



UDK: 39 (=512.133)

PECULIARITIES OF THE CULT OF WATER IN ANCIENT RELIGIOUS BELIEFS (BASED ON THE MATERIALS OF THE KHOREZM OASIS)

Abdalov Umidbek Matniyazovich

PhD Senior Lecturer, Department of History, Urgench State University, Urgench, Uzbekistan

ABSTRACT

In this article, the researcher analyzes the reflection of the cult of water in ancient religious beliefs on the basis of historical and scientific sources on the example of the Khorezm oasis.

KEYWORDS: *Khorezm, Amudarya, Avesto, cult, culture, tradition, tradition, ceremony, mourning ceremony, purification, taboo, Zoroastrianism, river, lake, sea, Ashavan, Khubbi, Anaxita, sacrifice.*

INTRODUCTION

Human activity in the process of gaining a worthy place in society has been closely linked with natural phenomena. It would not be wrong to say that the formation of ancient religious beliefs was certainly formed on the basis of the weakness of men towards the forces of nature. In this regard, we can see that the formation of the cult of water and the view of this source as a sacred element is directly reflected in the sacred book of Zoroastrianism, the Avesta. As a result of the spread of Zoroastrianism in ancient times (VII-V centuries BC), ceremonies and celebrations of religious and philosophical views became widespread among the local population. The sacred book of Zoroastrianism, the Avesto, and its second part Visparat, the description of ceremonial songs and rituals typical of religious beliefs, testify to the great development of religious ceremonies and celebrations.. It should be noted that this issue has been the focus of many researchers, albeit in a small number, in their research work [1, p. 117-121].

In studying the history of the Uzbek people, Abu Rayhan Beruni described several groups of Turkic peoples - Movarounnahr Turks (Karakhanids), Northern Turks (Oguzs, Kumaks, Kyrgyz, etc.), Eastern Turks and the Chu River Valley, Khotan, Tibet, Afghanistan in his works. These works also contain materials on the life of karluks, pechenek (bajanek) and other tribes. In his work "Monuments of ancient peoples" the scientist left an invaluable historical and cultural treasure about the famous days, holidays and customs of the Khorezmians, Sogdians, Iranians, Romans, Jews, Syrians, Christians, Indians and others.

In this book, the author divides the pre-Islamic holidays of Khorezm into two types:

1. Holidays dedicated to natural events - New Year's Eve (Navruz), Opening Day, Warming Holiday, Oil Baking Day, Mina Night (Eid in early spring in memory of a woman who died in the cold), etc.
2. Religious ceremonies (in pre-Islamic times) - the day when food is put in front of graves for ghosts and so on.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The cult of water played an important role in Zoroastrianism, which was based on monotheism. According to the British Avesta scholar M. Boyce, "The main objects of Zoroastrian cults are water and fire. The water brought life to the steppes and deserts. Proto-Indo-Europeans, the oldest ancestors of the Indo-European peoples, sanctified rivers, seas and watersheds as material manifestations of the goddess Apas and offered sacrifices in her honor [2, p. 10]. According to G.P.Snesarev, an employee of the Khorezm expedition, the concept of sacred water was first deified among the peoples of Central Asia [3, p. 193].

In the regions of the world, there are beliefs related to water in the lives of peoples who have acquired economic orientations [4, p. 135]. The notion that rivers, lakes, springs, seas and water bodies are the source of life is formed in the minds of mankind. Rituals such as calling for and stopping rain in times of water scarcity, drinking water by the bride and groom, bathing the newborn, and washing the body of the deceased with warm water are also various manifestations of the water cult.



The custom of water purification is a characteristic, custom, and tradition peculiar to all religious beliefs and cultures. According to archaic-cosmogonic notions, the earth first emerged from the waters or formed an egg in the chaos of the ocean, which was later divided into two parts (sky and earth). Thus the source of life - water - is seen as the basis of all things [5, p. 62]. This is why the concept of water is interpreted in a broad sense in many myths, legends and songs created by our ancestors. In folk songs, which are considered a treasure of the spiritual world of Khorezm, the terms pool, stream, spring and river are widely used as a divine power. Water was deified as a sacred, source of life, and it was regarded as a glorious blessing that laid the foundation for the life of plants, man, and the animal world.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In the book of Avesto, the water is expressed as follows: "O waters! You are fluent in goodness. You wash and purify the world, and you are blessed with the bliss of the two worlds. We respect you [6, p. 227]! In Zoroastrianism, the definition of the main functions of the cult of water was based on its purifying properties. In the third section of the seventh fargard in the Vendidad, the purity of the water, that is, "O Ashavan Zoroaster! The water of the spring called Ardivyusvar is said to purify the semen of the earth, the baby in the woman's womb, and the milk in the mother's breast [6, p. 133].

Residents of Khorezm oasis performed the ritual of drinking water for the bride and groom before the religious prayer at the wedding in order to preserve the sanctity of the family [9, p. 2013]. This is the case in the past and present of the Turkic peoples. According to scientist V.V. Radlov, Siberians who converted to Christianity drank the water of marriage for the bride and groom. In Uzbeks, this task is performed by yangas (sister-in-law of bride), while in Siberian Turks, the father-in-law drinks the water of marriage for the bride and groom.

The fact that many shrines in our country are connected with springs, and the fact that people still seek healing and children from them, shows how developed the belief in the worship of water in the history of our people. Field observations have shown that in several holy shrines, childless women and their relatives washed their faces and hands several times from the bottom (well) and prayed various intentions and prayers. (In particular, the shrine of Sheikh Mukhtor Ali in Yangiariq district of Khorezm region, the shrine of Pakhlavon Mahmud in Khiva Ichonkala and the shrine of Sheikh Jalil in the Republic of Karakalpakstan) [8, p. 2020].

In Zoroastrian religious ceremonies, the traditions of the water cult were followed in the ceremonies of the newborn and his chilla (40 days) period. In the ritual of chilla, the baby is washed in coin, salt, and egg shell water [9, p. 2017]. These rituals were thought to have magical properties and were used to wish the baby well. In this sense, in the eighth chapter of the fifth fargard of the Vendidad, when a pregnant woman gives a birth in the house of a Mazda worshiper, she is told that "the land is poor, the vegetation is plentiful, and the herds of cattle and sheep are few; Ahuramazda's son was a Zoroastrian who had less fire, less religious rites, and the people of Ashavan stopped there from time to time. The woman who gave birth had to stand three steps away from the fire, the water, the barsam(a type of plant), and the people of Ashavan. They surrounded the house with a high wall and kept the woman there and fed her without taking her out. A woman who gave birth in Zoroastrianism was unclean for certain days. For them, the period of ceremonial purification was heavy, arduous, and lasted forty days [10, p. 81]. Therefore, she was not to approach anything that was considered sacred. A woman who ate meat, bread, and wine for three nights and three days could not drink water. The woman who gave birth avoided drinking water and approaching water pools because she was unclean. Because they feared that such a woman might pollute the water, which was considered sacred. Three days later, they dug nine holes in the house where she was temporarily living for the woman who had given birth, and the mother washed her body and clothes near these holes and performed the first rituals of purification. After the woman had kept the chilla for another nine days and nights, after washing her body and clothes with water and kumis, the woman was purified and began her activities with her family members.

This custom is still reflected in the tradition of chilling. Usually a woman with a new child was considered unclean in the psyche of our people. According to ethnographer G.P. Snesarev, the residents of the oasis believed that a woman who gave birth to a new child could not go to the water (wells, ditches, canals, rivers, etc.) for seven days, participate in farming and go out at night because she was unclean [3, p. 91-92]. The custom of protecting a woman who has given birth to a new child from the hardships of the farm has survived to this day [11, p. 2013]. The historical foundations of the customs associated with the Chilla period are inextricably linked with Zoroastrianism. According to interviews conducted during the field practice, the process of protecting new-born women from evil spirits and spiritual and physical purification took place over a period of forty days [9, p. 2013].



In Zoroastrianism, a person who died was considered unclean, and according to it, it was forbidden to sow, irrigate, or plant crops for up to a year at the place where the dog or person died. The place where the corpse was touched was considered an unclean area for a year, and it had to be cleansed by sunlight. Paragraph 4 of the sixth fargar of Vendidad states that "it is not permissible to sow grain or water on the land where dogs and people have died for a year". A man who has sinned in his lifetime has received three different types of whipping twenty times. Attempts such as not to bring the deceased close to the water, not to sprinkle water on the place where the dead came out, and not to bring water to the place where the body was laid were made [12, p. 55]. Through these traditions, we see that people have ensured the purity of water.

Our elders emphasize to young people that it is necessary to keep water clean in our daily lives, to use it sparingly, not to pollute the water. They call not to spit in the water. In the Khorezm oasis, water is equated with the "mother's face" and the elderly call young people to upbringing and say, "It is a sin to spit in water," "If you spit in water, you will spit in your mother's face" [9, p. 2013].

It is known that the Amudarya has long been important for the people of the oasis, and because the agriculture and livelihood of the people of the region is inextricably linked with the Amudarya, the local people have endured the whims and floods of this river for thousands of years. That is why there is a tradition among the people of the oasis to pray and pray in various ceremonies: "... Let the river be full of water and flow in its own direct" [9, p. 2012].

In this sense, the myths and legends associated with the cult of water have survived among the various strata of the population of the oasis. As they escorted the sailors across the river, the elders instructed them to respect the spirits who were "patrons of the river" [13, p. 2012]. In particular, the Khorezmians honored and deified the patron of the river called Hubbi. The Khorezmians considered the "shipping spirit" - the prophet Noah and the "patron of the river" Hubbi as the same person. This patron of the river, later included in the sources under the name of Hubbihoja, was able to perform various prophecies in the eyes of the people, in particular, to rescue drowning people, to restore the lives of slaughtered bulls, and to perform other miracles. The practical manifestation of this trust can be seen in the meeting of names such as Hubbiquli and Hubbiniyaz among the people of Khorezm. The people of the oasis believed in the power of the water cult Hubbi, which arose out of fear of the people, and sacrificed to him in the early spring to prevent floods [7, p. 31-32].

The image of Hubby is also widespread in other regions of the republic. These include the

Khoja Ubbon shrine near Bukhara, the Sultan Hubbi shrine in the village of Oqshikh in the Jondor district, the Hubbi [7, p. 33] shrine in the Fergana Valley and the Tashkent-Ahangaran River, and the Hubbil shrine in the Kamashi district of Kashkadarya province [14, p. 101]. A broader interpretation of the Hubby legend is given in the monograph of Ya.G. Gulyamov on the history of irrigation of the Khorezm oasis [7, p. 31-32]. Бу образ билан бирга кейинчалик Хуббининг онаси Ардвисура-Анахита образи пайдо бўлган Along with this image later appeared the image of Hubby's mother, Ardivisura-Anaxita (ушбу образ кейинчалик халқ орасида Анбар она номи билан машхур бўлган) (this image later became popularly known as Mother Anbar). Ана шу Хуббининг онаси биринчи қайикни ясаган ва халқни дарёда сузишга ўргатган. It was Hubby's mother who built the first boat and taught the people to swim in the river [7, p. 31-32].

The situation, which reflects the image of Hubby's mother, seems to be that this statue of the legendary mother is mounted on the front of the boats floating on the Amudarya (where the two sides of the boat meet). After the arrival of the Arabs, they cut off the head of the statue, leaving only the legend that the mother had two braided hair, which confirms the pre-Islamic existence of the cult associated with the image of Hubby. In Khorezm shipping, it was customary to build ships with three sides resembling the head of a man, the image of the river goddess Ardivisura-Anaxita.

According to G.P. Snesev, there was a popular belief that childless women would secretly go to the ship and a horse mane from the horse-drawn carriage at the head of the boat [15, p. 237-238]. For this reason, the childless women crawled to the top of the ship, took a piece of horsehair wrapped around the snake's head, and when they got home, added it to the incense and circled it around all the rooms. Thus, they believed that they would achieve their goals. Observations in the oasis show that infertile women still believe that if they return from the Amudarya by boat or boat to the other side, their problems will be easier and they will have children [16, p. 2020].

In Khorezm, the image of Hubby was an epic image that fought and restrained the evil forces - the Arang - who overflowed the water and caused great harm to people [17, p. 86]. According to the researcher M.V. Sazonova, the Khorezm ship makers knew Noah as their teacher. Interestingly, the Khorezmians shouted "Sultan Hubbi" during the crash as loud as possible [17, p. 89]. Because, in the imagination of the people of the oasis, when someone was in a difficult situation in the river, they remembered Hubby, not Noah, and called him for help, and in their imagination, Hubby saved them.



The above-mentioned data allow us to conclude that the sailors floating in the river knew Hubbi as a saint. It should be noted that at the same time, the image of Hubby is found in the views of the people of the oasis. After all, the residents of the village of Doshiyak, Khiva district, have witnessed that they still start something by saying, "Oh, my Hubby" [18, p. 2019].

According to the study, the fact that the Ardisura-Anaxita symbol was later transferred to the image of the mother of Ambar (Anbar) can be seen with the custom of throwing several dishes of meals to be thrown into rivers and canals for fish has been preserved among the inhabitants of the oasis.

In addition, we observe that the people of the oasis still have a special respect for land, grain and bread in their views and rituals related to the traditional way of life in various customs and rituals. Of course, farming ceremonies are also held in other seasons.

When water comes to the canals in early spring, the Uzbeks of the Khorezm oasis perform a salt-throwing ceremony. According to the sources, such an event will be held in the sense of "abundance of agriculture, increase of food" [19, p. 2020].

Thus, taking into account the above historical data, the following final conclusion can be made:

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of scientific and comparative analysis of many studies on this topic and the analysis of materials obtained during field ethnographic research, it can be concluded that many ancient customs that reflect Zoroastrian traditions, are preserved in the rituals and customs of the Uzbeks of the Khorezm oasis. but to this day the name or content of many of them has changed.

REFERENCES

1. I.Bogomolova K. *Traces of the ancient cult of water among the Tajiks // News of the Department of Social Sciences of the Academy of Sciences of the Taj. Issue 2, 1952, pp. 117-121*
2. Boyce M. *Zoroastrians. Beliefs and customs. M. Nauka, 1987, p. 10.*
3. Snasarev G.P. *Relics of pre-Muslim beliefs and rituals among the Uzbeks of Khorezm. M., 1969, p. 193.*
4. Frank-Kamensky I. *Water and fire in bubble poetry // Japhetic collection. M., L, issue 3.1925. s130-135.*
5. Ashirov. A.A. *Water in Uzbek culture. T., "Akademnashr", 2020, - B. 62.*
6. *Avesto. Historical and literary monument. A. Strong translation. T., Sharq, 2001, p.227.*
7. Gulomov Ya.G. *History of irrigation in Khorezm. T.: 1959. - B. 31-32.*
8. *Field records. Yangiarik district of Khorezm region and the city of Khiva. 2020 y.*
9. *Field records. Karavul, Tondirchi village, Cholish village and Cholobod mahalla of Urgench district of Khorezm region. 2012, 2013, 2017.*
10. Ashirov A.A. *Ancient beliefs and ceremonies of the Uzbek people. T., 2007, - B. 81.*
11. *Field records. Urgench, 2013.*
12. Eshmurotov M. *Interpretation of natural cults in the Avesto. T., 2002, p.55.*
13. *Field records. Turtkul district of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, 2012.*
14. Rahmonov F.Sh. *Agricultural customs and rituals of the population of Kashkadarya (late XIX - early XX centuries). t.f.n. diss ... - B. 101.*
15. Snasarev G.P. *Pre-Muslim rituals and customs of Khorezm / S. Translated by Ruzimbaev. - Urgench: 2018. - B. 237-238.*
16. *Field records. Yangibazar village of Khazarasp district of Khorezm region, 2020.*
17. Sozonova M.V. *Traditional economy of the Uzbeks of South Khorezm. - L.: "Science", 1978. - P. 86.*
18. *Field records. Dashyak, Akyop, Kinik, Rafanik and Badirkhan villages of Khiva district of Khorezm region. 2019.*
19. *Field records. Mukhomon village of Hazarasp district of Khorezm region. 2020.*