



## IN THE VIEWS OF THE INHABITANTS OF THE KHORAZM OASIS, SOUL IS An ISSUE OF SPACE

**Abdalov Umidbek Matniyazovich<sup>1</sup>, Masharipova Ozoda Dilshod qizi<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Associate Professor of Mamun University

<sup>2</sup>A Student of history at Ma'mun University

### ANNOTATION

*In this article, the issue of the soul in the religious views of the Khorezm oasis residents, issues related to its departure from the human body and its subsequent placement are analyzed on the basis of data collected on the basis of historical materials and ethnographic field research.*

**KEY WORDS:** religion, belief, trust, soul, space, grave, cemetery, coffin, shroud, vessel, dahma.

In the process of gathering information about ancient beliefs in mourning ceremonies in the Khorezm oasis, in the center of the opinions and comments received from the informants is the opinion and belief that death is the cessation of movement in the human body, the soul leaves the body. In the Khorezm oasis, there is an idea that after a person dies, his soul flies out of his body like a bird<sup>1</sup>.

The idea of the soul, which is located in the tissues of the human body and is considered the main incentive in human life, has come a long way, and having experienced the stages related to animistic views, many traditions related to it have been expressed in the science of ethnography. These traditions exist even in the most advanced religious systems. "Regardless of how it is defined, the revitalization or deification of nature and man retains its materiality in language and customs"<sup>2</sup>. Such traditions are also found in the complex of beliefs typical of Khorezm, which we are studying. It is true that equating the soul with blood and mind, likening it to a person's shadow, is prominent in the customs of many peoples living a primitive life. This situation shows its image even in Khorezm. This situation manifests itself in some proverbs:

Like "Blood is out - soul is out", perhaps the beliefs in this system can include soul-related phenomena such as the eye and the navel that a child understands. At the same time, the concept of soul and spirit in Khorezm did not reach the level of communication with ghosts.

In all the beliefs related to the disembodied soul, which is invisible to the surrounding people, its immaterial conception is manifested. First of all, it is necessary to prepare a place for the soul (in the first case, the deceased).

Graves in Khorezm cemeteries attract attention with their color and architecture. Among them, above-ground burial mounds are of particular interest, most of them reminding of Khorezm paintings residences<sup>3</sup>.

People have such an idea that the deceased is a fully material existence. He must also have his space, his soul is manifested together with him.

One custom in Khorezm attracts attention. Many cemeteries here have a sogona, a structure typical of Central Asia. It is built of clay or brick. The top is a dome, it is built in the form of four corners, and a window is installed on it. There are different answers to the question about windows. For example, in the Miskin Ota cemetery near

<sup>1</sup> Снесарев Г.П. Хоразмликларнинг мусулмонликдан аввалги маросимлари... – Б. 109-110; Рапопорт Ю.А. К вопросу о Хорезмских статуарных оссуариях // КСИЭ. Вып XXX. – М., 1958. – С. 63.

<sup>2</sup> Шаревская Б.И. Кўрсатилган асар, 178-бет.

<sup>3</sup> Снесарев Г.П. Большие семейные захоронения у оседлого населения левобережного Хорезма. КСИЭ, 1960, вып. XXXIII, –С. 60-71.



Amudarya, they answered that this question is asked "so that air can enter". In other places of Central Asia, in particular, in Bukhara, they answered this question: "the spirit of the deceased enters and exits through the window"<sup>4</sup>.

Kazakh customs also have this tradition, after the deceased is buried underground, a hole is made in the grave with a long stick. The idea that the soul of the deceased comes out through this hole and communicates with the bright world is hidden in this custom<sup>5</sup>.

These methods provide opportunities for the soul to communicate with the world around it. This shows that it is imagined as a specific material phenomenon.

In Khorezm, there is a ritual related to providing a place for the soul of the deceased, and it is called a house of ghosts. Sometimes it is named after my father's house. In most cases, this structure is built near large cemeteries.

Such "cells" occupy a certain area near certain cemeteries. Especially the houses near Kokhna Urganch, Kara Kopi, Kara Olovkhoja, Kirq Thousand Mullah Hill and the tomb of Sultan Baba can prove this. This means that people who come to visit the deceased think that his soul will find a place in those "cells". The informants in the hall said that the old people built themselves a ghost house.

"Houses" in Khanka called "My Father's House" were also built specially for the elderly. Later, this custom became symbolic. Some rich people bequeathed to build their grave around the tomb of a famous saint during their lifetime. It is necessary to assume that the haunted house is a unique phenomenon of Khorezm and is not found in other places<sup>6</sup>.

It is more difficult to determine that the deceased and his soul are provided with certain objects that are due to them and that they are reflected in certain rituals. As a result of the influence of the Islamic religion and the evolution in this process, the traces of archaic customs have almost disappeared. For example, the custom of placing belongings (male or female) next to the deceased has disappeared. At the same time, some traces of these wars are still present.

It is difficult to find objects buried with the deceased in underground graves. But near some graves in Khorezm, you can find some objects placed for the deceased. This situation is more noticeable in places where children are buried. Things like a cradle and a hat are placed there. In many cases, you can come across objects such as teapots, bowls, and jugs. Sometimes, the shape of liquid food is made on the wooden wall of the sogona. This is because customs have changed in recent times<sup>7</sup>. The indigenous people of Khorezm, or rather, the part of the oasis related to ancient spiritual life, did not preserve the tradition of placing an object next to the deceased. This situation can be explained as the influence of Islam. However, there is another issue here. Placing an object on the grave is also related to the burial procedure. According to the results of archaeological excavations in Khorezm, even after the introduction of Islam, the burial of the dead continued in this country for hundreds of years according to the old custom, and the bones of the corpse were buried in special ossuaries (boxes, chests) according to the rules of

<sup>4</sup> Гордлевский В.А. Избранные сочинения, т. –М.: 1960. –С. 198, примечание 8.

<sup>5</sup> Рухнинг моддий ҳодиса сифатида тасаввур қилиниши хусусида Э.Тейлор ёздики "Рухнинг кириб чиқиши учун тешик очиб қўйиши усули жуда оммавий тарқалган". Олим бу ҳақда турли этнографик маълумотларни келтиради. Ирокез халқи орасида қабрдан тешик очиб қўйиши одати мавжуд. Бу удум маънави халқи орасида ҳам учрайди. (Тейлор Э.Первобытная культура. –М.: 1939. –С.277, 278). Ўрта Осиё археологиясида ҳам бу борада қизиқарли далиллар мавжуд. Г.В.Григорьев зардуштийликка оид суяк сақлаш остонларини текшириши жараёнида Франкент қишлоғидаги қазималарда топилган идишларда ҳам тешикча қўйилганини қайд қилади. (Григорьев Г.В. Зароастрийское костехранилище в кишлаке Франкент под г. Самаркандом. // Вестник древней истории, 1939, №2 (7); –С.147.Хоразмдан топилган оссуарлар (суякдон)да ҳам халқасимон тешиклар борлиги аниқланган. (Ягодин В.Н.Новые материалы по истории религии Хорезма. С Э, 1963, №4, –С.96.

<sup>6</sup> Мазкур одатнинг генезисини аниқлашда дунёнинг бошқа халқларидаги унга ўхшаши ҳодисаларни қўриб чиқиши анча қизиқарли туғдиради. Африкадаги балуба қабиласида аجدодлар инончининг маркази яшаи жойининг олдидаги кичик кулбадир. Ҳар бир уруғдои вафотидан сўнг у ерда руҳ учун конуссимон бир кичик иншоот қурилган. (Шаревская Б.И. Кўрсатилган асар, 69-96-бетлар.)

<sup>7</sup> Мазкур удумнинг илдизлари бошқа бир одатларга бориб боғланиши мумкин. Хоразмда сақланиб қолган бир удум борки унга кирвершида ёки дарвоза устига суюқ таом ёки коса шаклини ясаб қўйишади. Бу усул ўлик учун ҳам, тирик учун ҳам қўлланилади.



Zoroastrianism<sup>8</sup>. From this point of view, the custom of putting something in the grave was abolished before the advent of Islam.

There are also rules for burying a dead body in a particular place in the cemetery. Usually, the deceased is often buried next to his father, and in the case of a woman, next to her husband's grave, thus creating a family shrine. Neighbors and relatives go to the house of the deceased on the days of Ramadan and Eid al-Adha, pray and bless him, remember his good qualities and wish the family members good health.

At this point, it should be noted that Zoroastrian traditions have been preserved in mourning ceremonies in Khorezm, as well as burial methods. In Zoroastrianism, the corpse is usually placed on the ground or its bones are placed in special coffins and buried in naus. Because, in them, the land is considered sacred, and the dead body is considered a collection of sins and impure.

Burying the corpse on the ground, not in the soil, with the help of various coffins and caskets is a characteristic feature of the funeral rites of the Southern Khorezm Uzbeks. In fact, in the past, the method of burying the dead body on shelves in the saghana, without burying it in the ground, was widespread among the peoples of different regions of Central Asia, especially the ancient oases (Bukhara, Samarkand, Shahrisabz, etc.).

Saghana, as a structure on the grave, is widespread in the area. However, the structure built on top of the erosti saghana is often preserved as a surface saghana. This custom is associated with changes in later periods.

Observations of Khorezm oasis cemeteries and burial methods show that the ethnogenetic composition of the oasis population is inextricably linked. The method of burial on the ground with paintings in the oasis area is widespread mainly in Hazoras, Khanka, Bogot, Urganch, Khiva, Yangariq and Shavot districts.

Researchers studying the history and ethnography of Khorezm consider the population to be the descendants of the oldest settled people, who forgot their clan in ancient times. Among this population there are also those who consider themselves "hard", and this is not accidental. In the history of Khorezm, this layer of the population belongs to the oldest ethnographic group, and in their daily lifestyle, traditions and rituals, as well as legends, elements of ancient Zoroastrian traditions have been preserved. Islam, which ruled for centuries, managed to suppress the traditions and views related to above-ground burial methods, which originated from the doctrine of impurity of the corpse in Zoroastrianism.

Currently, this method of burial is associated with the proximity of the erosti sizot (underground nitric) waters. Analysis of the essence of the matter denies the decisive role of such grounds. Because, in the areas of the Zarafshan oasis where the water is above the water, although the water floats under the lahad (grave) during the winter months, without building a saghana, a reed or straw is laid under it, and the corpse is buried over the water, which once again confirms our opinion.

In addition, in many places (for example, Khiva), although the level of groundwater is not very high, here the tradition of burial of the body above the ground prevails. On the contrary, some regions with high water level (for example, Pitnak), as well as Northern Khorezm Uzbeks and Karakalpaks who live in the Amudarya delta, are buried in erost. In the northern and southern regions of Khorezm (the southeastern parts of Gurlan and Hazoras districts), burial is carried out in a mixed way, the body is buried both above and below ground.

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