

Belief System of Sahneh Ahl-e-haq Sect of Iran

Rahim Farrokhnia and Haghighi Reza

Bu-Ali Sina, University Hamadan, Iran
Telephone: +98(811)8246521, Fax: +98(811)8246521,
E-mail: rahim.farrokhnia@gmail.com

KEYWORDS Ahl-e-haq Sect. Belief System. Don-Ba-Don. Syncretism

ABSTRACT This study deals with the belief systems of Ahl-e-haq sect residing in the western part of Iran. This work is followed by a thick description of ethnography of religious (culture) elements and characteristics of *Ahl-e-haq* community through an emic approach. This study is essentially based on hermeneutic anthropology which seeks to put religious semiotics and its semiotic pattern functions within their cultural systems. Participant observation and interviews were employed as data collection strategies. The ethnographic findings demonstrated that the religious aspect determines of their different states and quality of life. The result of this research may be useful in cultural and convergence discourses.

INTRODUCTION

Research Area and People

Here, I would provide a brief overview of Iranian society. Iran is located in Middle East. It is one of the ancient civilizations of Asia. Iran is a multi – ethnic and multi- religious society. The important ethnic groups are: Persian, Kurds, Turks, Lures, and Bal ouches. Majority of Iranian population are Muslims. The two major divisions of Muslims are Shiite and Sunni. The Shiite in comparison to Sunni is majority in Iran. Other religious minority in Iran are: Ahl-e- haq sect, Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians. These minorities compose nearly 2 – 3 percent of the total Iranian population. Iranian Kurdish community inhabit in five major provinces: Elam, Kerman shah, Kurdistan, west Azerbaijan, and north Khorasan. There is no accurate data on ethnic population in Iran and provincial data are the most reliable data for demographic ethnic studies in Iran. Kurdish population in Iran is estimated around 6.5 million in 2006 census. Ahl-e-haq sect of Sahneh Township that is subject of this research ethnically is Kurds. Sahneh Township is located in Kerman shah province. Majority of Kurds people belong to Islam (both branches: Shiite and Sunni). But this community is not considered as Muslim group. So this group has no social communication with other Iranian communities.

Iran is located in the south-eastern part of Asia. It has historically experienced large-scale migrations and cultural contacts with other surrounding nations. Nowadays, different ethnic,

religious groups and minorities live in Iran, possessing particular cultural traits, elements, rituals and traditions, which do not assume a singular cultural fit.

One of these groups is the Ahl-e-haq sect who inhabited the Sahneh Township located in the west part of Iran.

The present research uses thick interpretative ethnography within the realm of hermeneutic anthropology to study this community. The study focuses on meanings and symbolic analysis within the cultural system from an emic point of view. So far, the Ahl-e-haq community has been a secret society, so it is not open to others. The group's spiritual training, psychic experiences and their inner intuitions carry on within a limited circle of the group and thus have its own particular discourses. To reach inner conception and auto interpretation of people, we suggest interpretative anthropological approach which explores interpreted reality as a text. The objective of this research is nature perception and introduction of group culture, in which semiotic and social symbolic analysis is discoursed. The result of this research could be helpful in socio-cultural discourse and cultural convergences; therefore, the main question of this research is to recognize the status of semiotics and semiotic of Ahl-e-haq sect, within their cultural systems. This community mainly settled in countries such as Iran, Iraq, India and Turkey. Their population is estimated to be 2-3 million Sadar and Khoramshahi (1989) but the population of Sahneh Ahl-e-haq of Iran is about 50,000 who live in the small township of Sahneh. Sixty percent of this population is settled

in the rural area, while 40% live in the urban area (Iran 2006 Census).

This community is considered to be Kurdish, constituting one of the old ethnic groups of Iran, since Medes time settled in Zagross Mountains in western part of Iran Sader and Khoramshahi (1989). Actually Kurds are Indo-European Safizadeh (1999). Within the Ahl-e-haq community's oral and mystical narratives, it is claimed that their origin goes back to Ali (Muslims Imam) Shahkhoshin and Sultan Isaac Jehoon Abadi (1984). As mentioned, this group is an inner sect. Their religion has been mixed with metempsychosis belief Minorsky (1960). Some of the followers of this sect believe that in 14th A.D. in Solemaneh city of Iraq Sultan Isaac appeared. They emigrated to the western part of Iran, starting propaganda for his religion and claimed that he is divine Evanov (1959).

Pivotal Concepts

Ahl-e-haq means God men. They claim that only their cult is reality. Sometimes it is called "Yari" [aid cult] Nazari (2001).

Teafehsun: They are people who always engaged in circumambulation of God.

Yarsun: It means God's friends.

Sayid: Among this group there are 11 families who are called Sayid (lords). Their business is guidance of their followers, prayer and gratuitousness.

Peer: He is a person guided by Padshah (Religious King).

Daleal: His duty is to guide new comers. He is appointed by Padshah and peer.

Padshah: He is a person who successfully reached perfection and considered to be mirror of God's light.

Be secret: The followers of this sect, in terms of their religious duty, are not permitted to give any information about their religion to the outsiders. Locally, this duty is called *be secret*.

Theoretical Consideration

Data analysis of this research is based on the theoretical approach of Geertz. Geertz considers religion as a cultural system. By cultural, he means "a historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbol, a system of inherited conception expressed in symbolic forms Geertz (1973). As apart of culture, religion deals with

sacred symbols, and what sacred symbols do, according to Geertz, is to synthesize a people's ethos—the tone, character and quality of their life, its moral and aesthetic and mood—and their worldview—the picture they have of the way things in sheer reality are in their most comprehensive ideas of order Geertz (1973).

Geertz distinguishes two basic elements: a people's ethos and their worldview. Sacred symbols or religion plays an important role in increasing a world picture and in relating it to ethos. Sacred symbols make the ethos intellectually reasonable by showing it to be a way of life ideally adapted to the state of affairs that world generally expresses. Geertz arrives at a definition of religion; he defines it as a system of symbols which functions to establish powerful, persuasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions with such on aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic Geertz (1973).

Geertz says people need to see the world as meaningful and ordered. They cannot tolerate the view that it is fundamentally chaotic, governed by chance and meaningless for them. Three types of experience threaten to reduce the world to a meaningless chaos. Geertz calls them bafflement, suffering and evil Hamilton (1995).

The problem of religion, as Geertz sees it, is that things are as they are and not as they ought.

In short, religion tackles the problem of bafflement, suffering and evil by recognizing them and denying that they are fundamentally characteristic of the world as a whole by relating them to a wider sphere of reality within which they become meaningful. But the questions are why do people accept such beliefs at all; not how to avoid suffering but how to accept it, how to make it sufferable? Most of the world's religious traditions affirm the proposition that life entails suffering and some even glorify it Hamilton (1995).

While the religions response to bafflement is primarily an intellectual one, the religious response to suffering is largely an emotional or affective one. In its intellectual aspects, religion affirms the ultimate explicability or experience. In its affective aspect, it affirms the ultimate suffering of existence.

The third type of meaning that is threatening experience is that of evil. The problem of evil is concerned with the threats to our ability to make sound moral judgments. What is involved in the

problem of evil is not adequacy of our symbolic resources to govern our affective life, but the adequacy of those resources to provide a workable set of ethical criteria normative guides to govern our action. The vexation here is the gap between things as they are and as they ought to be if our conception of right and wrong make sense, the gap between what we deem whereas individuals deserve and what we see that they get. The discrepancy between moral prescription and material rewards, the seeming inconsistency of “is” and “ought” rather more elegantly Geertz (1973).

Moreover, Geertz adds that “culture” itself is woven into the body of thick-description ethnography, in the hope of rendering mere occurrences scientifically eloquent. The aim is to draw large conclusions from small, buttery and densely textured facts, to support broad assertions about the role of culture in the construction of collective life, by engaging them exactly with complex specifics Geertz (1966).

METHODS

Data were gathered using interpretative ethnography while the anthropological approach was employed to analyze meanings. Symbols’ meaning, analysis and penetration to their internal concepts rest upon auto-interpretation of studied people. Religion is considered as a psychic and socio-cultural phenomenon, so this study is confined to religion as a cultural semiotics; therefore, researchers did not apply ontological judgment. In this research, the ethos of Ahl-e-haq sect is a theme which is reflected in the emic approach. Techniques of data gathering were participant observation interviews and documentary evidences. Field work duration lasted six months in the year 2007. The exclusive nature of this society was overcome since fortunately, one of the researchers is a native of the studied community, and thus the group was given access.

Primary data were collected from fifteen key informants. Also, 250 questionnaires and interviews were conducted with local people in a cluster sampling.

Religious Symbols of *Ahl-e-haq* Sect

The most important characteristic of *Ahl-e-haq* cultural system is their religion, which distinguishes them from the other Iranian groups.

One of their basic principle is to believe in Don-Ba-Don [cloth to cloth= universe to universe which constitutes their focus cult. The notion of Don-Ba-Don similar to that of metempsychosis, that is, if a dead person is righteous, his soul descends to a body of another good person, but if dead person is an ill-treating one his soul descends to a body of another bad person or to a body of an animal.

Every human being may be rich in one Don, but poor in another. Even he may be rich or poor in many Dons. A person becomes wealthy because of control over his fate, not because of the social status that he occupies Elahi (1993).

To reach psychotic perfection and elevation, every individual in his course of life must successfully pass 1001 Dons (universes), and then he can reach to utmost level where he joins God (Lordship). These 1001 Dons are a kind of hierarchy to visit the God. Ascending this hierarchy spiritually is called Don. In fact, 1001 Dons are nothing but God’s qualities; therefore, the perfect person is the one who reaches to God grade and divinity. Passing each Don needs lot of sufferings and mortifications for a man.

The God manifestation in a human being occurs in two forms: (a) in the form of Zate Bashar (human nature) where some of the God qualities along with nature, manifest in a Don, (b) in the form of Zate Mehman (guest nature). Zate Bashar is a manifestation of God in physical manner, such that the human body at the beginning becomes the place for God manifestation.

Actually being a human is apparent; therefore, physical death is apparent too. It happens when Zate-haq (God nature) gets out from the human body and thus the human body will not remain. However, if some in his ritual perfection becomes successful, God manifests in his body, so his Don will be Divinity. Even the degree of this divinity is equal to God and is similar to the reality which is manifested in Ali. Therefore the soul of this kind of person after death will link to Haq (God) so the individual soul remains Tabebi (1995).

Zate Mehman is same as God’s nature, of course in people who reach high degree of purification and God manifestation in them. This manifestation of God provides responsibility for person. The time of appearance of God’s nature in a body of a person needs departure of Zate Bashar (human Nature). Zate Mehman may reflect in a human body for a moment or forever. The

body in which Zate Mehman appears is called Shah Mehman (guest king).

The soul of Shah Mehman of the dead body again will join living humans.

The followers of this sect should successfully pass 1001 Dons to enter resurrection (heaven). Their heaven is a place in Iraq called Shahr-e-Zoor. Evolutions of soul is in form of come and go within a period of 50,000 years, but if the soul could not successfully travel to 1001 Dons within this period, it will be deprived from joining God; according to its desert, soul will receive rewards.

They observe Gods justice in Don-Ba-Don conditions. Therefore sufferings like poverty, illness and handicapping of each person depend on his background near God, so, God behaves with them according to their previous Don's background.

The people of this community believe that God appeared to saint in three periods. Prior to Adam, God created seven angels to guard the sky, moon, sun, stars, weather, earth, water, fire and metals. These angels had God's essence in them. In the first period of appearance, Ali and his seven saints succeed God and his first period angels. But in the second period, Shahkooshin and his seven companions succeed the first period saints, and in the third appearance, Sultan Isaac and his seven saints succeed the second appearances.

Ahle-e-haq cult followers call themselves *yarsun*) like-friends (.They have four pillars as follows:

- 1) Truth (abstinence from falsehood and sin)
- 2) Purity (internally as well as externally)
- 3) Inexistence (degenerating desires to reach to God rank)
- 4) Reda (means self-sacrificing and providing services to help human being)

Among this people, all religious beliefs and holly's in time and place are watched. They consider the following rites as holly's: (a) Bayobass (only come and see me), (b) Jamkhaneh (group house), (c) Qurbani (offering), (d) khadmat

(service for people), (e) Nazer-o-niaz (vowed), (f) Shokraneh (Thankfulness), and (g) Abcharkh (water distribution), Bayobass (means come and visit me) tradition is considered to be the final and sufficient contract that takes place between disciple (murid) and desire. It is said to be the basic principle of their religion. In this contract, the desired one are expected to go and visit sultan Isaac Tomb which is an important pilgrimage to them. There are two types of Bayobass, both of which are holy places: (a1) Sadjnar Bayobass (Sadjnar means fire pan which resembles the sun), and (a2) Pardivar Bayobass (Pardivar means beyond the bridge, which is located near the Sultan Isaac Tomb and it is righteous bridge).

The first type (a1) is an old external promise dating back to the beginning of human creature between followers and God. However, the second type (a2) dates back to Sultan Isaac appearance in the fourteenth century. This is a promise and contract sealed between Sultan Isaac and his followers. Actually Pardivar is the special Kiblah of the *Ahle-e-haq* group. The great confession contract between Sultan Isaac and his followers was sealed in this place and since then this place has become the pilgrimage of this people. The soul of dead person must cross Pardivar Bridge after reincarnation in another person's body. Each passage is called one Don. Each soul must 1001 times across the bridge then enters heaven and rejoins Ali and Sultan Isaac and visits his kinships. Common religious practices (every Tuesday and Friday) take place in Jamkhaneh. It does not need to be a specific place. But any place can act as a Jamkhaneh, provided that it has sufficient space for constructing circular seating (adaptation of sky circular) for participants. The circle center is considered to be God's place, from circle center God shines to all prayers similarly. Jamkhaneh ceremony has its own rituals.

In Jamkhaneh Doakhan (who prays for others) along with Tanbour playing (a kind of guitar) reads *kalameh haq* (religious book). At the time of

Names of seven saints in different Appearance Periods:

Appearance Periods	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
God	Gabriel	Israfile	Michael	Azrael	Razmir	Shafile	Abel
Ali	Salman	Glanbar	Jaber	Abbass	Fatemeh	Hassan	Houssein
Shakhooshin	Kakareda	Ghalabi	Shahryar	Mirzad	Mama Jallaleh	Gosladin	Khoshaldin
Sultan Issac	Benjamin	David	Peer-Moses	Moustaf-adodan	Khatoon Ramzyar	Shah Ebrahimi	Babayadgar

performance of blessing, participants are not allowed to leave the assembly. Until the ceremony ends, the number of participants should not be less than seven persons. The participants should be mature, male, wise Sarsepordan (a person who entrusts his head (his aliveness) to eleven Sayid families. It should be mentioned that children and women are not allowed to take part in the ceremony. In this rite, participants should observe the following rules: wearing socks and cap to observe cleanliness, and wearing the fasting belt as a symbol of readiness to help other people and the connection of individual souls to each other's body.

Individual participation in the ceremony is based on the social stratification, comprising of Sayid at highest rank, then Khalefeh (caliph), Doakhan, Khaedm and finally, ordinary people at lowest rank. Each individual based on his duty has to do his task. By the end of ceremony, a special food called Nazri (vowed food) will be eaten by participants. At the time of food division, each person follows his duty, that is, Sayid praying, Khalefeh sharing food among participants equally, Doakhan reading the holy book and Khadem providing the service for participant and controlling the discipline in the ceremony. The aim of conducting Nazri is to meet their material and spiritual needs. Avower person should have some qualifications like being mature, cognizant, wise, and with prior intention. The subject of Nazri must be specified and avower must be faithful to the contract. Things vowed also must have some conditions; that is, it should have transaction capacity, available, harmless for eating purpose, and should not be Taboo. The subject of vow can be in the following manner:

- a) Bloody sacrifice includes camel, cow, sheep and cock (They shouldn't be ill and old one).
- b) Bloodless sacrifice includes things like fish, nutmeg pomegranate, etc.
- c) Khadmat (service). In this ceremony, special food is prepared out of rice, cock and ghee. They claim that the objective of using cock meat is that the bird declares end of the night (darkness) and announces glad tiding (brightness of the day), and this animal is very polite, but the most strongest reason for this is supposed to be gratitude and prosperity of their lord (Sultan Isaac) that after a war he had with his enemies conducted a celebration, that is, called ID yari = ID Padshahi (yari festival) starting with cock meat eating.
- d) Nazri (vow) is also edible, but there is no need

to specify it, and there is no obligation for it. The purpose underlying it is closeness to God. It also ends with food eating.

- e) Shokeraneh (thankfulness) is a rite that becomes necessary if a person is in a disposition that he is reminded of the origin of creation and in gratitude, he arranges a thankfulness rite. Khadmat is the procedure observed in this ceremony.
- f) Abcharkh (water distribution) rites take place within Jamkhaneh khadem (servant), which is supposed to distribute water filled in a jug among thirty participants who are seated in a circle. Participants are supposed to drink sufficiently. This custom also reminds the follower of Sultan Isaac's behavior in Pardivar Jamkhaneh, where the original purpose was to resolve disputes among community members.
- g) Nutmeg Break and Sarsepordan cult. This ceremony is considered as an identity rite. If an individual does not follow it, he loses his identity in the eyes of his group. When an infant is born, within 7 to 40 days of life, his parents must entrust the infant's head to one of the eleven Sayid families. Until the end of his (her) life, this person is affiliated to his lord, that is, one peer and one Daleal. These two holy persons are mediators between individual and "Padshah Haghighat" (God). The procedure of rite of Sarsepordan is as follows: A white kerchief, sharp blade, a piece of sugar candy, a coin, bread and salt will be made available. In this rite, a peer or his agent with parent's candidate (infant) makes final notice whether he is permitted to entrust the infant's head to peer or no? If parent agrees, then the peer or his agent uses a sharp blade to cut the nutmeg. Here the nutmeg is considered as symbol of infant entrusted to peer (law of similarity). After breaking the nutmeg, its parts are distributed among rite participants to be eaten. Then praying is started and after that the kerchief is fastened around the neck of candidate (infant). Candidate's father with his left hand catches Daleal's skirt and Daleal also catches khadem skirt, lastly these three people kiss each other's hands. The kerchief is removed from the candidate's neck by Daleal and he will be the owner of Kerchief. Also some money is collected from participants that will be paid to the peer of candidate. The person (candidate) who passes this rite

is called Chakedeh (abstract). This ceremony is ended with a specific meal.

Ahle-e-haq religion like Mohammedan has rites like Kiblah, Hajj, Fasting, etc. Actually these rites are not exactly like Mohammedan. For example, *Ahle-e-haq* Kiblah is holy place of "pardivar", but Moslem's kiblah is Mecca. *Ahle-e-haq* Hajj pays tribute to Sultan Isaac, while Mohammedan visits Prophet Mohammad Tomb. Also Moslems observe annual fasting for one complete month, but *Ahle-e-haq* observes annual fasting twice a year, each time three-day fasting. The first one is in November called "Marrnowi" fasting; it is on the occasion of the saved life of Sultan Isaac in a war with Mogul in a cave called Marrnowi. So this fasting is gratefulness in gratitude to their lord.

The second fasting, lasting three days, is called Qavaltas, an annual commemoration of the group of Ahal-e-haq people who had gone to visit Sultan Isaac. They were buried in snow fall for three days, but they were saved by Sultan Isaac's people. The name is derived from the buried group leader Qavaltas. The *Ahle-e-haq* sect has their own calendar, they consider a full year to be 360 days, and the remaining five days is called Panjeh Tar (guitar playing) Azadi (2003).

These people also consider each season to belong to one of the saints; that is, spring belongs to David, summer to Benjamin, autumn to mosses and winter to Moustafa dodon. Also, all events happened in these seasons is registered by peer Moses.

The naming ceremony as a cycle of life takes place in the first week of birth. On this occasion, the infant is introduced to the group and the special blessing is read by Sayid. The blessing is as follows: Thou! Child you are made-up of four elements' that is, your parents should not be fed up on you. Second, your peer and Daleal should not deny you; third, your behavior must be fine and you are not supposed to disturb your neighbors. Fourth, your practices and behavior will be completely registered in peer mosses note book.

Death for this people is considered as a holy matter, the reason is in the belief in metempsychosis (Don-Ba-Don). According to them, death is just a transition from a body to another body. The dead body is washed and a special blessing is declared. The concept of this blessing is as follows: The dead person's head is entrusted to a lord, and his sins are exempted, his soulfully to nature of God; his first and last helper is Ali. Then

the dead body covered with white cloths (shrouding), if a man has two wives or married twice, his shrouding is doubled. The burial ceremony is carried out along with playing Tambour (guitar); the Holy book is also recited. No individual biography is written on the tomb. Only the word of yahoo = Hagh (God = Ali) is registered.

This community is not an open society, and usually this people do not give information about their religion to outsiders. This phenomenon is called Sermago(be secret).

Another peculiar characteristic of this people is paying respects to Satan. It is claimed that so far Satan is a criterion of bad and good measures. This duty is assigned to him by God; Satan is only doing his duty, so he should not be insulted.

The evident symbol of this people is to keep a long moustache, male individuals are not permitted throughout their life to shave or cut their moustache. If a person does not observe this rule, without any objection he will be abandoned by other members of society. They consider this sign to keep them apart from outsiders. Another reason that is mentioned is that moustache brings veil and modesty for men.

Another important symbol of this community is the ceremonial dance, which has a religious aspect. The individuals dance circularly and hold each other hands, and with the Tambour playing dance with rhythmical movements of body. In each movement, they say yahoo (God=Ali). These movements create emotional moods in them; even sometime they keep on shouting and lose control over their bodies. This dance in its all features is an example of lives ritual honoring which is an attempt for unity with nature. This holy dance is performed to achieve unity with nature and the holy cosmic system.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of gathered data about culture (religion) is based on interpretative harmonistic anthropology (emphasis on Geertz perspective), that is, thick description Kuper (1996). The gathered data classified and analyzed within the three types of experience threaten, that is, bafflements, suffering and evil.

In bafflement, we can point out Don-Ba-Don appearance periods and Sarsepordan ceremonies. Don-Ba-Don is a religious symbol, which is strong and a consistent motivation of the whole of

universe. Within it, a soul must successfully pass 1001 Don within a period of 50,000 years to reach to God's grade.

Soul transition, that is, migration of one Don to body of another person, creates a strong connection bond between them and links their fate to one another. So every person in his individual action must try to fit his practices with his religion principle. If a person does not follow this process, his final fate and those who are linked to him will be destroyed. We find this reiterates communal responsibility. The symbol of this linkage is belts fasten in ceremonies.

A Sarsepordan ceremony provides psychic rest and certainty because the individual has given his jurisdiction to his peer and Daleal. This is done by cutting the head of the nutmeg, which shows belief in the law of similarity throughout the life he feels, their support. So far, the practice is associated with a high degree of actuality. If an individual avoids performing this ceremony, he loses his socio-cultural identity within the community and finally he faces social abandonment. In the area of suffering, rites like fasting, acceptance of deformity and imperfections are considered as a fate that God considers as worthy. These kinds of painful experiences are reactions that justify and explain inequality and makes sufferings smooth.

Belief in Truth, Reda, Bayobass, Nazari, Shokraneh, resurrection, and sacrifice results in material and spiritual rewards, and people are aware of it. These rites are classified under evil experiences. Most of the rites and ceremonies have social functions in guidance and regulating the meaningfulness of life for individuals in the form of symbols, that is, Abcharkh functions as a resolution of dispute among members of community and renewal of contract with their lord (Isaac). The function of Bayobass and confession is to stabilize the contract of desire (lord and Murid).

Festivals like Idd Padshahi and Marrinow are associated with the events and memories of their Lord (Isaac), which are annually conducted to renew their contract with their lord. The ceremonial dance has an expelling destruction energy effect; it also causes a change in the psychic and spiritual moods of people. The organization of this dance is in the form of a circle which is associated with the cosmic order.

Basically, *Ahle-e-haq* cult is a syncretism

religion, within which we find religious elements of Islam, Jew Christianity, Hinduism and Zoroastrian; for example, the appearance of God and his angels who possess God's nature and have a calendar of 360 days per year is an element which diffused from Zoroastrian religion. Belief in the resurrection God, justice, Hajj and Kiblah has been borrowed from the Islam cult.

Cock sacrifice and fasting in each ceremony in gratitude of memory of difficult period of life of their lords or having Jewish names like Ebrahim, Shafile, Abel Zarmir, etc. shows that these traits have been borrowed from the Jewish religion.

The appearance of God in human nature, the narrative of Isaac's birth, Babayadegar and Shahkooshin, which is similar to the birth of Jesus (parthenogenesis) or nutmeg rites are Christian religious elements.

Believing in metempsychosis (Don-Ba-Don) is a Hindu religion element. Therefore we can conclude that this religion is a syncretism, one which has incorporated some local beliefs.

REFERENCES

- Azadi AM 2003. *Ashenayi ba Agheed va Rosoome Dieni Ahl-e-haq. (English Translation Familiarity with Belief and Religious Tradition of Ahl-e-haq)* Kermanshah: Kosar.
- Elahi B 1993. *The Way of Light*. Salisbury: Element
- Evano V 1959. *Majmoeh Ashare Ahl-e-haq. (English translation: Collection of Ahl-e-haq Poems)*. Tehran: Esmaili Anjoman.
- Geertz C 1973. *The Interpretation of Cultures. Selected Essays*. New York: Basic Books.
- Geertz C 1966. Religion as a Cultural system. In: M Banton (Ed): *Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion*. A. S. A. Monographs No. 3. London: Tavistock.
- Hamilton M 1995. *The Sociology of Religion. Theoretical and Comparative Perspectives*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co. Inc
- ISC 2006. *General Census of Iran. Annual Report*. Iranian Statistical Center: Tehran
- Jehonabadi N 1982. *Shahnameh Hagigat. (English translation; Master paper of fact)*. Tehran: Tahuri.
- Kuper A 1996. *Anthropology and Anthropologist*. New York: Rutledge.
- Minorsky V 1960. *Ahl-e-haq. The Encyclopedia of Islam*. Vol.11: London: University of London
- Nazari JA 2001. *Naghdi Bar seri Dar Maram Ahl-e-haq (English translation: A Critique on Ahl-e-haq Beliefs)*. Kermanshah: Taghbostan.
- Safezadeh S 1999. *Tariekh Kurd va Kurdistan. (English translation: Kurds and Kurdish History)*. Tehran: Ateh.
- Tabibi H 1995. *Ahl-e-haq. Vahid*, 9: 20-34.