Dersim Alevism (*Raa Haqi*) is understood not merely as the ground on which material life is sustained, but as a holistic realm of existence situated at the center of the cosmological order, moral responsibility, and the relationship established with the sacred. Together with *asmen/hiw* (sky), the earth constitutes one of the two principal pillars between the worlds of *Haq* and *Neq*, and is conceived as the fundamental element that enables the continuity, transformation, and cyclicality of life. The creation of human beings from the earth and their return to it through death reveal both the ontological and ethical dimensions of this cosmic cycle. Within this framework, *hard* is regarded as a sacred entity entrusted by *Haq* to humans, whose use is bound by limits and obligations.

The designation of the earth as the “Dervish Earth” points to its qualities as a selflessly serving entity that watches over humans and other living beings while also establishing a connection between this world and the other world. The distinction between day and night, the prohibitions associated with sunset, and concepts such as *tija merdu* reveal the temporal and spatial regulatory role attributed to the earth. At the same time, in the *Raa Haqi* belief the earth

offers an ethical framework reminding humans that the journey toward *Haq* cannot be undertaken alone; rather, it must be carried out together with other living beings, nature, and the entire realm of existence. The rules prohibiting the cutting of living trees, the hunting of animals, and the destruction of nature constitute practical reflections of this holistic understanding of responsibility.

In conclusion, *Hard / Erd* reflects a vision of the world in *Raa Haqi* cosmology in which the material foundation of existence and the moral order are inseparable. As both the origin of human beings and the point of their ultimate return, the earth becomes one of the fundamental thresholds that connect life with the sacred. In this sense, it emerges as a central concept where cosmology, ethics, and ritual practices intersect within the *Raa Haqi* belief system.

Endnotes

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

References & Further Reading

Gezik, Erdal, and Hüseyin Çakmak. 2010. Raa Haqi – Riya Haqi / Dersim Aleviliği İnanç Terimleri Sözlüğü. Ankara: Kalan Yayınları.

Publisher's Note: The views, interpretations, findings, and data contained in this publication are solely the responsibility of the respective author(s). They do not necessarily reflect the views of the Alevi Encyclopedia, its editors, the editorial board, or supporting institutions. The Alevi Encyclopedia and its editors cannot be held responsible for any consequences arising from the use of the published content.