



ZOROASTRIAN TRADITIONS IN CALENDAR CEREMONIES OF THE UZBEKS

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ANNOTATION

This article reveals the issue of Zoroastrian traditions in Uzbek calendar and thematic rituals basing on the scientific literature and field research, and analyzes the subject from a historical point of view.

KEYWORDS: *Khorezm oasis, Avesta, Zoroastrian religeon, lifestyle, tradition, ritual, calendar, sayl (public festive), spectacle, the sun, stars, the moon, holiday, peasant calendar.*

INTRODUCTION

It is well known that the livelihoods of the settled or herders have paid a great deal of attention to the question of time, even though their livelihoods vary. When the population of the herd was deeply engaged in agricultural work, acquired the knowledge of planting, sowing, growing, taking care of its crop and harvesting, used the lunar, solar, star calendars with the names of the house and wildlife. There have been published literature on the history of human calendars, such as the moon, sun, and stars [1; 1976].

The pre-Islamic calendars in Central Asia were called the “Zoroastrian calendar”, consisting of 12 months in a year consisting of 30 days each and additional days. The same calendar is also found in ancient Khorezm and Sogdians, which are different from the names of months.

According to Avesta, there are six “gohanbor” (holidays) in the past, which are related to the calendar of the year. It is noted that these holidays were celebrated at certain times of the year. For example, the first feast was “Mayzyuyi Zimaya” celebrated on the 41-45th days of years in the middle of spring; the second, “Mayzyuyi Shi-ma” – on the 101-105th days in the middle of summer; the third, “Pyatyash Hahya” (Harvesting of the grain The harvest of the day) –on the 176-180th days of the year; the fourth, “Ayatarima” – on the 206-210th days of the years of “bringing back the livestock to home”; the fifth, “Mayzai-ryah” (mid-year) on the 285-292nd days of the year; the sixth, “Hamaspasmasida-yah the movement of all warriors” or “the day when the spirits of the past ancestors

return home” is on the 360-365th days of the years [2, p. 310-316].

Hence, the people of the Avesta Society have had a clear calendar and follow it in their daily routine, work planning, and at certain times of the year [2, p. 310-316].

Information about these holidays is one of the main and the oldest and most important sources of scholarly knowledge in the study of the calendar of the Uzbek people. The early features of Uzbek calendar traditions and ceremonies are also important for making conclusions about the early forms and historical roots of the calendar's customs and traditions.

Therefore, among the medieval written sources reflecting the ceremonies related to the calendar of the East, the great encyclopedic scholar Abu Raykhan Beruni's book “Monuments from Ancient Peoples” is of great importance. This historical and ethnographic work contains remarkable information about the pre-Islamic Khorezmian, Sogdian, Iranians' calendars and dates, and the festivities held by them - holidays, various rituals, and similarities and uniqueness [3, p. 233-252]. Especially important information for our research is the information about the Navruz, Mehrjon, Sada, “qovoq sayli” (pumpkin festive), “grapes festival”, “remembrance day of ancestors”. All of these celebrations were held in accordance with the calendars of the year, reflecting changes in nature. The scientist also mentioned the names of lunar dates in the calendars of ancient nations, and said that the days in those months were called by different names. During the civilization of the local population,



concepts such as “day”, “night” and “week” have emerged, including the time of rope weeping, the marking the wood and short beats, and the observation of celestial lights combined with the time issue were created [4, p. 311]. The lunar, solar and star calendars have been used by mankind. At the same time, it has been observed that mankind has determined the midday time observing the shade of the sunshine and in some cases the term “sun is in late afternoon” is more commonly used among people. Wherever the breeders and herdsman were, they set the time basing on the observations of the sun's rising, sunset, the appearance of the stars and the moon, and their saturation. Abu Raykhan Beruni, our compatriot, said that the Khorezm people were deeply acquired the skill of using the lunar calendar. That is to say, the people of Khorezm used those calendars for years and months suitable for sogdians, however they didn't correspond to Iranians' calendars. Khorezmian rituals resemble those of the Sogdians, and they are also the beginning of the summer “novsarji avvali”. Novsarji is the first day of the month, the celebration of the beginning of the year, which is a new day. H-r-v-sh-t was the first day of the month called “arijosuvok” [3, p. 280]. This period is “getting free from clothes”, which means “time to be naked and to be open”.

Chiri is the fifteenth day of this month, and its explanation is “wood and fire”. Umri (life) was the first day of the month, called azdokandhvor, meaning “the day of eating bread with butter”. The people of Khorezm came to their houses from the cold and gathered around the fire and ate some bread with butter. Khorezmians used lunar addresses [3, p. 281–283]. Ancient people have learned to calculate time basing on their observations of the day and night. The calculation of the time of the year and the month was created between the two rivers.

It is easy to see that the division of the year into seasonal periods is based on the dualistic views of good and evil, light and darkness, male and female. According to the Uzbek people, the last month of winter includes the terms “ayamajuz”, “ahmon-dahmon”, “hezim-hirmon”, “naqsh navruz” (good new day), “obi rahmat” (thanks to water) and “kuni bekor” (idle day).

What is the description of Ayamajuz on imagination of the people of oasis? In the myths and legends of our forefathers, the brutal old woman was depicted as a slimy but cruel woman. Sometimes alone, sometimes as a mother of two boys or two girls, she was known as a wise and witty woman. As the winter starts, the people of the oasis ask each other questions, “How many days are there till ayamajuz?” It can be heard many times when a person with real experience will say, “No, there is not yet” or “an incoming cold is ayamajuz”.

According to M.Boyce, who studied Zoroastrian doctrine, the last day of the year, the day before Navruz, was held “a feast of all souls”. This holiday was known as “Khamaspartmazdaya”, and on the last day of the year after the sunset at the end of the day, when the dark sets around, all the spirits come to their former places and enjoy the night and prayer and return again to their places before dawn. This happens once a year [5, p. 120-129].

The Uzbek people, including the people of Khorezm oasis, have a twelve-year calendar, which includes the years of mouse, cows, tigers, rabbits, fish, snakes, horses, sheep, monkeys, rooster, dogs and wild-swines. Experts say that the weather was cold in the years of mouse, tigers, fish, horses, monkeys and dogs, and the nature was mild in the years of the cow, rabbit, snake, sheep, rooster, and wild-swine [6, p. 2017]. At the same time, informants predicted the yield of the New Year, the abundance of the crop, and the character of the newborn baby. According to their beliefs, the year of mouse is unfortunate as it is a vermin animal, that is, this year the harvest will not be as expected, the year of cow is sad and full of suffer, but the livestock will have full of feed, the sheep will not work and behave in vain, calm animal and the year will be peaceful, the harvest is rich. The rooster is anxious because it is energetic, however the year is full of problems, but the weight of crop is heavy. The year of the dog is good; the harvest will be as it was expected. Children born in the year of rooster are open-hearted and live long [7; 2018].

According to the Uzbek people, the time period from the small chill to the spring equinox “Navruz” is divided into oh-oh, deserts, yellow sumalak, hutuyut, ayamajuz, ahmon-dahmon, nakhsh navruz, obi rahmat [8, p. 6-7].

Avestaologist M. Boyce shows that the celebration of Navruz is associated with the idea of glorifying the goodness that is reflected in the image of goddess Asha, an attractive and beautiful face [5, p. 45].

The rise of the sun and the connection between fire and spring is widely used in folklore [9, p. 32]. New Year's calendar for the peoples of Central Asia, starting on March 21, is called Navsard in Sogdians, and Novsarji in Khorezm [3, p. 279–280]. The historian of Bukhara Narshahi has said that the celebration of Navruz has the history of more than three thousand years [10, p. 104]. Archaeological research shows that the historical roots of Navruz dates back to the Neolithic period [11, p. 14-17]. The origin of Navruz is mentioned in the Avesta. It is associated with the term “khamaspa eta”, which means that each family grows wheat and co-produces “sumalak”. Also, they cooked pasty to remember their parents and relatives passed away this ritual was



called “letting out odour” [12, p. 114-115]. The people of the Khorezm oasis distribute pies or food, cookies made of minced early sprout of wheat to their neighbors or herbs.

Calendar events in the Khorezm oasis are reflected in calendar ceremonies. Sayil is a celebration, an important event in society, and performances in connection with major changes in nature [13, p. 23].

There is a great variety of activities in the way of life of the Uzbek people, many of which are based on Zoroastrian traditions. After all, many of these traditions are not reflected in Islam.

The traditional “Red Flower”, also included in the calendar, is one of the oldest national celebrations that combine the idea of cults and fertility in connection with the awakening and renewal of this nature [14, p. 73].

In Khorezm, Navruz is one of the holidays celebrated as the awakening of nature and the foundation of future harvest. It is interesting that there is another festival in Khorezm on this issue. This holiday also coincides with the renaissance of nature, which is celebrated mainly around Khiva and is called the “Red Flower Festival”. One of the main features of the ceremony is the presentation of a red flower to relatives and friends. According to the information, the feast was held near Bovaris Baba Cemetery near Khiva. According to Komiljon Khudaibergenov, during the red flower celebration, young boys and girls shared their love of each other with apples besides red flowers. Men are gathered at the cemetery. Some bring rice, some oil, and some meat to cook “qorma” (shavla) there [15; 2019]. As we can see, this holiday is mostly attended by young people. According to the information provided by the experts, the flowers are primarily the symbols of spring awakening and love.

The ethnographer from Khorezm, T. Kilichev linked the “Red Flower” with the images of Anahita and Siyavush [16, p. 26-28]. Additionally, one of the seasonal festivals was called “Tut sayli” (Mulberry festive). It is a “mulberry party”, held mainly in areas with large mulberry trees, and has no strict regulations. While it is common for people to gather mulberry fruit in their own gardens, mass rallying around mulberry gardens is a big celebration of the “Mulberry festive” [17, p. 99].

In Khorezm, mulberry is a symbol of fertility and prosperity. In times of famine and shortage, the mulberry fruit has been considered the most nutritious food for humans. Since our ancestors came out of the long winter, the earliest and most fertile fruit is mulberry and the people believed that “Saying farewell to winter at last we could eat the mulberry and now we will live a long life”. Therefore, during the ripening of the mulberry fruit, that is, in May the

great festivals were organized by the people. During the mulberry festive, they prepared for the winter food, as well as organized entertainment, performance, and competitions. These festivals were held in places considered sacred to the population, especially around the mulberry tree planted by the saints, including Sheikh Muhtor Wali, Sayid Mohroyi Jahan and other places of worship.

At present, the festival is held exclusively at Said Mohroki Jahon. The festival is organized with the participation of all the people of Khiva. According to facts, a large mulberry tree in the shrine was spread from the mulberry brought by Sayid Mohroyi's grandfather. The visitors eat white mulberry and the syrup and dried fruit are made from the remaining mulberry fruits. The women of Khiva and children are more likely to participate in the festival [15; 2017].

“Qovun sayli” (Melon Festival). The farmers have been celebrating the rich harvest the outcome of hard labor, the end of agricultural work with weddings, festivals and holidays since ancient times. The celebration of the annual harvest of melons among them is called “Melon Feast”. To date, the melon festival is gaining new content and is evolving again.

CONCLUSION

Thus, this article may conclude with the following conclusions. The people of Khorezm have developed a calendar based on the moon, sun, and star movement in their daily life and business activities. BC From the 4th century onwards, the celestial activity was based on the movement of celestial bodies by the Priestesses. The calendars, which were common among our people were created by Beruni, had their names.

The calendars used by the people of ancient Khorezm are still in use today. In Khorezm, local indigenous populations continued the calendar, which was used by their ancestors, who have lived and watched for centuries.

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