

AN ETHNOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF SACRED ELEMENTS IN ISLAM: THE EXAMPLE OF WATER

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Abstract

In this article, the relationship to the element of water in Islam, the importance of water in the performance of Islamic rituals and, in general, the importance of water in the whole life of a Muslim people and in his daily life is analyzed ethnologically.

Introduction

Islam is a monotheistic religion that appeared in the Arabian Peninsula at the beginning of the 7th century AD. Nowadays, about 1 billion 800 million Muslims live in 125 countries of the world¹. Most of the populations of 28 countries of the world (85-90%) are Muslims who believe in Islam². One of these country is the Republic of Uzbekistan, according to the number of believers, 89% of the country's population are Muslims³. Islamic traditions have been the basis of local culture for centuries among the inhabitants of the Fergana Valley, which is considered the most densely populated region of Uzbekistan, and even today, in order to understand the religion and its beliefs and traditions the inhabitants of the valley use Islam in local lifestyle and traditions. When we approach to the topic of the research, the Qur'an, the holy book of Islam, as well as hadiths and Islamic jurisprudence, serve as a source basis for the study of the relationship to water in Islam.

Beliefs related to the water in Islam. Water is closely connected with human life and is a very important natural product, its cleansing, purifying and life-giving properties are expressed in many religions and heavenly programs⁴. We can see a number of views and instructions in the Islamic religion about it⁵. Particularly, the holy book of Islam - the Qur'an and many instructions given in the hadiths narrated by the Prophet Muhammad sollallohu alayhi vassallam are among them. The study of these sources shows that in Islam, water is the primary element in the creation of all existence, in the creation of life. In this regard, it is mentioned in

1 www.pewresearch.org // Why muslims are the world's fastest-growing religious group. April 6, 2017.

2 Алексеев И. Л., Арапов Д. Ю. Ислам. – М. : Большая российская энциклопедия, 2008. – С. 741.

3 www.state.gov // U.S. Department of State. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. International Religious Freedom Report 2010. November 17, 2010.

4 Авесто // А. Маҳкам таржимаси. – Т.: Шарк, 2001; Қуръони Карим (маънолар таржимаси). // А. Мансур таржимаси. – Т., 2013.; Библия. – Москва: Российское Библийское Общество, 2006; Мифы народов мира. – М.: Советская Энциклопедия, 1987; Филатова С. В. Магия воды. Чудесные исцеления. – М. : Рипол классик, 2012.

5 Қуръони Карим (маънолар таржимаси). // А. Мансур таржимаси. – Т., 2013.; Абу Абдуллох Муҳаммад ибн Исмоил ал-Бухорий. Ал-Жоми ас-Саҳих. // Зокиржон Исмоил таржимаси. – Т.: Қомуслар бош таҳририяти, 1991; Абул Ихлос Ҳасан ал-Вафойи Шурунбиллоий, Абу Зайд Шиблий. Нурул Изох. –Т.: Мовароннахр, 2003.

the Surah Nur, ayat 45 of the Qur'an that "Allah created all living things from water. Among them there are those who walk on their bellies, those who walk on two legs, and those who walk on all fours. Allah creates what He wills. Indeed, Allah is able to do everything!⁶" Moreover, in the Surah Anbiyya, ayat 30 of the Qur'an it is mentioned that "Have not those who disbelieve seen that the heavens and the earth were (in the beginning) dissected, then We split them open and created all living things from water?! Do they still not believe?⁷" In this ayat, it is reported that the basis of all living beings in this living world is water, and water is not only the source of life, but life itself. Through the two ayat that mentioned above it can be understood that in Islam, water and the creation of life are stand in a central place. We can find many more examples in the Holy Qur'an that confirm our opinion. In particular, in Surah Hud, ayat 7 it is mentioned that "He is the One Who created the heavens and the earth in six Days – and His Throne was upon the waters - in order to test which of you is best in deeds"⁸. It can be concluded from this that water existed as a substance when there was no substance in the whole existence. So, according to Islamic views, water is a primary element that has existed in existence forever and is considered the main symbol of the existence of life. Furthermore, in the above verse, water is expounded as a symbol of true divine purity. Because Allah's Arshi, i.e. Throne, is shown as neither the sky nor any space, but water. According to the Islamic faith, the Arshi (throne) of God, who is Subhanallah ("Allah is free from all faults and defects"), must be in the most pure place. Here, the element of water is meant as the most holy and pure place worthy of God's Throne.

According to Islamic beliefs, water is considered the greatest blessing, a symbol of wealth and happiness. Even paradise which is a dream for every Muslim, consists of gushing waters and rivers. In the Qur'an, which is the basis of Islamic beliefs, the words like rivers with fresh water and gushing streams are used in many places to show how good a place heaven is to live and stay forever. Particularly, in Muhammad Surah, ayat 15 it is said that "The description of the Paradise promised to the righteous is that in it are rivers of fresh water, rivers of milk that never changes in taste, rivers of wine delicious to drink, and rivers of pure honey⁹." According to Islamic beliefs, even for God water is the greatest blessing too and is the greatest gift given by Him to humanity. It is understood by the fact that he chose the Kawsar pool (or river) in Paradise as a gift to his beloved prophet Muhammad (pbuh). The word "Kawsar" means "abundance", and according to interpretations and hadiths, the water of Kawsar is sweeter than honey, whiter than snow and milk, and whoever drinks from it will not be thirsty forever. It is also prophesied that in the Judgement Day, believers and Muslims who will be granted paradise will drink from this Kawsar water. Surah Kawsar is the shortest surah of the Qur'an and consists of 3 ayats¹⁰. In the Surah, Muhammad (pbuh) is asked to pray and make a sacrifice in gratitude for the

6 Qur'oni Karim (ma'nolar tarjimasi). // A. Mansur tarjimasi. – T., 2013. – B. 233.

7 Qur'oni Karim (ma'nolar tarjimasi). // A. Mansur tarjimasi. – T., 2013. – B. 211.

8 Qur'oni Karim (ma'nolar tarjimasi). // A. Mansur tarjimasi. – T., 2013. – B. 136.

9 Qur'oni Karim (ma'nolar tarjimasi). // A. Mansur tarjimasi. – T., 2013. – B. 348.

10 Islom ensiklopediyasi. /Z. Husniddinov tahriri ostida. –T.: "O'zbekiston milliy ensiklopediyasi" Davlat ilmiy nashriyoti, 2004. –B. 160.

blessing of "Hawzi Kawsar" that Allah has given him. And envious enemies are reminded that they are deprived of such blessings.

Dualism in the Islamic faith is also characteristic of views related to water, where water is interpreted not only as a source of pleasure and life, but also as a means of punishing and tormenting sinners. In particular, it is said in the descriptions of Hell in the Qur'an: "So, as for disbelievers, garments of Fire will be cut out for them and boiling water will be poured over their heads, melting whatever is in their bellies, along with their skin"(Surah Hajj, ayats 19-20)¹¹. In Surah Duhan, it is said: "Take hold of him (the sinner) and drag him to the middle of Hell, then pour boiling water over his head - punishment!¹²" It can be seen from the information above, one of the main forms of tormenting sinners in hell is punishment with boiling water. This shows that in Islam, water can be interpreted as a means of punishing and tormenting sinners. This dualistic view of water in Islamic religious views that water is not only a symbol of life-giving, but also a symbol of destruction, and it can be seen in the following verses of the Qur'an. According to It, God sends Noah as a prophet to call people to faith, but people do not believe his words and become sinners for God. Then God will send a "deluge of water" on unbelieving humanity and completely wipe out all humans from the surface of the Earth except for a few dozen people who followed Noah (note: here the water that gave life to all mankind is now wiping out all mankind). This is what the Qur'an says about this: "So they made him a liar. Then We saved him and those who were with him (believed in him) in the ship, and drowned those who denied Our revelations. Because they (their heart) were a blind¹³. There is another Qur'anic incident that the dualism related to water is reflected more clearly. According to it, God sent Prophet Moses to Egypt to release his beloved people from the oppression of the Egyptians, but Pharaoh did not allow it. After that, Allah sent many punishments to Egypt. Finally Pharaoh agrees. But they want to chase Moses and his people and tried to destroy them. However, God saved the people of Moses and destroyed Pharaoh and his army by drowning them in the water and said that "Remember that We divided the sea and saved you and drowned Pharaoh's men before your eyes¹⁴." In this case, water is a symbol of destruction and suffering for sinners and oppressors, and it is interpreted as a symbol of salvation and life for the oppressed. Therefore, the study of these fundamental Islamic sources shows that, according to Islamic religious views, water is a symbol of life, happiness, salvation and wealth, and at the same time a symbol of pain, destruction and punishment.

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¹¹ Qur'oni Karim (ma'nolar tarjimasi). // A. Mansur tarjimasi. – T., 2013. – B. 290.

¹² Qur'oni Karim (ma'nolar tarjimasi). // A. Mansur tarjimasi. – T., 2013. – B. 462.

¹³ Qur'oni Karim (ma'nolar tarjimasi). // A. Mansur tarjimasi. – T., 2013. – B. 123.

¹⁴ Qur'oni Karim (ma'nolar tarjimasi). // A. Mansur tarjimasi. – T., 2013. – B. 7.

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