

## ANALYSIS OF RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS, CEREMONIES AND CUSTOMS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF ZOROASTRIAN PRINCIPLES

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**Abstract:** *The article talks about the fact that Avesta values are a historical heritage that confirms the national characteristics of our people. In particular, the author emphasizes that the ideas expressed in Avesta express ancient history, political and daily life, lifestyle, religious and world beliefs, customs and traditions, philosophical and scientific thinking, and knowledge of nature and society of our ancestors.*

**Keywords:** *Avesta, Zoroastrianism, custom, tradition, ritual, prayer, philosophy, religion, succession.*

Zoroastrians tried to preserve their customs and traditions for many centuries. This philosophical and religious teaching has its followers for thousands of years. As a result of the spread of Islam to the countries of Central Asia, and especially in many Eastern countries, and the constant persecution of Zoroastrians, they lived in a closed community, and the upper class of the society, the priests, strictly monitored the correctness of Zoroastrian customs and rituals. These customs and traditions, despite the difficult conditions of life, helped Zoroastrians to feel themselves as a whole system, a member of a social group of people who could triumph over evil. The formation of a certain ethnic group takes place over a long historical period; beginning with the time of collecting and gathering of mankind, it continues during the period of emergence and formation of forms of social consciousness, such as mythology, religion, philosophy, ethics, which require mastering and knowledge of nature and a long and complex historical development. On the other hand, the historical evolution of human civilization cannot be imagined without the interaction and communication of various ethnocultural systems, within the framework of which extraordinary, complex diffusion and integration processes took place. These processes helped unite ethnic groups, despite differences in language and culture. In addition, the process of understanding the place of man in the universe in a mythological, religious-philosophical way took place, this process was reflected in customs, traditions and ceremonies related to the level of development of each ethnic group. It is through the mixing of different ethnic groups and their visions of the world and man, traditions, customs and rituals that a single vision of the world and man, a common and at the same time a single worldview, sense of the world was created.<sup>21</sup>

Zoroastrians' religious visions constitute a systematic social structure. Its composition consists of a complex hierarchy and reflects specific elements such as folk beliefs, magic and demonology. For example, the fear of giants (demons) has been

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<sup>21</sup> G. Mahmudova. Philosophical essence of Avesta. Tashkent, "NOSHIR", 2015, p. 226.

passed down from generation to generation; and to overcome them, Zoroastrians recited special prayers and wore ancestral amulets to protect themselves and their families from demons, misfortune and disease.

In Zoroastrianism, "clean" and "dirty" objects, animals, insects, plants and even people are classified. As G. Mahmudova noted: "Videvdod has developed a whole system of purification, in which what and who is to be purified, where and how it should be purified, the rules of purification are listed in detail, compensation for correct purification and punishments for violating the ritual are indicated. It should be emphasized that the Avesta speaks not only about cleaning things, physical purification - "clean", "not being dirty", but about spiritual and moral purification, which acquires a sacred meaning in all cases, characteristic of religious ceremonies."<sup>22</sup>

According to Zoroastrian religious and philosophical teachings, "pure" things include people, animals (especially dogs, hedgehogs, cows, sheep), and plants. From the day of birth to the day of their death, Zoroastrians are required to undergo a ritual of purification and observe absolute purity. Touching "dirty" things is equated with sin. Fire, water, and earth were especially revered by Zoroastrians. It was forbidden to pour water without washing hands, and to go out in the rain, because it meant polluting the land and water. It is forbidden to eat meat, unless the blood has been removed from it first. Strict rules of observance of absolute purity did not allow Zoroastrians to eat in the presence of representatives of other religions during meals. Zoroastrians never bathed in a pool in the presence of other religions. Burning garbage was forbidden, because fire was always sacred to Zoroastrians. Dry, clean wood was used to make fire in the home hearth; when cooking, not a single drop of water should fall on the fire.

Each house has a special room for garbage and dirty things; after the room was filled to a certain level, a specially prepared solution was poured into it, and the waste was discharged to the ground through a special drain.

rites of initiation or confirmation were carried out - introduced teenagers to the Zoroastrian religion.

Initiation involved a program of wearing the sacred kushti belt, which male and female Zoroastrians were required to wear throughout their lives. Men wore the sacred dress for Zoroastrians. Both the kushti and the dress symbolized communion with the faith of one's community, a readiness to follow the precepts of the Avesta and complete submission to one's God, Ahura Mazda.

Many Zoroastrian rites were associated with the seasons and were seasonal. According to the ancient Zoroastrian calendar, they were performed in conjunction with religious reigns and festivals.

In the Zoroastrian religion, seven festivals should be celebrated annually in honor of Ahura Mazda, and six in honor of Ameshaspenta. According to Zoroastrian legends, these holidays were founded by the prophet Zoroastrian.

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<sup>22</sup> G. Mahmudova. Philosophical essence of Avesta. Tashkent, "NOSHIR", 2015, p. 178.

Nowruz was considered the most solemn and respected holiday of Zoroastrians in ancient times, even today. The sixth gahanbar, or commemoration of the spirits of ancestors, begins five days before Nowruz. Since there are 360 days in the Zoroastrian calendar, the remaining five days before the beginning of the new year are dedicated to praying in honor of the ancestral spirits.

Zoroastrians look forward to the last day of the sixth gahanbar with special impatience, the coming of a new day traditionally means the victory of justice and the beginning of a new life.

Although according to Zoroastrian tradition, Nowruz is associated with the name Zarathustra, some scholars believe that this holiday has been known since ancient times and was a symbol of flowering and fertility. According to M. Boyce, the Zoroastrians revived this ritual and thus glorified Asha Vakhishta and fire.

The celebration of Nowruz was held very solemnly and somewhat mysteriously. During the holiday, Zoroastrians dressed in their best clothes and gathered around the festive table. A collection of prayers from the Avesta is placed on it. The festive table is decorated with various dishes - kandakors, sweets.<sup>23</sup>

Nowadays, in the modern Karakalpak society, Navruz goja is prepared on March 21, the Navruz holiday. Navruz goja is cooked from seven different types of grain crops. After drinking Navruz goja, every person enters the new year, that is, the second age begins. There are 7 different grain crops used in making goja - oats, wheat, barley, millet, rice, mung beans and beans.<sup>24</sup>

In addition to the above, you can find juo'eri gürtik, bylamyq, karma, sumalak, zaghara, iyjan, qaoyñ qaq, ayran and other foods and dishes on the Navruz table of today's Karakalpaks.

In ancient times, candles were considered a necessary attribute of welcoming Navruz holiday. They were considered a symbol of sacred memory.

The celebration continued at home and outside the home. Since fire is considered a symbol of purification, bonfires were lit on the streets from the thorns of plants growing in the desert, and young people rode over them, this act meant purification from "impurity".

In the Avesta, farming is shown to be preferable to praying 3,000 times and sacrificing 100 animals. "Sowing crops means destroying the evil in the land, because when the grain is planted, the giants sweat, when the mill appears, the giants are confused, when the flour appears, the giants lose themselves, and when the bread appears, the giants start shouting with all their fear."

Above we tried to analyze the religious holidays, rituals and traditions considered common to Zoroastrians. But some of these events were of a family nature. For example, they include the process of marriage. According to the general program,

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<sup>23</sup> Cultivation from Karakalpakstan from the 19th century to the 21st century. Nökis, Karakalpakstan, 2003. - B. 136.

<sup>24</sup> Snesarev G.P. Pre-Muslim ceremonies and customs of Khorezm people. Urganch, publishing department of UrDU. 2018. – B. 211.

Zoroastrian men are usually married between the ages of 25 and 30, and women between the ages of 14 and 19. Sometimes, 15-year-old boys married girls as young as 12; sometimes 60-year-old widowers married 15-year-old girls. Some families related by kinship or friendship had their children married off at the age of two.

A situation similar to this was found in ancient Karakalpaks, but Karakalpaks married their children by "biting off their ears" from the cradle. We can see this in Karakalpak folklore. But this custom is almost not found in modern Karakalpak society.

However, as G. Mahmudova rightly pointed out: "Zoroastrianism is the first major meta-ethnic faith in the world, which reflects most of the layers of the spiritual life of the peoples of the Middle and Middle East." Cults, customs, traditions and ceremonies are so firmly rooted in the minds of the population of a certain region and various ethnic groups that, despite the changes in the human spiritual constitution in later periods, the consciousness of these ethnic groups and peoples preserves its unifying syncretism, at the same time has made changes to this spiritual wealth".<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> G. Mahmudova. Philosophical essence of Avesta. Tashkent, "NOSHIR", 2015, p. 227.

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