

Cosmogonic Views Of The Uzbek People (Based On The Example Of Southern Uzbekistan)

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Abstract: In this article, based on available sources, literature and field materials, traces of ancient beliefs in the national cosmogonic views of the Uzbek people are highlighted.

Key words: Sky, moon, sun, star, agriculture, animal husbandry, custom, ritual, traditions.

In the sayings performed during magical practices related to the beliefs and rituals of farmers in the oasis of Southern Uzbekistan concerning the movement of the sky and planets, the Sun, Moon, and Stars are mentioned. Since ancient times, our ancestors have regularly observed the position and movement of celestial bodies. They were well aware of the timing of seasonal changes and the zodiac constellations.

The practical experiences based on observing the movements of celestial bodies had significant importance in agriculture. Therefore, herders, farmers, and gardeners could predict the weather conditions by the movement of stars and the position of the sun and moon. For example, if the sun rises red in the morning, it indicates that the weather will worsen that day, with snow or rain, or if the Libra constellation appears above the horizon, it signals the beginning of summer [1:36-38]. During ethnographic research, it was observed that many elders in the region could accurately identify stars by name. They have also created various legends and myths about the movements of stars like the Big Dipper, the North Star, Libra, Sirius, Alcor, and others [2].

According to ethnological data, there are thirteen stars associated with the sun, and it moves through the boundaries of these stars throughout the year. Therefore, the names of the 12 months are related to these stars. Since the constellations of Scorpio and Serpent appear close to each other, the term for one of these is used in naming the months. The month related to these stars is called either Scorpio or Serpent. It is evident from the information provided by our informants that the farmers of the oasis observed the movements of celestial bodies with great interest [3].

At the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, the influence of Islam was quite strong among the inhabitants of the region. In such a context, people engaged in farming, herding, and gardening did not have a specific scientific understanding of the mysteries of the sky. People explained the causes of natural events and phenomena by attributing them to divine forces, spirits, and supernatural beings. They viewed celestial bodies with a special perspective, as if they were places of miracles. Thus, sometimes people considered celestial bodies as representations of deities and gods. Each of these deities had different characteristics and attitudes towards people, being perceived as either benevolent or malevolent. For example, the reddish planet Mars was considered a "god of war" that favors blood, while Venus, the closest and brightest planet to us, was symbolized as the "goddess of beauty." According to ancient Greek myths, the Milky Way in the sky was interpreted as the "milk" flowing from the breast of a celestial goddess [4:6.]. In Uzbek legends, however, the Milky Way is depicted as a mark left when the head of an imaginary hero touched the sky or as a trace of straw spilled from a cart [5:35-41.].

It is known that ancient astrologers also associated many phenomena occurring in the sky with the "will of God." Among our people, there existed mythological beliefs that each person on Earth has a star in the sky, and if one of the stars falls, the life of someone on Earth ends as well [6:39-43]. According to historical data, during the later stages of the development of clan-tribal relations, particularly during the matriarchal period, religion, with its various interpretations, greatly astonished humanity. People followed the path of worshiping the universe. During this period, agriculture also significantly developed. Ancient people believed that the reason for a bountiful harvest was connected to the celestial bodies or the blessings, mercy, and grace of the deities.

Despite the countless number of celestial bodies, it is observed that our ancestors paid more attention to seven of them. These include the Sun and six stars associated with it. Perhaps this is why the number "seven" has

been considered sacred in many cultures around the world [7.]. The renowned Russian ethnographer S.A. Tokarev, while studying the magical beliefs preserved in modern rituals and customs, mentions the belief in "lucky" and "unlucky" days, as well as "fortunate" and "unfortunate" numbers [8:9.]. Among the inhabitants of the Southern Uzbekistan region, there are also several beliefs and customs related to the number seven. For example, "according to the belief of the Uzbek people belonging to the Qongirat tribe, if crops are attacked by locusts, green worms, or flower worms, they would bake seven pieces of flatbread, capture three of these insects, and smear their mouths with soot oil. They believed that this would drive the pests away" [9:30.]. Many more examples of such superstitions can be provided.

When considering that each day of the week is associated with specific celestial bodies, it becomes clear that the seven days of the week are related to the names of seven planets. For instance, Monday is the day of the Moon, Tuesday is the day of Mars, Wednesday is the day of Mercury, Saturday is the day of Saturn, and Sunday is the day of the Sun. Additionally, myths about the seven layers of the sky and the seven layers of Earth are also widespread [4:7.].

People engaged in agriculture, animal husbandry, craftsmanship, and other trades speak of the unique characteristics and qualities of each of the seven days of the week. In the past, our ancestors observed the days of the week and the natural phenomena that occurred on those days, creating special "Hour Books" and "Weekly Books" that specified what activities could or could not be done on each day of the week [10:171-180].

One of these "weekly books" widely known among the people is a compilation based on the interpretation of Yusuf alayhissalam (peace be upon him). The village elders approached the ideas in these weekly guides based on their life observations and work experiences, identifying "good" and "bad" days. For example, Qobil Sofi, from the village of Chashka in Kumkurgan district, was well aware of the characteristics of the days of the week. He had 16 pairs of oxen for plowing and 30-40 hectares of land for sowing, where workers and relatives would work. He personally determined the days for plowing, seed sowing, and grain harvesting. If some people began working, he would say, "It is a good day of God, make an effort," or sometimes, "You have chosen an inauspicious day." If a worker ignored his advice, saying, "What would Qobil Sofi, a prophet, even know?" and sowed seeds regardless, the crop in that field would not prosper. People believed, "Qobil Sofi has jinns, they inform him." When Qobil Sofi would collect the harvest, it would be so abundant that it wouldn't fit in his storehouse, pits, or barn [11.].

According to the ancient beliefs of our people, it was considered permissible to travel east on the first day of the month, south on the third day, west on the fifth day, and north on the seventh day. The ancient nomadic Uzbek tribes, like the Qongirat, would avoid moving to new pastures on these days, believing that these days were "heavy" and that some misfortune might occur [9:35.].

Wise individuals could predict changes in the weather, such as snow, rain, heat, wind, hail, or showers, based on the changing seasons and lunar days. Each month had two inauspicious days, referred to as Qambar Tugali and Hulkar Tugali. Qambar Tugali occurred on the 23rd day of one month and the 21st of the next, and so on. Typically, these days were determined by the moon's eclipse. When the moon aligned between two specific stars, an eclipse would occur, indicating a change in the weather. The occurrence of good or bad weather was related to the rings that surrounded the moon, which could be hazy, bright, yellow, or red, and knowing how to read this shape was necessary. "If a ring appears around the moon, there is a likelihood of rain. The brighter the ring, the more likely it is to rain" [1:36]. A halo around the moon indicated a change in the weather, while a tilted moon signaled a cold spell during the month.

Hulkar Tugali usually fell on the 8th or 9th days of each month but could also occur on the 7th, 5th, 3rd, or 1st days of new months.

"On the 11th night of the month of Jad, the 9th night of Dalv, the 7th night of Hut, the 5th night of Hamal, the 3rd night of Savr, and the 1st night of Jawza, the Hulkar star sets simultaneously with the moon. On such nights, a natural event like rain or wind might occur. If it rains, it is considered a good omen; if there is a drought and a hot wind blows, it is seen as a bad omen" [9:36].

According to our informants, the Hulkar star consists of seven stars, three of which resemble scales. Hulkar may appear on the 9th, 11th, or 12th of each month. If the Hulkar star is not visible at the beginning of May, it indicates rainy days. If heavy rains occur after the star disappears from sight, it suggests that the year will be bountiful. When Hulkar begins to drift towards the horizon, it signals the start of hot days and the emergence

of vegetation. If the Hulkar star appears at dawn, it suggests that colder weather is expected soon [1:38-39]. Generally, signs of dust appear before a change in weather on the day of Hulkar Tugali [12.].

According to our elderly informants interested in nature's mysteries, Hulkar Tugali may sometimes appear one, two, three, or even half a day late.

Among the peoples of Central Asia, including the people of Kashkadarya, the odd days of the month were considered inauspicious and termed as "bad," "unlucky," or "Tugali" days. In contrast, the ancient Chaldeans followed the opposite belief. They feared starting any benevolent work on the 2nd, 4th, 6th, or 20th days of the month, believing that these days belonged to evil spirits and that something bad might occur on those days [13:9]. Thus, it is clear that among the world's peoples, the tradition of designating "good" and "bad" days related to celestial bodies varies.

In conclusion, although superstitions and customs related to celestial bodies among the inhabitants of the Southern Uzbekistan oasis could not fully meet the practical needs of people, they played an essential role in strengthening faith, particularly the belief in goodness. Indeed, such beliefs carried within them a desire to protect nature, to guard against various calamities, and to foster a love for work. Thus, it is particularly noteworthy that each wisdom, each narrative, and each custom of our ancestors expressed a yearning for goodness.

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