

CLASSIFICATION OF PEOPLE'S WISHES

Abdimuratov Levitan Aymuratovich

Nukus State Pedagogical Institute independent researcher

Email: la0569371@gmail.com

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Annotation: The article provides a detailed analysis of the classification of folk well-wishes, the level of imagery, the system of images and their description, the prose and poetic structure of well-wishes, artistic imagery and means of expression, the rhythmic nature of poetic well-wishes, stanza structure, rhyme, poetic repetition, and the functions of alliteration in well-wishes, as well as the features of the artistic language.

Keywords: Blessing, genre, folklore, information, themes, poetry, prose, metaphor, metonymy.

Introduction

The study of the centuries-old cultural and spiritual values of the Turkic peoples is carried out through the implementation and dissemination of their noble ideas, such as humanism and peaceful coexistence, into everyday life and public consciousness. Folk blessings serve to promote all good wishes connected with human happiness, health, and a bright future. Therefore, collecting, studying, and integrating this immense spiritual heritage into contemporary life is undoubtedly one of the urgent tasks of today.

The scientific study of folk blessings makes it possible to restore the uniqueness of this heritage as an independent genre, determine the role of blessings within the system of folk education, and educate the younger generation in the spirit of the progressive traditions of our cultural heritage.

Literature Review

Folk blessings are a genre based on the magical power of words. The term *olqish* (blessing) derives from the ancient Turkic verb *ol*, meaning “to respect,” “to elevate,” or “to praise,” combined with the imperative suffix *-qi* and the verbal noun suffix *-sh*. [1.129]

Since blessings are imbued with the spirit of humanism through the expression of good wishes toward people, they occupy a special place among folklore genres. This feature of the genre constitutes its leading characteristic that determines its ideological orientation.

Another genre-specific characteristic of blessings lies in their purely utilitarian (practical) function. Their use for practical purposes and the predominance of the informative function indicate that the aesthetic function in this genre is secondary. Therefore, when analyzing blessings, artistic features occupy a secondary position.

One of the important genre characteristics of folk blessings is their direct orientation toward specific objects. Indeed, every blessing is addressed either to a particular individual or to a group of people. For example, the blessing “May you go and return safely; may what you take not be taken away from you; may what you hold become gold and what you seek become silver; may your enemies be silenced, Allahu Akbar” is directed toward a specific person setting out on a journey.

Another characteristic feature of blessings is that they are always pronounced at the beginning or completion of a certain activity or undertaking.

The famous Russian folklorist Vladimir Propp established new criteria for the classification of folklore genres. These criteria include:



- a) the genre's ability to encompass events of a specific scope;
- b) the integrity of the poetic system;
- c) the specificity of performance style and timing;
- d) the relationship to music. [2.34]

From the perspective of these criteria, blessings possess distinctive characteristics among folklore genres. The nature of blessings as an independent genre is fully revealed through the analysis of these four criteria.

It is also necessary to consider blessings from the standpoint of the general characteristics of folklore, such as collective creativity, oral creation and performance, variability, and anonymity of authorship. Since oral transmission, representation of the people's worldview, circulation in various forms and versions, absence of a specific author, and strong traditionalism are also characteristic of folk blessings.

The uniqueness of blessings as a separate genre is also reflected in their system of images. Since blessings are intended to express good wishes for people, positive images such as Allah, prophets, Khidr, Bobo Dehqon, Khoja Bahauddin, ancestral spirits, and *chiltons* frequently appear in them.

In Uzbek folklore studies, Professor Bahriniso Sarimsoqov was the first to study blessings as an independent genre. He expressed certain views regarding the historical principles of this genre and classified blessings into three groups according to the religious concepts reflected within them:

- a) blessings containing elements of pagan religious beliefs;
- b) blessings containing Islamic religious concepts;
- c) blessings combining both pagan and Islamic concepts. [1.130]

We also support the above-mentioned views concerning the historical layers formed within the genre of blessings. At the same time, we consider it necessary to note that the above historical classification lacks a certain consistency. This inconsistency stems from the fact that folk blessings have been classified not only according to ideological systems but also according to the influence of changes in human consciousness on the genre's image system.

However, in genres such as blessings, where the informative function predominates, the renewal of the image system becomes the principal criterion determining the genre's historical development. Although both paganism and Islam contributed greatly to social life and human consciousness, the stable traditionalism and practical orientation of blessings have preserved their fundamental features throughout all ideological transformations.

Taking this objective reality into account, we believe that Turkic folk blessings should historically be classified as follows:

1. Blessings based on mythological images;
2. Blessings based on realistic life images.

Blessings containing mythological concepts and images were created by ancient ancestors, yet their meanings and functions have remained unchanged to the present day. For example, the following blessing recited after meals demonstrates this: "Amen, may the reward of this food reach the spirits of our ancestors, Allahu Akbar." This blessing is built upon the single mythological image of ancestral spirits.

According to mythological, more precisely animistic, beliefs, a human being consists of three elements: body, soul, and spirit. The body returns to the earth, the soul departs the body through the Angel Azrael, while the spirit remains eternally alive.

Any good deed performed in honor of the deceased is believed to be rewarded by their spirit. Therefore, various posthumous rituals serve to honor and satisfy the spirits of the dead. Consequently, the blessing above reflects the desire to please ancestral spirits.



The following example of a greeting blessing contains the mythological image of calamity (*balo*): “Amen, may your steps arrive but not calamity, Allahu Akbar”; “May God protect us from the calamity of water, fire, and falsehood.”

In folk belief, calamity symbolizes destructive evil. Its genetic roots derive from ancient conceptions of the eternal struggle between good and evil and the coexistence of benevolent and malevolent forces.

The struggle between good and evil is eternal; thus, the image of calamity as a symbol of disaster survived through various historical and religious transformations and entered the framework of Islamic ideology. Consequently, the belief emerged that if people commit many sins, God sends calamity upon them to destroy sinners collectively. Therefore, when people meet, they say: “May your steps arrive, but not calamity,” implying the wish that no disaster should come to the place where they gather peacefully.

The image of calamity also appears in folk tales, legends, and epics alongside blessings and curses. In epic genres, calamity opposes beloved heroes, but the heroes ultimately overcome it through courage, strength, wisdom, and ingenuity.

Among other mythological figures appearing in blessings are Hazrati Khidr, *chiltons*, angels, fairies, and Bobo Dehqon. Khidr comes to help people in the most difficult moments—when lost in the desert or facing misfortune. In Turkic folklore, he is usually depicted wearing white clothes.

According to belief, Khidr has no bone in his thumb. If a person recognizes him while shaking hands and does not release his hand immediately, Khidr will fulfill up to three wishes before disappearing.

To this day, it remains uncertain whether Khidr was a historical person or a mythological figure. Azerbaijani folklorist Professor Mirali Seyidov argues that Khidr originated as a mythological image connected with the creation of fire among ancient Turkic peoples. [3.10]

Mythological images not only provide blessings with spiritual depth and increase people’s faith in them, but also ensure the survival of the genre over long periods, since these images and beliefs are deeply rooted in human consciousness.

Changes in human consciousness, lifestyle, and historical conditions eventually brought significant transformations to blessings as well. This was reflected in the emergence of realistic life images within folk blessings. Therefore, blessings containing such images are referred to as realistic-life blessings.

Although realistic-life blessings are numerous, blessings on modern themes are relatively rare. Nevertheless, the existence of even a few modern blessings demonstrates that blessings remain highly adaptable and enduring genres. Yet, regardless of adaptation to the spirit of the times, the essential orientation and life function of blessings remain unchanged, because humanity continuously strives toward goodness and light, while blessings serve as heralds of that goodness.

In summary, according to their thematic scope, poetic imagery, principles, practical function, style of performance, relationship to music, oral transmission, collectivity, anonymity, variability, and historicity, blessings represent one of the most ancient and enduring independent genres of Turkic folklore.

As one of the genres based on the magical power of words, blessings are widely used in many areas of human activity.

Among Turkic peoples, the genre of blessings has been particularly classified in Altai Turkish folklore, where it is divided into the following categories:

- a) blessings dedicated to various cults;
- b) blessings related to hunting, crafts, and productive labor;



c) family and domestic blessings.

Professor Bahriniso Sarimsoqov classifies Uzbek folk blessings from two perspectives. First, thematically:

a) traditional ceremonial blessings;

b) everyday blessings.

Second, historically:

a) blessings preserving pagan and Islamic religious concepts.

We also follow the approach of studying folk blessings in two major groups: festive blessings and everyday-life blessings. [1.31]

Uzbek ceremonial songs and blessings are studied in the following groups:

1. Blessings related to wedding ceremonies;
2. Blessings related to mourning ceremonies;
3. Blessings related to Ramadan ceremonies.

Among Turkic peoples, there are various types of weddings such as cradle ceremonies, circumcision ceremonies, and marriage ceremonies. Each contains specific blessings performed in different contexts and fulfilling different functions.

In some regions, when an infant is placed into a cradle for the first time, the following blessing-song is recited:

“In the name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate! O God, may this child have a long life, may the mother’s milk become nourishment, may prosperity follow behind them, may their heart be full of faith, may they be kind to their parents, may their sleep be peaceful, may their eyes be bright; move aside, grandfather, the owner of the cradle has arrived.”

Although cradle blessings differ from region to region, they are close in meaning. Similarly, blessings recited while removing a child from the cradle include wishes for health, long life, prosperity, and future descendants.

Poetic and prose blessings are also used during marriage ceremonies. They express wishes for lifelong companionship, happiness, children, long life, and strong health for the newlyweds.

Among Turkic ceremonial traditions, mourning rituals occupy a special place. Although mainly religious prayers are recited during mourning ceremonies, one or two lines of folk blessings are usually added at the end of each prayer. For example: “Amen, may God have mercy upon him, may his place be in paradise, may his grave be illuminated, may the living be granted long life, Allahu Akbar.”

Regardless of who the deceased was, speaking ill of them is considered inappropriate, while wishing them peace and paradise is regarded as a firm tradition within mourning blessings.

The rituals of Turkic peoples are genetically connected with Islam. The “Yo Ramadan” ceremony is one such example, held during the month of Ramadan.

During the thirty evenings of fasting, neighborhood children gather and go from house to house singing “Yo Ramadan” blessing songs. These songs are conditionally divided into two parts: blessings recited while requesting charity and blessings recited after receiving it.

Seasonal rituals among Turkic peoples are also rich in blessings. For instance, the following blessing is pronounced during the first plowing of fields in spring:

“Amen, may the birds embrace you, may what you sow become ears of grain, may there always be food before you, may prosperity enter your homes, may Bobo Dehqon support you, may Hazrati Khidr guide your way, may the Four Companions watch over you, Allahu Akbar.”

Blessings pronounced around the table also occupy a significant place. In all nations, especially in the Muslim world, the dining table is regarded as sacred. Around it, people express gratitude for the happiness of gathering together. For example:

“Amen, may prosperity increase, may peace and well-being prevail, Allahu Akbar.”



Such blessings are usually pronounced by respected elders, while others raise their hands and join in prayer.

Blessings recited after meals wish prosperity, goodness, and protection from evil upon the hosts and participants. Turkic peoples possess a rich culinary culture; therefore, blessings differ according to the type of food consumed.

The study of table blessings led us to the following conclusions:

1. To regard the table as sacred and encourage discipline, etiquette, and cleanliness around it;
2. To educate young people through organized gathering and dispersal around the table;
3. To influence people's consciousness and spirituality through blessings and strengthen faith in goodness.

Travel blessings express wishes for safe journeys and peaceful return home. For example:

"Amen, may you go and return safely; may what you take not be taken away; may what you obtain become gold and silver; may your enemies be silenced, Allahu Akbar."

Meeting blessings are short blessings exchanged when acquaintances meet on the road before asking about each other's well-being.

Blessings are also pronounced before and after public undertakings such as building bridges, digging canals, or constructing buildings. Elders bless the beginning of the work and later wish that the completed project serve the people well.

Analysis and Results

When discussing the artistic nature of blessings, one must proceed from their informative function. Unlike genres such as poems, epics, fairy tales, or wedding songs, blessings should be evaluated not by purely aesthetic criteria but according to the specific nature of the genre itself.

From this perspective, the artistic features of blessings should be studied in three aspects:

1. The specificity of figurative reflection of reality and the analysis of the image system;
2. The formal structure and rhythmic nature of blessings;
3. The functions of artistic expressive and descriptive devices in blessings.

The figurative reflection of reality in blessings demonstrates that each image embodies the universal through the particular. The imagery of blessings is closely connected with the lofty humanitarian ideals of the people.

In Turkic folk blessings, appeals are made to Allah as the sole creator and ruler, while sacred figures such as prophets, Hazrati Khidr, Luqmani Hakim, Bobo Dehqon, and Noah serve as mediators helping fulfill human wishes. Alongside them appear mythological images such as ancestral spirits, angels, and *chiltons*.

The image system of blessings also includes evil forces and malicious individuals opposing these benevolent figures. Thus, the conflict between positive and negative images creates the dramatic tension of blessings.

Blessings, as artistic genres, employ various figurative means to portray the qualities of images and noble wishes. One such artistic device is simile.

The rhythmic nature of poetic blessings demonstrates that they belong to epic folk poetry. This conclusion is based on two reasons:

1. Epic narration predominates throughout the blessing;
2. Different stanzaic structures are employed within a single work.

Thus, poetic blessings constitute examples of epic folk poetry.

Research into the genre characteristics, thematic functions, and artistic nature of blessings among Turkic peoples allows the following conclusions:

1. Folk blessings are among the most ancient genres of Uzbek folklore and reflect beliefs about the eternal struggle between good and evil through mythological, animistic, totemistic, and



fetishistic images. Despite changes in human consciousness across centuries, the core content and imagery of blessings remained largely unchanged because of their orientation toward goodness.

2. Folk blessings functionally and thematically encompass all stages of human life and all aspects of human activity.

3. Blessings exist in both prose and poetic forms, each possessing distinctive artistic and figurative possibilities governed by the laws of artistic prose and poetry.

4. In the modern era of independence, the rich progressive ideas embodied in blessings should be effectively utilized in shaping the national ideology and cultural values of our people. [4.16]

Conclusion

In conclusion, blessings constitute a fully independent ideological and artistic genre of our folklore. Therefore, collecting, scientifically studying, and widely promoting them remains our enduring responsibility.

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