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Significance of the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad in Kazakh proverbs and sayings

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Abstract

We will examine the hadiths of the Prophet which one encounters in religious, spiritual life of Kazakh people, particularly in proverbs and sayings. The hadith is considered to be utterances, actions made by the Prophet Muhammad as well as his decisions regarding certain issues. Although pronunciation and structure of hadithes do not always correspond to those of Kazakh proverbs fully, the meaning they bear is similar. Investigating such a topic is significant from the point of view of science, because proverbs give us extensive information about daily life, whole history, past and present of the Kazakh nation that is its spiritual heritage.

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1. Introduction

Proverbs and sayings are the beacon of spoken literature and core of spiritual values. The proverbs are not just simple combinations of words. They bear implications and mysterious meaning. Kazakh people are very eloquent and rich for proverbs. Our ancestors would speak every word with care and accuracy

So, why are the proverbs and sayings handed down by our ancestors to us so precious. Certainly, they are precious for their brevity, undoubted precision, wisdom and instruction. The proverbs are not a result of only one century, they are closely connected to the past of a nation. Every proverb with its meaning depicts a certain historical event in particular periods, culture, daily life and traditions of a nation. Therefore proverbs as a topic of a national identity is meaningful in all ways. Indeed proverbs and saying are historical heritage that never tarnishes. It is an enduring poetic genre that is full of cultural and educational colour.

Our ancestors used to express meaningful thoughts in a brief statement and communicate what they saw, what they had experienced and gone through with the help of proverbs. From this standpoint many proverbs function as

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edification, moral instruction. Any proverb has a shade of certain events in life and it manifests as an analysis or evaluation to those events.

Islam had an enormous impact on spiritual views of Kazakh people. One evidence for that is borrowed words from Arabic. It is not an easy process when a word from one language penetrates into another and gets assimilated. The words of religious meaning were used in Arab Peninsula first, then started spreading to the Turkic nations.

Generally speaking arabic elements that is borrowed words carved a place not only in language, but also in culture, tradition and science. For instance, calling azan (call for prayer in Islam) when giving a name to a new-born baby, greeting people with the word “Assalamugaleykum”, religious holidays Qurban eid and Ramadan eid, islamic circumcision, wedding, charity, fitr (alms giving in Ramadan), giving bata (blessing), scripts in cemeteries and mausoleums demonstrate religious customs. Also, mosques and madrasas functioned as a beacon of national spirituality in the long course of the history. Moreover it penetrated in Kazakh folklore. For example, arabic fairy tale “One thousand and one nights”, “Layla and Majnun” and other works though composed on the basis of oriental plot, they got adapted to the Kazakh folklore and became assimilated (B.Abilqasimov 1982).

There are many proverbs in Kazakh language that took roots from the Prophet's hadithes owing to the above-mentioned factors. Indeed such proverbs are conveyed either by translation or semantic substitution.

Even though contemporarily hadithes were investigated in Arabic peninsula and Islamic world from scientific standpoint, they have not been analyzed thoroughly in independent Kazakhstan yet. In fact if we contemplate proverbs and sayings, we could see prophet's hadithes among them. As proverbs mostly teach people good behaviour, tolerance and other decent characteristics, hadiths also call on literacy, decency, justness, patience and other proper features. Also, the prophet's hadiths and Kazakh proverbs are similar to each other from the standpoint of structure, content and essence.

Islam preaches that greeting is the fundamental element of ethics. Islam taught the Muslims to greet each other with the word «السلام عليكم» (Assalamu aleykum). The word “assalamu aleykum” means ‘peace of Allah be upon you’ (may Allah save you from disasters). One day a man came to the Prophet and asked: “What are the best features of Islam?”. The Prophet replied: “تطعم الطعام و تقرأ السلام على من عرفت و من لم تعرف” (tut'imuttaáma ua taqrau assalama ála man árafta ua lam ta'rif) (Feeding hungry people and greeting people you know as well as you don't know) (Buhari 20).

Kazakh ethics also advocate greeting.. The Kazakh nation established the manner of greeting on the basis of Islam as greeting can also be observed and discussed in Kazakh proverbs: «Әдепті елдің баласы, алыстан сәлем береді» (the son of a civilized nation greets people from distance), «Адамдықтың белгісі – иіліп сәлем бергені» (Proverbs and sayings of Kazakh nation 2006) (the sign of humaneness is greeting). It has to be mentioned that the word “salem” in Kazakh was borrowed from Arabic and used in the same meaning. Another hadith states: «ما من مسلمين يلتقيان فيتصافحان الا غفر لهما قبل أن يفترقا an yuftariqa), “If two muslims greet each other by shaking hands, their sins will be forgiven before they depart”. This idea can be found in Kazakh saying «екі қолдап амандасса күнә төгіледі»[†] (if one greets with two hands, sins are dropped). It means the customs of greeting older people with two hands, greeting people when in the street were rooted from the above-mentioned hadiths.

A hadith of the Prophet states: الحياء من اليمان (al hayau minaliman)– shame is a sign of iman (Abu Daut, Ethics, 143) (belief in God) اذا لم تستحي فاصنع ما شئت (iza lam tastahi fasna ma shi'ta)– If you are shameless, do everything you want (Abu Daut, Ethics, 143). Thus, these hadiths underline the importance of shame. The central object here is shame which is the most beautiful feature of a person's character. Therefore Kazakhs say “iman juzdi” (having iman, faith) to refer to a person who is good-mannered, truthful and lenient. As for the word “imansizdik” (state of being faithless) it is understood as shamelessness, dishonesty. The word and concept of “iman” came through Islam that is Quran and hadiths. In Arabic the word “ایمان” (iman) means “to believe, to confide”. The above-mentioned hadiths' and Kazakh proverbs' central idea is shame, honesty. From this viewpoint they are similar in terms of content.

The word “amanat” implies will, testament, assignment, task. Amanat is considered to be valuables, properties of one person entrusted by someone else. One hadith says: “أد الأمانة إلى من ائتمنك و لا تخن من خانك” (adil amanata ila man

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