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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» (Ma min muslimayni yaltaqiani fa yatasafahani illa gufira lahuma qabla 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

itamanaka ua la tahun man hanaka) - «Саған сенім білдіргеннің аманатын тапсыр. Біреу саған қиянат істеген болса, сен оған қиянат істеме» (Abu Daut, Buyug; 81 (3534) (*Pass the amanat of a person who confided in you. Do not commit khianat (treating amanat dishonestly) even if you suffered from it.*). Thus, amanat is urged to be accomplished properly. Kazakhs also have always paid a paramount attention to accomplishing amanat and felt indebted until it is done. The proverbs as «Біреу берсе аманат, оған қылма қиянат» (*if someone entrusted you something, do not betray him*); «Біреуден алған аманат, берсең жақсы – саламат» (O. Turmanjanov) (*it is a decent action if you handed over the entrusted amanat*) serve as evidence to that. The word amanat give the same meaning both in Arabic and Kazakh.

One of noble features of a human is generosity. It is intrinsic only to a person who tends to help and do good things to people. In regard, such hadiths as «اليد العليا خير من اليد السفلى» (alyadul'ulia hayrummin alyadissuffla) - «Берген қол алған қолдан жақсы» (Muslim, Zakat, 97) (giving hand is better than a taking hand), «لا توكي فيكي «عليك» (la tuki fayuka álayki) - «Дорбаңның аузын байлама, сенің ризығың да байланады» (Buhari, Zakat, 21) (do not keep your sack shut or you will restrict your earnings) call on being generous. Also, we have proverbs like «Сұрағаннан берген артық» (*better giving than taking*), «Жомарт дос көбейтеді, сараң мал көбейтеді» (*the generous makes many friends, the greedy makes wealth*).

Islam also covers the issue of respecting elder people. The Kazakhs paid much attention to it as well. For example, our proverb “Үлкенге құрмет, кішіге ізет” (respect elders and esteem younger people) is likely to have been rooted from our revered Prophet’s hadith “من لم يرحم صغيرنا و يعرف حق كبيرنا فليس منا ا” (man lam yarham sagirana ua ya’rif haqqa kabirana falaysa minna) – those who don’t feel compassion to younger and don’t respect elder is not one of us (Abu Daut, Sunan Abi Daut, 4943).

Contentment is a basic sign and core element of ethical norms. A person who is always content will live in prosperity forever. The prophet’s hadith states: “قد أفلح من أسلم و رزق كفافا و قنعه الله بما آتاه” (qad aflaha man aslama ua razaqa kafafan qanaáhu Allahu bima atahu)– «Кім мұсылмандықты ұстап, ризығы жеткілікті болып, Аллаһ тағаланың берген барына қанағат емсе, құтылғаны» (Muslim, Zakat, 125) (the person who adopted Islam and was content with what Allah had given to him would get freed). In this regard our nation has many concluding phrases summarized as a result of life experience. The sayings like «Қанағат қарын тойғызады, қанағатсыз жалғыз атын сойғызады» (*contentment gives satisfaction, discontent person slaughters his last cattle*), «Қанағат қылсаң, қарның тоқ» (J. Malaysayrin 2005) (*you feel satisfied, if you are content*) depict the reality. Patience is undoubtedly evaluated highly from the point of view of ethics, humbleness. There are many hadiths calling on being patient. A hadith follows: “الصبر نصف الايمان” (assabru nisful iman)- «Сабырлылық – имандылықтың жартысы» (Bayhaqi, Ethics, 473) (patience is a half of iman (faith)). Kazakh people also say: “Біреу жәбір емсе, сен сабыр ет” (be patient, if someone offends you), *Сабырлы жетер мұратқа, сабырсыз қалар ұятқа» (Patient person reaches his goal, but impatient one puts himself in awkward position), «Сабыр түбі сары алтын» (Patience leads to success)(A.Nisanali 2004). Such proverbs seem to have originated from the Prophet’s hadith, as the word “sabir” (patience) is used in the same meaning both in Arabic and Kazakh.*

The word “tauekel” is derived from the Arabic word «توكل» (tauakkul). It is needed before doing something in order to reach the aim. Islam instructs to start a work with tauakkul (recumbance). The Quran and Hadiths speak about it very much. Likewise, there are a lot of sayings in Kazakh language stock. For example, “Нартәуекел – ер ісі” (*Tauakkul (recumbance, hope) is a true man’s action*), “Тәуекел нар жығады” (*Tauakkul overcomes all the hardships*), “Тәуекелдің кемесі суға бамнас” (J.K.Salihuly)(*Journey started with tauakkul will end successfully*). The Kazakhs hoped and asked for the positive result from Allah before starting doing something. The prophet’s hadiths state the following regarding it: «لو أنكم تتوكلون على الله حق توكله لرزقكم كما يرزق الطير» (lau annakum tatauakkaluna ála Allahi haqqa tauakkaluhi larazaqakum kama yarzuqut taira)- “Егер сендер Аллаһ тағалаға шын көңілмен тәуекел етсеңдер, құстарды ризықтандырғаны сияқты, сендерді де молынан ризықтандырады (Tirmizi, Zuhd, 33) (If you place reliance in Allah sincerely, Allah will grant you your earnings like birds are granted their share).

One Kazakh proverb goes as “Көріі ақысы Тәңір ақысы” (Obligations before your neighbor are to be fulfilled like obligations before the God). As well Islamic fundamentals underline the importance of good neighborhood and urges Muslims to take it as a guideline. Neighbor’s obligations are compared to obligations before the God. Hadiths

follow: *من كان يؤمن بالله و اليوم الآخر فليحسن الى جاره* (man kana yu'minu billahi ua bilyeumil ahiri falyuhsin lijarihi) *Кімде-кім Аллах тағалаға және ақырет күніне иман келтірсе, көршісіне жақсылық істесін* (Muslim, Iman, 77); (He who believes in Allah and hereafter must help neighbors) *ليس المؤمن الذي يشبع و جاره جائع* (laysal mu'minullazi yashbau' ua jaruhu jai'un)- *Көршісі аш болып, өзі тоқ жатқан кісі мұмин емес*» (Buhari, Mustadrak, IV, 167) (he who is full while his neighbor is hungry is not a Muslim). Taking this hadith as a foundation our nation said: *“Сапарға шықпас бұрын серігіңді сайла, үй салмас бұрын көршіңді ойла”* (prepare your partner before traveling, think of your neighbor before building a house). The Kazakhs always treated neighbors with whom shared walls, fences with a care and respect. There are such appropriate proverbs as: *«Көршіңнің ала жібін аттама»* (do not offend your neighbor), *«Көрші ақысы – Тәңір ақысы»* (Obligations before your neighbor are to be fulfilled like obligations before the God), *«Үй сатып алма, көрші сатып ал»* (Don't buy a house, but find a good neighbor), (Keykin Jardem). So, such proverbs seem to have rooted from the Prophet's hadiths.

Justness is one of the most appreciated sides of a human's personality and sign of humaneness. This feature of people's character is expressed in the proverb *“Тура биде туған жоқ, туғанды биде иман жоқ”* (A just judge has no relatives (is not corrupt), corrupt judge has no iman (faith in God)). In nation's notion struggle for the sake of justice is deemed to be the fight in the name of humaneness. Proverbs like *“Әділдіктің белгісі біле тұра бұрмаған, жақсы адамның белгісі өткен істі қумаған”* (the sign of justice is not rigging consciously, sign of a decent person is not renovating old hostilities) emphasize that a judge must treat people and situation rationally without prejudices. As for the Prophet's hadiths, they regard this issue as follows: *“ان المقسطين عند الله على منابر من نور”* (innal muqsitina i'nda Allahi ala manabirin min nuril lazina ya'diluna fi hukmihim ua ahlihim ua ma uallu)- *“Әділдік жасағандар Аллаһтың қабатында нұрдан жасалған мінберлердің үстінде болады»* (Muslim, Imara, 18) (those who are just will stand on the tribunes made of beams in front of Allah). Such hadiths and proverbs call people on being just and share the central idea.

We have examined how the Prophet's hadiths occur in Kazakh proverbs and sayings, their manifestation according to the semantic meaning. Particularly investigation focused on hadiths and proverbs with religious content. However, the Prophet's hadiths can be traced also in semantic level when they occur figuratively. For example, if our proverb goes as *“Басқа бәле тілден”* (The tongue causes trouble), a hadith states: *«أكثر خطايا ابن آدم»* (aksaru hataya ibn adama min lisanihī), *“Адам баласының көп қателесетіні – тілінің кесірінен”* (Haysami, Majmauz Zauaid, 302) (A human being makes many mistakes because of his tongue). A hadith states: *قل الحق و ان كان مرا* (qul alhaqqa ua in kana murran) - *“Шындықты ащы болса да айт* (Ajłuni, Kassshful hafa, 130) (tell the truth regardless of how bitter it is), likewise, there is a Kazakh proverb *«Шындықты ащы болса да айт»* (tell the truth regardless of how bitter it is) which iterates the meaning. For example Kazakhs say: *«Әркім сүйгенінің құлы»* (Everyone is a slave of his/her beloved) and hadith states: *«المرء مع من أحب»* (al-marua maā man ahabbahu) which means «everyone is together with his beloved» (Buhari, Ethics, 96). There is also a saying *«Көп күлген бір жылайды»* (he who laughs much will cry once) and hadith which says: *“من أذنب و هو يضحك دخل النار و هو لا تكثروا”* (man aznaba ua hua yadhaku dhalan nara ua hua yabki)- *“Күліп тұрып күнә істеген, жылап тұрып тозаққа кіреді”* (Abu Nayim al-Asbahani) (he who commits sins laughing will be cast in hell crying); *لا تكثروا الضحك فان كثرة الضحك تميمت القلب* (la tuksirud dihka fainna rasratu addihki tumit alqalba) *“Шектен тыс күлмеңдер. Себебі, көп күлу жүректі өлтіреді»* (Abu Bakr Ahmad al-Bayhaqi) (Do not laugh too much, laughing excessively will kill your heart (make it indifferent)). One proverb states: *“Ерлік білекте емес, жүректе”* (Keykin Jardem) (Bravery is not measured by power of the body, it is within the heart) and similar hadith says: *“ليس الشديد بالصرعة انما”* (laysa ash-shadidu bissurati innama ash-shadidu allazi yamluku nafsahu indal gadab) - *Күш – білек күшімен емес, ақиқат күш ащы кезінде өз нәпсісін ұстай білгені* (Buhari, Ethics, 76) (Power is not in the strength of arms, but the real strength is containing anger when fury comes). Kazakhs say: *“Ағайын – ағайынның айнасы”* (Keykin Jardem) which is corresponding with the following hadith: *“المؤمن مرآة أخيه”* (almuminu miratu ahihi) - *Мұсылман – бауырының айнасы* (Abu Daut, Ethics, 49) (A Muslim is like a mirror for his brother). The Kazakhs say: *“Басың аман болсын десең, тіліңді тый”* (If you want to stay healthy and safe, mind your language) and the hadith follows as: *“من أراد أن يسلم فليحفظ لسانه”* (man arada an yuslima falyahfaz lisanahu) - *Кім амандықта болуды қаласа, тілін тыйсын* (Daylami H. 5860) (He/she who wants to be safe and sound should watch his language); another hadith states: *“احفظ لسانك!”* (ihfaz lisanak) - *Тіліңді сақта, тый!* (Control what you speak, be careful with your language). The Kazakh proverb: *“Ұят – ізгіліктің ұясы”* (Shame is core of kindness), hadith: *“الحياء لا يأتي الا بخير”* (alhayau la yati illa bihayr) - *“Ұялу тек жақсылыққа алып келеді”* (Buhari,

Ethics, 77) (Shame brings about only good outcome). The Kazakhs have such a proverb as: “*Біреуге өлім тілегенше, өзіңе өмір тіле*” (Keykin Jardem:) (Wish life for yourself instead of wishing death for somebody), hadith: “*لا تَتَمَنَّوْا الْمَوْتَ لِتَمْنِيَاتٍ*” (la tatamannau almauta lit tamniat) – “*Өзгеге өлім тілемеңдер және оны көксемеңдер*” (Al-Munziri, At-Targib ua at-Tarhib, 77) (do not wish death to other people). So, one can see that the examined proverbs and hadiths are in harmony in terms of content and share an idea. Although these facts cannot act as an undoubted proof to the fact that Kazakh proverbs took their roots from hadiths, it is possible to trace them through the words borrowed from Arabic.

Also, there is the category of Kazakh proverbs which implies that they took the idea from hadiths. The reason we assume they took the idea from hadiths is that those proverbs and sayings have religious implications or shade and they align with some points of sharia (Islamic law). For instance, hadith goes: “*اِكْرَاهِيْكَ، فَاِنَّ الْكِبْرَ وَالْجَبْنَ نَالِيَانِ*” (iyuakum ual kaziba fa inna alkaziba mujanibu lil iman) – “*Өтіріктен сақтан. Себебі өтірік пен иман бір жерде болмайды*” (Ahmed, Ibn Hanbal) (beware of lie, because lie and iman cannot be in one place) and our proverb states: “*Өтірікшіді иман жоқ*” (A liar has no iman). A hadith says: “*لا يَنْظُرُ اللهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِلَى مَنْ جَرَّ اِزَارَهُ بِطَرَا*” (la yanzuru Allahu yaumal qiamati ila man jarra izarahu bataran)– “*Тәкаппарлығынан киімінің етегін жерге сүйретіп жүргендерге Аллах қиямет күні назарын салмас*” (Buhari, Libas, 1, 5; Muslim, Libas, 43) (*those who draggle their clothes out of arrogance will not be granted Allah’s attention in hereafter*), Kazakhs say: “*Тәкаппарды Тәңір сүймес*” (Keykin Jardem) (The arrogant person is despised by Allah). Our prophet also paid attention to social life. In one of the hadiths relating to this it is said: “*ان الله تجوز عن امتي الخطأ والنسيان وما استكروها عليه*” (inna Allaha tajuzu an ummati alhata ua an nisyan ua ma istakruhu alayhi)– “*Аллаһ тағала менің үмбетімнен қате, жаңылыс және мәжбүрлікпен жасағандардың жазасын кешірген*” (Ibn Maja) (Indeed Allah does not punish my followers for what they have done by mistake, confusing or being compelled) and Kazakh proverb follows: “*Жаңылысқанға жаза жоқ*” (There is no punishment for the mistaken people).

Another hadith says: “*الضيافة ثلاثة أيام*” (ad diafatu salasatu ayuam) – “*Қонақ – үш күн*” (Buhari, Ethics, 31) (Guest is welcome three days). The next proverb follows: “*Үш күнге дейін қонақ құт*” (for three days is a guest treated). Our prophet said in another hadith: “*يَدُ اللهِ عَلَى الْجَمَاعَةِ*” (yadullahi ala aljamaati) – “*Аллаһтың қолы (жәрдемі) жамағатпен (көпшілікпен) бірге*” (Nasai, Sahih an-Nasai, 4032) (Allah’s help finds jamaat (community)). Having digested such a religious edification our nation summed up as: “*Көп қайда болса, Құдай сонда*” (Keykin Jardem) (The God is there where the community is). A hadith says: “*السفر قطعة من العذاب*” (as safaru qitatu min alazab) – “*Жолаушылық – азаптың бір бөлшегі*” (Buhari, Umra, 19) (travelling is a part of suffering). The Kazakhs also compared travelling to suffering with a saying: “*Жол азабы – көр азабы*” (travel suffering is like suffering in wooden coat) (Keykin Jardem).

2. Conclusion

We have examined the frequently encountered shared ideas of the Prophet's hadiths and Kazakh proverbs and sayings, manifestation of hadiths as folk wisdom. So, having claimed that the aforementioned hadiths and proverbs share ideas and concepts, we can come up with the conclusion that those proverbs took their roots from the hadiths.

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