

# THE FUNCTIONS OF WATER IN FOLKLORE AND LITERATURE

*Kasimova Rano*

*Bukhara State University*

**Abstract.** *Functions of water described in legends of Uzbek folklore and their traces in modern literature are analyzed in the article.*

**Keywords:** *the curative peculiarities of water, miracles related to the sea, the beliefs of rescuing people from disaster, possessing magic power, the means of passing from transitive world to eternal one.*

Water is described as means of life in the myths, legends and fairy tales typical to folklore. Even world of water is depicted as the mysterious world. In ancient times people considered water as the magic world for passing from one world into another, cleaning up one's act, devoting him eternal life. One of the ancient motifs connected with the cult of water became a basis of origin of the legend about an ascetic [saint] *Khodja Ubbon*. The so called place is located at about 40 kilometers to the south-west of Bukhara city. This place is famous for its curative water well. The cemetery of *Khodja Ubbon* is included into the monuments of an ancient culture. Information about the cemetery is observed in the travel book of A. Burnes "Travels into Bokhara" firstly. He gave some facts about the coins and ancient relics of the kings lived in olden times. It was defined that these coins belonged to the kingdoms of III-I centuries B.C [2, p.455-473].

Narzulla Yuldashev [7,p.29], who had deeply investigated the cemeteries of Bukhara saints and the history of these spots, wrote about the origin of the legend about *Khodja Ubbon* cemetery:

Once upon a time there lived a king whose son caught infectious disease leprosy. Being ashamed of their son's illness parents left him in the desert which is called Khodja Ubbon cemetery nowadays. The boy felt exhausted and thirst in scorching hot. Fortunately with the order of God there appeared Khodja Ubbon and asked the fellow the reason of his being there. King's son told a story of himself. Having heard that Khodja Ubbon ascended the highest hill and as soon as he stuck his javelin into the peak, there appeared a spring. Khodja Ubbon told the boy to drink water of that spring. The young fellow did what he had been told and soon recovered.

It is evident that water is one of the main sources for recovering from the illness. On one hand legends show the curative peculiarities of water, on the other hand the beliefs of rescuing people from disaster exist. In some facts Khodja Ubbon is given in the form of Khubbi [4,p.25] and is used for the latter reason. Legends about *Khoresm Khubbi* indicate that the son of Hakim is a person who amused people with his deeds.

They say that Hakim had three sons; his youngest sons' name was *Khubbihodja*. Two older sons followed their father and learned religious sciences, but the last one liked to ride the horse and go hunting. Father was upset and angry with his son that he did not follow him. Later Khubbi started to astonish people.

Once Khubbi's father called him three times. After the first calling he started for the road, during the second one he was busy with rescuing suffered people. In the third call he appeared in front of his father. Father got angry with his son's deeds and forced him to leave Khorezm. Khubbi had parted with his father and disappeared.

As you see Khubbi was depicted as a performer of many miracles related to the sea in this legend. So we can say that Khodja Ubbon was created with the help of the imagination and the beliefs of people and always regarded as a mythical hero.

One of the wells situated in Bukhara is called *Chashmai Ayub* which means spring of Ayub. The water of this well is also famous for its curative function. People, who know about that function come and drink water of this well with a good intention. So many versions of the legend about Chashmai Ayub are spread among the nation. Water is shown possessing magic power which can destroy everything that humankind has got. But the end of the legend gives information about the cure for illness.

The blessed Ayub had 14 children and was very wealthy. He was so rich that he didn't know the amount of his property. Being deprived of his children and wealth he was deprived of his health as well. The worms began eating his body. *Allah* had ordered worms not to eat Ayub's heart and tongue. Because he remembered Him with his heart and repeated His name with his tongue. All the relatives turned away from Ayub even two of his wives out of three abandoned him. People made Ayub leave the city. After some period the worms began to leave one by one but while he was taking the worms and put them again in their places there came revelation not to put them back on his body, because they had already done their duty. He beat his foot on the ground from the place where he was sitting and with the power of Allah there appeared a spring. When he washed up in the water of that spring one of the worms dropped into the water and turned into a leech, and the other one went up to the mulberry tree and turned into a silk worm. The blessed Ayub regained his health.

That hill still exists and has become cemetery of Ayub. Spring water is the treatment for any wound. The people who keep the silk worm take water from this spring and pour on the worms when worms begin to weave cocoon. Old people wish the patience of Ayub to those who are in difficulty.

Another version of the legend about *Chashmai Ayub Mausoleum* is cited in the book "Bukhara. The city and the legends":

On the place of modern mausoleum, as the legend suggests, there used to be a desert. Its inhabitants had suffered from the lack of water; they had prayed to God to send them at least some water. In response to these prayers, Saint Job [Ayub] had appeared in front of poor people and hit the ground with his magic staff. Sudden appearance of a well had astonished the people by its vivifying spring and its crystal clear water. It is commonly believed that the water still keeps its clearness and herbal power [1.p, 14].

So, reverence for water and beliefs connected with the cult of water have deep roots in the works of folklore. But in some works of modern literature the theme of water is also been treated. Abdulla Aripov's dramatic epic poem "Way to Paradise" (*Jannatga yo'l*) repeats the motif of water. While rescuing a girl from the disaster a fellow drowns and dies. So, water became the means of passing from transitive world to eternal one [6, p.93].

Attempting to clarify the functions of water described in the legends of Khodja Ubbon, Spring of Ayub, it became obvious that water and rain have been compared to wealth from ancient times and

became a basis of peculiar ceremonies and customs to be formed. Furthermore, ceremonies connected with the belief in water and belief of our ancestors to nature attracts scientists all over the world.

In general, it can be said that peoples' belief of revering for water exists not only in the works of folklore but also has its traces in the works of modern literature, which causes admiration of the treasure of Uzbek convictions about water.

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