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THE ISSUE

OF ATTITUDE TO THE ANCESTRAL CULT IN AZERBAIJANI FOLKLORE

LA CUESTIÓN DE LA ACTITUD HACIA EL CULTO ANCESTRAL EN EL FOLCLORE AZERBAIJANO

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ABSTRACT

The article explores the place and role of ancestral worship in Azerbaijani folklore, as well as in world folklore traditions. Elements of the miraculous birth, the tradition of respect for the elderly, the culture of behavior, and respect for the ancestral spirit, which is one of our national moral values, the archetype of the country, are analyzed. Through different examples of epic literature, the place and role of the ancestral ties of the Azerbaijani people and the high moral and spiritual values, comparing them to other nations are analyzed. It was found that despite the passage of time, folk traditions are maintained to this day and in the Azerbaijani people, as in others, it is a fundamental part of their idiosyncrasy and identity.

Keywords: Folklore, ancestor cult, miraculous birth, respect for the eldest

RESUMEN

El artículo explora el lugar y el papel del culto ancestral en el folclore de Azerbaiyán, así como en las tradiciones del folclore mundial. Se analizan elementos del nacimiento milagroso, la tradición del respeto a los ancianos, la cultura del comportamiento y el respeto al espíritu ancestral, que es uno de nuestros valores morales nacionales, el arquetipo del país. A través de diferentes ejemplos de literatura épica, se analiza el lugar y el papel de los lazos ancestrales del pueblo azerbaiyano y los altos valores morales y espirituales, comparándolos con otras naciones. Se encontró que, a pesar del paso del tiempo, las tradiciones populares se mantienen hasta el día de hoy y en el pueblo azerbaiyano, como en otros, es parte fundamental de su idiosincrasia e identidad.

Palabras clave: Folclore, culto a los antepasados, nacimiento milagroso, respeto por los mayores

INTRODUCTION

The concept of folklore emerged in mid-nineteenth Europe in century. Originally, it connoted tradition, ancient customs, and surviving the mid-nineteenth festivals, old ditties and dateless ballads, archaic myths, legends and fables, and timeless tales and proverbs. As these narratives rarely stood the tests of common sense and experience, folklore also implied irrationality: beliefs in ghosts and demons, fairies and goblins, sprites and spirits. It referred to credence given to omens, amulets, and talismans. From the perspectives of the urbane literati, who conceived the idea of folklore, these two attributes of traditionalism and irrationality could pertain only to peasant or primitive societies. Hence, they attributed to folklore a third quality: rurality. The countryside and the open space of wilderness were the proper breeding grounds for folklore. Man's close contact with nature in villages and hunting bands was considered the ultimate source of his myth and poetry. As an outgrowth of human experience with nature, folklore itself was thought to be a natural expression of man before city, commerce, civilization, and culture contaminated the purity of his life (Ben-Amos et al., 2020).

According to Imanova (2022), folklore in modern usage, is understood as an academic

discipline the subject matter of which (also called folklore) comprises the sum total of traditionally derived and orally or imitatively transmitted literature, material culture, and

custom of subcultures within predominantly literate and technologically advanced societies (notice that comparable study among wholly or mainly nonliterate societies belongs to the disciplines of ethnology and anthropology). Thus, as pointed out by Abbasova (2020), citing Honko (2013), folklore as an expression of traditional knowledge is primary evidence used by an analyst to produce findings and generalizations about tradition as process.

As pointed out by Qizi (2016), it is known that folklore is a national sphere of people's artistic thinking. Folklore reflects poetic thinking, artistic imagination, peoples' knowledge, wisdom, creation and it is the most valuable mental property that always develops and gets richer. In the case of Azerbaijan, there is no exact date of beginning of collection of folklore material, though some samples of the different folklore genres have been preserved in the ancient manuscripts, anthologies, and written monuments. Because of that, Azerbaijani folklore is varied and there are a lot of genres in it (Muradoglu, 2021).

The ethno-cultural arsenal of the Azerbaijani people has had a tradition of preserving a number of common cultural, spiritual and national values, such as the traditions of

our spiritual ancestors, waiting for the great way, respect for ancestors, the path they set, among other traditions. Linguistic unity, national morality, solidarity, internationalism, humanistic approach to the moral values of other peoples and tolerant attitude are the main factors characterizing the Turkic peoples. Then, Ancient Turkish spiritual values have a special place among all the peoples of the world and have given impetus to the development of many cultures.

Commenting on the culture of the Turkic ethnoses, L. N. Gumilyov spoke about the multicultural values of the Turks: - "The Turks did not have a name like Europeans from birth to death. Turk's name has always indicated his position in society. As a child he had a nickname, in his youth he had a rank, and in old age he had a title. If he was a khan, his title would change according to the system of kinship" (Gumilyev, 1993, p. 108).

Emphasizing the impact of the common values of the fraternal Turkic peoples on world civilization, D. Yeremeyev said, "The role of the ancient Turks in the ethnic history of the Old World is enormous. Settling in large areas, the nomads, as they were called at the time, created giant empires, powerful states, changed the ethnic landscape of entire continents, changed the course of social history, passed on the cultural values of one settled nation to others, and finally contributed to world cultural history" (Yeremeyev & Meyer, 1992, p. 9).

Taking the above into account the goal of this research is to observe the common and different characteristics and customs of the Azerbaijani people (a branch of the Turkic peoples) in the context of ancestral worship, in comparison with the peoples of the world. For this, both modern customs and the transforming paradigms of ancestral worship, the high moral values of the Azerbaijani people, and respect for ancestral ancestry will be analyzed. Due to the broadness of the topic the main focus will be based on the discussion of the following topics in the folklore of Azerbaijan and the peoples of the world:

- The miraculous birth and the participation of the ancestors in certain transforming paradigms.
- The tradition of respect for elders, the culture of behavior based on our national values, respect for the spirit of the ancestors, the theme of the archetype of the country.

DEVELOPMENT

We can name many architectural and archeological monuments that reflect and reveal the folklore, seasons, and customs of the Azerbaijani people. Gobustan rock paintings, which still preserve the national and spiritual values

and traditions of the Azerbaijani people, reflect the style of occupation of our predecessors: animal hunting, fishing, domestic scenes, group dances, game culture and various symbols. The paintings carved on the rocks are in fact the national cultural values of our people from, speaks of the historical past. The Gobustan rock carvings show the historical past of the Azerbaijani people, national identity. For example, the oldest human "Azikhanturop" found during archeological excavations in the Azykh cave, one of the oldest settlements in the world, which was occupied and destroyed by the Armenians. Also, Gamigaya monuments located only in the territory of Ordubad region are a large archeological complex with rock paintings - ancient lands and tombs art.

The above introduces the historical past and culture of the Azerbaijani people. Our main goal is to draw your attention to the representatives of the ancestral cult and their transformative paradigms. What was the attitude to ancestors in Azerbaijan? How is it today? How is it reflected in the customs of the peoples of the world? We will try to find answers to such questions.

If we pay attention to the Oghuz Khagan saga, which belongs to the Turkic peoples, we come across the motif of miraculous birth. This motive is distinguished by its uniqueness.

We often see in Azerbaijani fairy tales the motive of dervishes, representatives of the ancestral cult, Khidir Nabi to have children through a magical apple, which is sometimes given through the womb. The dervishes, who sometimes give birth to this miraculous birth, sometimes perform the white horse Khizir, Khidir Ilyas and other transformative functions. In the tales of the peoples of the world, the motive for having children is not in the hands of the saints, but in eating an apple by accident, swallowing a pea without knowing it, and so on. In the end, a child is obtained. Well-known Russian scientist V. Y. Propp, studying the motive of a miraculous birth, wrote that pregnancy through a fruit bar is typical of the folklore of many peoples of the world. But the magic apple has a special place among them. In other Russian and Ukrainian fairy tales, there are motives for having children from peas. For example, in the tales of the Malays living on the island of Sumatra, a woman becomes pregnant from a coconut without getting married. In Hawaii, according to legend, a girl finds two bananas, hides them from enemies, presses them to her chest and becomes pregnant. Thus, the practice of eating different fruits in order to become pregnant is still practiced in nations around the world at different stages of cultural development. As an example of the miraculous extraordinary motive of creation in ancient Turkish mythology, we can show Törüngöy and Eцени in Altai myths.

The people of Azerbaijan have shown their respect and care for their great ancestors by always sacrificing and giving alms to those in need. They believed that their prayers in the way of God and feeding the needy would be recorded as a rewarding deed. We can clearly see this in the epos of the book Dada Gorgud. Thus, in Oguz, it is customary for family members to leave the house once a year without taking anything. Let the people in need of the village come and plunder the house of Qazan khan (Alizade, 2004, p. 37).

People sometimes go to the grave of a deceased saint, distribute alms, and offer sacrifices. This shows that the strong faith in the saints maintained its influence even after their deaths. This, of course, is due to the genetic memory of our people. It is also a matter of respect and care for the saints, faith and trust.

In Necdet Kurt's research, childless women in the Amasya region of Turkey are taken to a pilgrimage called Emirören in the village of Emir Veren, where they make a wish and wash themselves in the water of the visiting spring. When the intention is realized, the mother, who has a child, comes with the child, and during that pilgrimage, she sacrifices an adak in the name of the saint. Sometimes people go to visit Hussein Gazi in this area, from there he takes 7 stones from the grave and puts them under his pillow. At the end of 7 days, he puts the stones where he took them. They believed that if they remained faithful to this tradition, they would have a child.

In the northern region of Azerbaijan, in the village of Qimir in Zagatala, as a manifestation of faith in the saints, childless brides from many places are brought to 7 pilgrimages named after 7 holy saints. Three times they walk on the tomb of the saint and they would take turns sharing the tale. On a pilgrimage called Nuru Baba, a childless woman, Nura Baba deliberately swallowed three of the berries of a mountain tree growing on a grave, believing that she will have a child for this. In the village of Seyidar in Ganja, there is a pilgrimage named after Seyid Kheyrolla aga, one of the hardest seyids, which still it is visited from all over Azerbaijan. Brides who did not have children during the lifetime of Kheyrolla agha were often brought to his house, which became a hearth during his lifetime. But if the intention is the son of the one who makes the master, they would ask him to name the child. Kheyrolla aga would be in charge of his sons for the rest of his life.

Sometimes childbearing was carried out by the followers of the Prophet's family, the Sayyids, who came to the dream of a woman who dreamed of having a child and warned them of the future. Unlike other factors, the motive of dreaming plays a significant role here. Sometimes, even after

the death of the saints, childless women would lie in the master's hearth with the intention of having a baby in his arms. "My husband has a cousin. Happy teacher. He had no children. His mother intended that if Bakhtiyar had a child, I would go barefoot over him. Bakhtiyar's wife is the daughter of national hero Allahverdi Bagirov. My father, Sayyid Kherulla, is a man. Aynur khanum comes to sleep. She gives birth to a child and says she will have a child".

Sometimes, like the saints, the sayyids have a certain role, theory and support in the later life of the children born with the blessing of the sayyids. In the village of Tashkent, Goycha district, which is one of the historical lands of Azerbaijan, inherited from our great ancestors and given to the territory of Armenia today, those who did not have children were brought from the hearth of Seyid Bayram agha. They took his bread and took it home. Most of the childless women slept in his hearth. They always went from September to November. Here the miraculous birth takes place mainly with the motive of dreaming.

Throughout history, people have believed in the miracles of saints and seyids who created the miracle of procreation. The main motive here is respect for adults. Great faith and respect for the saints is the motive for having children. The motif of procreation is widely reflected in the epics "Manas" and "Kitabi Dada Gorgud". The point about the ancestor in the legend about the Pir of the Forties, recorded from the Nakhchivan region, which speaks about the Prophet Suleiman, drew our attention. The text says that a man's 40 sons turned to stone where they were praying: "The man is thankful to God that my children died during worship. God willing, He gives birth to a son". The last child was miraculously born after giving thanks to God. As it is clear from the text, this pir has been called the Pir of the Forties ever since (Jafarova, 2011, p. 201).

Sometimes the miraculous birth manifests itself in a completely different form in folklore texts and the saints do not take part in this miraculous birth. On the last Wednesday of Novruz, which embodies our national values, the miraculous birth takes place with the cult of water. So, on Earth Wednesday, it is said that if a white-haired grandmother takes a bowl of spring water to a stream and pours it over the head of a childless bride, or drinks from it, without talking to anyone, she will soon have a child. As can be seen from the folklore materials, the historical legends about the ancestors reflect this historical event more clearly.

In these folklore texts, the miracle of birth is based on the miracle of the saint and the master, one of the messengers of God. How the hero of the fairy tale and saga is prepared from the beginning to the end with the help of Khizir Nabi in a white dress. These children are also helped by

the saints who mediate when they are in trouble for the rest of their lives. This, of course, is due to the functions of guardianship, sanctity and eldership of the seyid and saint.

Known the place of the miraculous birth in the folklore of the Azerbaijani people for comparison, when studying the tales of Western Europe, especially France, we do not come across the function of adoption by giving the apple to the hero by any mediator. However, in the fairy tales "Golden Apple" and "Mizer's Pear", the apple has the functions of beauty and immortality.

Thus, it became clear that the miraculous birth takes place in Azerbaijani folklore as follows:

- By eating the apple given by the saints
- By feeding those who are hungry
- Believing in the cult of water
- By dreaming with intention
- With the intention of sleeping in the hearths of the saints and seyids
- By tasting the berries of the trees in the sacred chests on the tombs of the saints

The second basic thing we will talk about in this article is the culture of behavior, the issue of respect for adults. In Turkish culture, attachment to the cult of the father, the cult of greatness is deeply rooted. The image of a benevolent elder is still found in the ancient tales of Azerbaijan in the epics of Oguz Kagan and Kitabi Dada Gorgud. In these sources, the image of an elder represents two natures. First, wisdom and experience, and in the mythological aspect, exhaustion, and the end. If we pay attention to our epics, we can determine their functions in the example of images such as Dada Gorgud. Let me note that these functions are the functions given to the god in Turkish divinity. Giving children, foretelling the future, resolving conflicts, shedding blood, conciliation, embassy, showing the way between nature and society or between two poles can also be characterized as an image of mediation.

The people of Azerbaijan have always been based on the values of the family, and the eldest of the family play an important role. In the epos "The Book of Dada Gorgud", especially in the light of father-son relations, we see that the son does not double the word father, respects him, and if he disobeys the word of the father, Dada Gorgud admonishes the young man. We can say that the psychological "state" is an incomplete mirror of our society today. "Kitabi-Dada Gorgud" is like the moral constitution of Azerbaijanism. It is widely reflected in all the traditions and folklore of our people, in the national moral values.

"It is very important for the Central Asian Turks to know their seven fathers and their genealogy" (Yilmaz Yeşildal, 2018).

The respect for elders is well known, but hospitality is another interesting issue. In the Oguz region, the state pays attention to whether there are children in the family. As can be seen from the saga, our people have always valued women in accordance with moral values. They did not even agree to dust their honor, they said that motherhood is the right of gods. On the other hand, the saga shows that the thick Oghuz beys prayed to God for the birth of Baybora bey's son. In the saga, along with the son, the daughter is also brave and courageous, able to hunt, but the son who is the successor of the generation is given a greater value. A talented son sees and learns from his father. The father earns the son for the name, the son earns the sword for the zeal of the grandfather. The son does not repeat the word of the father (Alizade, 2004, pp. 6–7).

The Manas saga also shows great respect for national values and the elder of the people. Thus, at the banquet held in order to please the people who have been waiting for a long time, suffering and misery, Jakib dressed the leaders, relatives and wise elders of each tribe in national costumes at the end of the banquet and placed them at the table.

On the other hand, the classic Azerbaijani poet Nizami Ganjavi restores justice to Sultan Sanjar, who is in his treasure trove of secrets, and the old shah, who teaches Sultan Sanjar in his story. As a result, Sultan Sanjar listens to his stomach and corrects his mistakes. In this short story, Sultan Sanjar's ability to listen to his great speech and, most importantly, his ability to draw conclusions from criticism is even greater. These features are very common in Greek mythology. "Paris, the son of Priam, the ruler of Troy, kidnapped the beautiful Elena, the wife of Menelaus, who was hospitable to him. With this immoral act, the man violated the ancient Greek tradition. Those who violate the rules of hospitality are punished by the gods.

In Azerbaijani folklore and ancient epics, national values are highly preserved. The heroes of the epics created in "Kitabi-Dada Gorgud" and before him also gained the status of alpine men and were remembered by this name. Legends about "Alp Er Tunga", "Oguz Kagan", "Shan gizi", "Shu-Saka", "Bilge kagan", "Mulan folk song", "Atilla" and others reflect the state-building of the ancient Turks. The Oghuz Kagan, considered the epic of the Hun Turks, tells of the great and long-lasting wars waged by the Oghuz Turks in the west before Islam. The saga depicts Oguz as the mother who united the surrounding khanates and built

a great empire from the moment of his birth. She divided this kingdom among his sons in his old age, tradition of statehood, love of country, protection of lands.

This ancient and historical thought is alive and relevant for Azerbaijani and Turkish psychology. Today, the acquisition of the historical lands of Azerbaijan under Armenian occupation as a result of the bravery of Azerbaijani army has given our people a great historical victory. Because this struggle for the homeland is a struggle for the traditional Azerbaijani for his mother, great ancestors, ancestral spirits. So, in Azerbaijani thought, homeland, motherland and landform the same line of meaning, and this behavior and thought is connected with the genetic code, directly with national-ethnic thought, with the mythical notion of "homeland" and archetype.

In the Anatolian province of Turkey, the names of historical heroes and political leaders, as well as the names of dead adults are noteworthy. This, of course, is due to the fact that preserving the names of historical figures always means keeping their names high

There is a tradition among the Nogai Turks to give the name of a famous hero to a newborn child. This is due to the desire of the named child to be as brave as the named hero (Yilmaz Yeşildal, 2018).

Also, it is noticeably how the Kyrgyz remembered the souls of their dead ancestors and prayed. The sanctity of the souls of dead fathers, close relatives, elders and chiefs is also reflected in other Turkic tribes. This tradition has existed in Central Asia since ancient times, as the Akkadians also sacrificed to the ancestral cult (kispum). Thus, in all regions of Azerbaijan, there is a tradition of visiting the graves of relatives who died on the eve of Nowruz and Eid al-Adha and Ramadan.

Along with the tradition of naming the deceased, there is a tradition of recognizing ancestors in the culture of the Turkic peoples. The preservation of this tradition today is closely connected with the issue of attachment to the motherland. That is why our people have never been able to give a share of the land. The main factor on this basis is the archetype of the homeland. This is one of the main factors in the culture and folklore of the Turkic peoples.

In many regions of Azerbaijan, especially in the northern region, when an envoy came to a girl in time, they would ask her if she knew the first 7 people behind her in order to get to know the boy better. They thought that a young man's recognition of his family tree, his strong attachment to his family, and his love for his homeland could be proved. Therefore, most young people who are getting married should be prepared for this question in advance. On

the one hand, this was a sign of masculinity, on the other hand, it was a sign of belonging to a new family, ownership, and the ability to grow responsibly. This feature is also closely connected with the archetype of masculinity, virtue, national and spiritual values, respect for our great ancestors and love for the motherland.

Throughout history, our people have also expressed their love for their homeland and people with the war of truth, fighting unswervingly for every inch of land lost, and on this path went to the war of truth. No matter how multicultural, fair, internationalist our people are, our predecessors, like our successors, took a sharp and uncompromising approach to the issue of attitude to ancestors and love for our ancestral lands. This feature is also closely connected with the archetype of masculinity, virtue, national and spiritual values, respect for our great ancestors and love for the motherland.

Today, if we pay attention to the interesting wedding customs of a number of countries around the world, we are faced with the picture of respect for elders, as well as the implementation of the word elder in the beginning and end of every good deed. For example, the girl from Bosnia-Herzegovina comes to the house and talks about the wedding. If the elders of the girl's family agree with the groom, they agree to the wedding. In the end, coffee is brought and if the coffee is sugary, the girl's house says the answer is yes. As can be seen here, great importance is attached to the issue of generation and genealogy. The main and interesting point here is that the word and decision of the elder are important in the assembly. In Azerbaijan, however, the tea brought by the embassy ceremony without the consent of the bride is not available.

In Italy If a girl and a boy want to love each other and start a family, they must follow the customs, albeit formally. So, the boy has to come to her house to ask his father. In this case, he must take a bottle of wine and a bouquet of flowers. In the United States wedding customs are mainly of European origin. In the past, boys would come to a girl's house with a gift to get married and ask her parents for permission. In our day, boys and girls simply take steps to get their parents of their blessings.

In India, at weddings, it is customary for one of the elders of the family to throw the bride and groom around the fire four times. This, of course, is due to the fact that the sign of respect for the elder of the generation is the belief in the magical power of wood and hearth. Let's pay attention to the attitude towards adults in the Mahabharata epos, which is the main indicator of "Mother is heavier than earth, Father is higher than heaven". In the southern region of Azerbaijan, next Wednesday, the engaged girls are

surrounded by bonfires three times, so that the new house will be on fire, light, and smoke to cover the evil eye.

In Bulgaria on the wedding day, the bride should take a shower for hours to completely cleanse her of old love and thoughts. In an interesting tradition, the bride and groom drink wine from a wedding glass, which is used only on wedding days and passed down from generation to generation. The tradition established by the elders here is realized through the cult of water. There was a feeling of confidence that the old habits of water purity and purity would take the weight of the thought out of the memory of the young man who was going to marry. In France, on the wedding day, the groom picks up his bride and walks to church. On the way to church, small children want to cut the ribbons in front of them.

According to an ancient Scottish belief, the elders of the family should wash their feet at night. In South Korea, girls cannot marry before the age of 25 and boys before the age of 27. Also in this country, it is illegal to marry a boy who has not served in the army. In fact, the courage and manliness, love for the motherland is connected with the desire and purpose of a strong attachment to the land. Among the peoples of the world, we consider the worship of the fathers to be out of duty to their souls. This is done for example going to church and light candles, keeping any sacred thing belonging to the elders in a secret, clean place. These sacrifices are made differently from the Azerbaijani people. Slavic customs include gunfire, midnight marriages, and sacrificial offerings in the provinces. Poor families sacrifice in this custom a rooster or a cow.

Ancestor worship was also developed in China. In ancient China, human sacrifices were sometimes made at the funerals of famous people (these sacrifices were performed alive along with the deceased (Mammadova, 2001, p. 202). Even the Chinese philosopher Confucius said that where there is a ruler, there is a father, there is a son, there is order, there is peace. In the ancient Turks, as a sign of respect for the cult of the fathers, sacrifices were made to the spirits of the fathers. The issue of the first ancestor is perfectly found in the all-Turkic epics "Bilgamis", Koroglu, Alp-Er Tonga. Note that the motive of "sacrifice" is always associated with the cult of ancestors. V. N. Toporov notes that the ritual of sacrifice, in fact, the process of its execution fully reflects the creation. It is a matter of ancestors (Toporov, 1988, p. 16).

If the motive of sacrifice in "Oguzname" is the basis of the state ritual determining the social and ideological structure of the Oghuz state, in the epos of Kitabi Dada Korgud this motif is one of the main conditions of the Oghuz behavior culture. For example: the man's name does not

appear until he cuts his property! (Zeynalov & Alizade, 1988, p. 129).

Over the years, some of these traditions have been forgotten and changed. But there are many that still are preserved. In Azerbaijan, on Novruz Wednesdays, especially on Earth Wednesday, one of the adults throws his daughter over the burning hearth so that the negative aura on the eve of the wedding falls on the hearth and burns to ashes. On the other hand, they would cover the burning hearth to protect a house and a family from evil. As can be seen, in the folklore, mythology and worldview of the peoples of the world there are customs and beliefs, and the miraculous birth motive and the respect for eldest is realized in different ways. Sacrifices made in connection with certain intentions vary according to their way of life and beliefs. However, as can be seen, the tradition of preserving the ancestral traditions of the peoples of the world continues today.

CONCLUSION

Azerbaijani people, like other Turkic peoples, were not indifferent to the traditions of their ancestors, on the contrary, they have always treated their national traditions with respect and care. The people of Azerbaijan have come to the fore with respect for the greatness of our national values, attachment to the land, and patriotism. Family moral issues inherited from our ancestors have always been at the forefront. It is true that many of our traditions have not been fulfilled in terms of following the laws and rules of the pandemic that have engulfed the world today, but the people have never abandoned their attitude to their historical past, national and spiritual values. This, of course, stems from the greatness of Azerbaijani people and the trust and confidence in their ancestors.

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