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## WRITTEN AND ORAL EVIDENCE OF NATURAL PHENOMENA IN AZERBAIJANI FOLKLORE

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Natural phenomena such as floods, earthquakes and lightning were understood by people in a mythological sense in the primitive worldview, and the causes of their occurrence are linked to divine existence. People's views on these terrible natural phenomena have been preserved in written and oral texts and have taken an important place in Azerbaijani folklore. In this paper the author has researched and analysed evidence of formidable natural phenomena in folk art.

**Keywords:** natural phenomena, flood, earthquake, lightning, proverb, puzzle.

## ПИСЬМЕННЫЕ И УСТНЫЕ СВИДЕТЕЛЬСТВА О ПРИРОДНЫХ ЯВЛЕНИЯХ В АЗЕРБАЙДЖАНСКОМ ФОЛЬКЛОРЕ

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Такие природные явления, как наводнения, землетрясения, молнии понимались древними людьми в мифологическом смысле, а причины их возникновения объяснялись в религиозном контексте. Народные взгляды на эти страшные явления природы сохранились в письменных текстах и устных преданиях, заняв важное место в азербайджанском фольклоре. В данной статье автор исследовал и проанализировал свидетельства о грозных природных явлениях в народном творчестве.

**Ключевые слова:** природные явления, наводнение, землетрясение, молния, пословица, загадка.

It is known that human being has always tried to understand and change nature as a continuation of matter. Even thousands of years before the invention of writing, when scientific understanding was simple, lightning, floods and earthquakes, which were terrible natural phenomena, terrified people.

When the genius of Azerbaijani astrologist Nasireddin Tusi built an observatory in Maragha in 1259 the Mongol Khan Hulaki Khan asked: “To which kind of benefits will a large amount of money be spent to build an observatory?”. The great scientist answered this question: “People will prevent a natural event by observing celestial bodies in advance” [6, s. 11]. As results of man’s helplessness in front of nature the terrible earthquakes which brought great disasters to humanity occurred in the following cities: in 1047 in Tabriz, in 1139 in Ganja, in Tabriz again in the beginning of the 19th century, in Shamakhi in 1859, in 1902, in 2023 in Turkey’s Kahramanmaraş, Gaziantep, Diyarbakir, Adana, Sanli Urfa and others. Migrant poet Heyran Hanım wrote about the Tabriz earthquake:

*Oldu ya rəbb, həlak insanlar,  
Suvarıb torpağı qara qanlar,  
Oldu çöllər cavanlara mədfən  
Çoxlarına nə qüsl var, nə kəfən,  
Sinəsi dağlı, gözləri giryən,  
Minlərlə ana edər əfğan .*

(It happened, my God, it ruined people,  
Black blood watered the land,  
Deserts are a burial place for young people.  
Most of them have no ghusl, no shroud,  
His heart is aching, his eyes are piercing,  
Mother cries in thousands) [4, s. 211].

The verses he describes are terrifying. We can bring any number of such examples from the lived history.

The earthquake that occurred in Iran in 1990 was highlighted in the folklore materials collected from the territory of Azerbaijanian Sheki by the employees of the Folklore and Handicrafts Department (Sheki Regional Scientific Center of Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences). Among many examples analysed in the book “Goynuk Mahali” by Kamil Adishirinov [1], the leading researcher of the Folklore and Handicrafts Department, the anecdote about the concept of “earthquake” draws

our attention. The researcher presents the text he transcribed from the language of the inhabitant of Bas Goynuk village named Mevlud Huseynaliyev as follows: “In connection with the earthquake that occurred in Iran in 1990, aid is being sent from Sheki to help Iran. The blue-collared drivers want to hand over the aid and tour the famous places of Iran. For this purpose, they appeal to the governor of the city of Anzali. After a while, it is learned that the governor does not agree to this proposal. Understanding the word "Farmandar"(governor of city) as uncle Farman, one of the drivers in blue says with surprise: "It seems that Uncle Farman's hand has reached here too"” [1, s. 92].

The wisdom of Azerbaijani people has been tested by dozens of scientific discoveries. A striking example of Turkish-oriental wisdom is that Sharden, a prominent French traveller of the Safavi period, mentioned the name of a scholar-Abu Tahir, who knew the exact hour, minute and day when an earthquake would occur, in his Travel Notes. Let's take a look at his comments on this:

“A Persian geographer reports that at that time there lived an astrologer from Shiraz named Abu Tahir (in Tabriz). Earlier he said that the earthquake corresponds to the year 235 AH 1849 according to the Christian calendar. When the Sun enters the sign of Scorpio, an earthquake will occur and destroy the entire city. Seeing that the people did not want to believe this at all, he went to the judge and insisted that he take everyone out of the city by force. The judge was the deputy caliph in that province and had great confidence in the judgment of this astrologer.

He eventually yielded to her insistence and did his best to drive the crowd out, but the crowd, suspecting that there was lurking evil in the judge's action, opposed the foretold earthquake measure. Therefore, they were able to get only half of the population out of the city. The earthquake actually happened at the appointed time and forty thousand people were affected. The following year, Amir Dineveron, son of Mohammad Rudani Andi, the viceroy of Iran, was ordered to rebuild the city more beautiful and larger than before. The order was to learn from the famous astrologer Abu Tahir under which zodiac sign one should work. He found it necessary to work under the sign of Scorpio. He assured them that there would be absolutely no terrible

earthquake in the new city, but instead showed that there was a danger of severe flooding” [9, s. 105].

In the times when natural events were understood in a simple way, people created interesting examples of folklore expressed their wisdom related to flood, water, rain, lightning, earth, sky, etc. Natural phenomena thoughts are also given an important place among our riddles, proverbs, tales, idioms and idioms. For example, a terrible natural event such as the flood and its natural features are well summarized by people in the riddles below.

*Dağlarda qar əridi,*

*Ayaq tutub yeridi,*

*Dərə görüb bağırdı,*

*Dərya görüb kiridi.*

(The snow has melted in the mountains

As if snow is stepping,

When valley saw, screamed,

When sea saw, kept silence) [7].

Or:

*Dağdan gəlir,*

*Daşdan gəlir*

*Qudurmuş bir*

*Aslan gəlir.*

(It comes from mountain,

It comes from stone,

A crazy one

Lion is coming) [7].

People have described rain, which is a natural phenomenon, not only as a source of flooding, but also as a source of livelihood for people. For instance: “There is rain, it brings good, there is rain, it brings pain” or:

*Dağdan, daşdan qan gəlir,*

*Qıvrılmış ilan gəlir,*

*Qabağında durmayın,  
Qudurmuş aslan gəlir.*

(Blood comes from mountains and stones,  
A coiled snake comes,  
Don't stand in front of it,  
A mad lion is coming) [7].

An example is the confirmation of our view. Rain accompanied by a hurricane is also a frequent natural phenomenon. There are many instances of people's wishes and desires in this field in folk literature. Such as the destructive character and sign of the storm is striking in the following riddles:

*Nə əli var, nə ayağı,  
Dağıdar dəli sayacağı,  
Şıqhaşırıq açar qapı.*

(He has neither hands nor legs,  
It rains heavy  
As crazy madman,  
Destroying everything) [8].

The unity and sanctity of the earth and sky are highlighted among our proverbs, oaths, applause and curses, which are the exhausted expressions of folk wisdom. For example, the content of the proverb "The power of the nation is the power of the flood" [2] gives us an idea about the destructive power of the flood at first glance. Or: "If you go into the ground" [5], "Let the neck go into the ground" [5], "I'll stick your neck in the ground"[5], "Let a stone fall on your head" [3, s. 543] ], "A stone on your head" [3, s. 543], "One stone per head" [3, s. 543] curses, people revived their first idea of the terrible natural phenomenon, the earthquake.

For instance, in the content of the expression "If the ground cracks because of my shame I would enter to ground" emphasizing confession, condition of the cracking of the ground at the time of an earthquake is directly expressed. The curse "May your place be tough in the head", which is currently one of the most common

curses in Sheki folklore, bears the traces of our elders' thoughts about the tragic fate of people buried alive in the earthquake.

Modern science suggests that mountains and hills were formed as a result of earthquakes. However, in ancient myths, legends and epics, this subject is told in a different way. Of course, these specimens, based on the probability theory of folk literature, were imaginary, not to the extent that the mind could accept.

For example, in the old Turkish epic “Creation”, Garakhan is a powerful God. He had three sons: Ulgen, Erlik and Mergen. At first, there was water. The Moon, Sky, Sun and Earth did not exist. There was a human being with God. This human being found himself in God. He thinks it is bigger than God and heads towards the water. He will drown in water. He starts shouting: “God help me”. God says: “Get up”. He goes into the water too. God tells the human being to go into the water and take out the soil. He digs up the soil at the bottom of the water and hides some of the soil in his mouth. He gives the soil to God. God sprinkles the earth. The earth is formed. The soil in the man’s mouth also begins to grow. The human being is choking and seeks God’s help. “Throws it into the ground” – God says. A human being throws the earth and little mountains and hills are formed [3, s. 343]. This example we brought remains a legend.

It is known that among the epic folklore genres, fairy tales, especially magical tales, stand out with their antiquity. The concepts of “flood” and “wind”, which are geographical concepts, are mostly encountered in the form of “like a flood from the valleys” and “like a flood from the hills” and these formulas are reflected in the “road time” of the region, artistic time of our magical fairy tales. The people summed up the destructive role and speed of the flood with the term “river”.

The concept of “wind”, which is a symbol of sustenance and fertility in seasonal ceremonies and the traces of the positive role that patronage provides to people, also found their place in public meetings.

The leading folklore scholar Bahlul Abdulla writes on this occasion: “... There is a closeness, kinship between Wind Dad (Baba Yel) and Farmer Dad (Baba Akıncı), as there is between Hızır and İlyas” [3, s. 92]. To confirm his ideas, the scientist

draws our attention to an interesting legend: "...Wind Dad and Farmer Dad were brothers. Farmer Dad sowed and reaped wheat and Wind Dad beat the wheat in a threshing machine, and then he helped others and took a share from it. People beat the wheat once and wait for Wind Dad to come and blow it. But Wind Dad does not come. Impatient people start blowing themselves up and:

*Yel baba, amana gəl,*

*Dolanıb xırmana gəl,*

*Heç bəhanən yoxdursa,*

*Xəlbirə samana gəl.*

*A Yel baba, gəl baba,*

*Saman sənin, dən mənim.*

(Hey Dad, come on,

Come to the threshing floor

If there's no excuse,

Come to Straw.

A Come on dad, come on dad).

"The straw is yours the grain is mine" – they sing. At that time Wind Dad, who came to the threshing floor, was offended by the song he heard and returned. Those in the threshing floor regret their actions. Everyone runs after Wind Dad and sings a song calling him:

*Yel baba, Yel baba,*

*Qurban sənə, gəl baba!*

*Buğdamız yerdə qaldı,*

*Yaxamız əldə qaldı,*

*Yel baba, Yel baba,*

*Qurban sənə, gəl baba!*

(Wind dad, wind dad,

Sacrifice to you, come, father!

Our wheat remained on the ground,

Our collar is in hand,

Wind Dad, Wind Dad,  
Sacrifice to you, come, father!).

Wind Dad likes this song and returns, blowing all the wheat in the threshing floor and separating it from the chaff” [3, s. 92-93].

In conclusion, we can note that seismic issues, which are the main subjects of modern literary studies and folkloric science, and which are almost not a subject of theoretical analysis or studying, should be included in comprehensive research.

Today the attitudes of people in the face of natural events – wind, floods, storms, earthquakes and underwater waves – tsunamis that cause heavy destruction or influence humanity, and the ways of protection from them are reflected in their artistic gatherings and applause. Curses, idioms, proverbs and ceremonies reflected in folklore, are to be researched and conveyed to the public. This is one of the inevitable tasks of modern folklore studies.

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