



THE ROLE OF KHALFAS AT THE FUNERAL CEREMONIES OF THE POPULATION OF THE KHOREZM OASIS

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ANNOTATION

Funeral ceremonies in Khorezm are different from other regions. This is mainly held around women. "Three-days", "seven-days", "forty-days" and "one-year" events are held mainly at the funerals with the participation of khalfas.

KEYWORDS: *Khalfa, funeral, "three-days", "seven-days", "forty-days" and "one-year" event, religious khalfa, mourning songs of mourners.*

INTRODUCTION

In Khorezm, the khalfas participate at the mourning ceremonies held for the death of a person (mainly by women - R.G.): There are "three-days", "seven-days", "forty-days", "one-year" events, in which the impressive parts of the epic proses and poetry about the mortality, shortness of human life, the truth of death, the nature of Muslim, the superiority of goodness are recited, the relatives of the deceased are encouraged to be patient.

THE CONTENT OF THE ISSUE

There are also 2 types of khalfas in Khorezm: a khalfa who attends at a wedding and a religious khalfa who attends at a funeral celebration¹. I have been a religious khalfa since 1995, "said Sister Malika. Religious khalfas used to recite poetry at the funeral ceremonies, and for 5 or 6 years or so, on the advice of our government they say to give a speech, not in verse. We read from the magazines "Hidoyat", "Muminalar", "Islam Nuri" newspaper, Friday tests are published. There is information about Islam. Lectures are given at the funeral ceremonies. At the present time, instead of "three days" and "seven days", only "three days" and the funeral are held. We give an hour-long speech on Islam to those who want to donate to their parents. We quote from the hadiths of our Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and inform the participants about the prayers, fasting prayers, the names and prayers of each month. We give information about the differences between halal and haram, family relations, parents, children, based on the Qur'an and Hadiths. The speech may last up to 1 or 1.5 hours, depending on the nature of the ceremony (khudoyi donation, little

khudoyi, mushkushod)². Throughout the oasis, religious khalfas are educated in specific madrassas or private schools, but work on the basis of the instructions issued by the government.

"Nowadays, the participation of religious khalfas is also significantly reduced, as the funeral ceremonies are held only as "three days" or donations and funerals. Although religious motives and images are dominated by form in such epics, the universal content prevails. In this regard, the epic "BoboRavshan" is widely used. This is not accidental, of course. In the epic, the example of Ali selling himself as a slave and doing good to the poor grandfather Ravshan, the promotion of living only in goodness in this world impacts on the faith of everyone. In the Khorezm oasis, similar rituals associated with death have the appearance of a folk theater. Funerals consist of rituals associated with long-term mourning for the deceased. The women, who had gathered for the funeral ceremony on the day of the funeral, sobbed in a frenzy manner around the "dead". We will be respected by our people and invited to their homes only when we have a deeper understanding of our activities and strengthen our religious knowledge", said the religious khalfas living in Beruni district³.

In Khorezm, khalfas also took part in the funerals and all ceremonies related to it among women. Commemoration and remembrance of the deceased was held in Khorezm Uzbeks and Turkmens three, seven, forty days and then for a year after the day of death⁴. There are also reports about such

¹ Field records. Recorded from Saparova Malika, who was born in Sherbog mahalla of Yangiarik District on October 21, 1951. 2020.

² Field records. Recorded from Ibragimova Khadicha khalfa, who lives at 597 Khirli qal'a street of Polvon mahalla. Beruni District of Khorezm region. 2019.

³ Field records. Recorded from Saparova Tursinoy khalfa, who lives at 111 G.Gulom street of Guliston mahalla in Beruni District. 2020.

⁴ Turkistan collection.



ceremonies in Karakalpaks and Kazakhs. In most of these ceremonies, the women sat in a separate room from the men, and the help of the khalfas played a special role in the performance of religious ceremonies there. The khalfas recited the Qur'an among the women gathered for the ceremony. Hence, it is obvious that in addition to singing and dancing, khalfas were also required to have religious knowledge. Especially, the khalfas of ceremonies were different in a certain sense from the khalfas who sang and danced. Because the attendance of khalfas in the ceremony at weddings is not observed in the oasis. In Khorezm Uzbeks, the relatives of the deceased and the khalfas women who attended the mourning ceremonies wore black or blue clothes. One of the khalfas sitting there started crying by telling about the good deeds done by the deceased, his/her best human qualities and the events related to the deceased. Then the relatives, friends and family members of the deceased continued crying. In particular, the relatives of the deceased spread their hair, clapped and sang mourning songs:

Mother

The power of my waist, the light of my eyes.
May your mother die instead of you
Woe is me, my child, (crying)

Wife

As I walk, you were my companion,
Both my support and my conscience.
It is poison what I drink,
Your children are orphans now, woe (crying)

Sisters

Our mountain on which we rest,
Our orchard giving fruit.
My brother left us
My camel has gone, woe ... (crying) saying turn by turn⁵.

The root of this ritual of Khorezm people goes back to a long history. As it is stated in "Shohnoma", the legend by Firdavsi, which is based on the religious beliefs of Zoroastrianism, that the god of goodness, Ahuramazda, created Qayumars to fight Ahriman. Ahriman launches an attack on him, but when he is unable to defeat, he kills Siyomak, the son of Qayumars.

In poetic utterances there are also certain elements such as tone, speech part, rhyme, and rhythm. The shamanic utterances, written by Guljon Porkhon from Hazorasp, consist of a text in a judgmental tone aimed at expelling an evil spirit after its traditional beginning:

Go back to whom that said die!
Go back to the eyes of the envious!

The khalfas also took part in the shamanic ceremonies held around the tombs of the sacred saints. Ethnograph G.P. Snasarev notes that Gullibibi Cemetery was one of the places where such ceremonies were held by women in the past. According to his notes, the sheikh of the cemetery and the disciples were also women, and the treatment was held during the "zikr" (formulaic chanting performed by Sufis, usu. with devotees sitting in a circle and chanting praises to God) with the participation of the khalfa. According to an elderly woman

from Khanka who witnessed the incident, "the "zikr" begins with the bibikhalfa reciting the prayer text. At that moment, the main Sufis crawled in through the doors, lying on the ground, sat down in front of the khalfa, and began to clap their hands in a spiritual frenzy. Immediately the candles, books, and utensils in the middle were removed, and all came close to the center, forming a circle in an upright position, holding hands, walking on one foot, and moving to one side together. The patient sits on the floor with his knees in the middle. Around the patient they recited prayers and utterances together with the khalfa and beat him on the shoulder."

The khalfa is also actively involved in the magic of words and magic movements at the beginning and the end of this ceremony, which reflects the animistic views associated with the cult of the sacred grandmothers. The utterances of the khalfas are mainly in the form of prose and aim at driving the harm, which is believed to settle in the patient's body and cause illness. In this ritual, shaman khalfas use a word and a stick that are believed to have magic. Importantly, each participant in this process supports the word and action of the khalfa and joins her in its place.

Naturally, in the practice of utterances and performance of shamanic khalfas the influence of Islamic beliefs was strong. In some researches it is stated that the Islamic influence on the remnants of shamanism dates back to the XIII century in Central Asia. In our opinion, in Khorezm, where pre-Muslim beliefs were more viable, this influence was weaker than in other regions.

Generally, the khalfas try to advise people with such exemplary stories and tales in celebrations and mourning ceremonies, telling them that the transience of the world, that one should live a meaningful life and try to make a good name for oneself.

CONCLUSION

It can be said as a conclusion that the genre diversity and thematic diversity of the works in the repertoire of khalfas is within the framework of all-Uzbek oral poetics. In their performance and interpretation the centuries-old art traditions particular to the Khorezmian women and the style that combines a unique elegance and a high spirit are reflected.

⁵ Field records. Khorezm region, Khiva city. 2012.