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FROM THE SPIRITUAL CULTURE OF THE KARAYAZI REGION (Based on the materials of the population of Tahla Chukay)

Abstract. The article explores the spiritual culture of the population of the Tahla Valley in the Karayazi region of the Republic of Georgia. It primarily examines examples of folk creativity—love poetry, old songs, lullabies, similes, proverbs, riddles, and beliefs—introducing them into ethnographic research for the first time. The study highlights their role in the daily life of the population and demonstrates that these elements of spiritual culture, rooted in ancient history, have emerged from the heart of the people, been refined through collective memory, and continue to be transmitted from generation to generation as valuable artistic heritage.

It is no coincidence that the population of Tahla Chukay, with its ancient roots, has been the focus of ethnological research. A key factor in this is the legacy of Koroglu, the 17th c. lover-poet-knight, who belonged to the Tahla tribe. According to opinion of Prof. Jamal Mustafayev, an esteemed philosopher and scholar, widely respected across the Turkic world and admired by many academics, the community of Tahla stands out in all of Karayazi as bold, upright, truth-loving, devoted to honesty, loyal to its roots, steadfast in its moral and spiritual values, and self-affirming.

Key words: Georgia, Karayazi, population of Tahla basin, spiritual culture, ethnography.

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Introduction

The people of Tahla valley (Aghtahla, Garatahla, Karajalar, as well as the village of Soganliq, which serves as the gateway to the city of Tbilisi), one of the ancient settlements of the Karayazi region of the Republic of Georgia, have cultivated a rich spiritual culture distinguished by

local characteristics over many years and centuries. Our ancestors, who led a turbulent lifestyle, our grandparents, who lived in the mountains, plains and villages, preserved this spiritual heritage they created and ensured its longevity by passing it down from generation to generation.

Ceremonies, customs, rites, rules, oral folk creativity, music, holidays and games that have emerged from various socio-economic conditions throughout history collectively form the spiritual world of the people—or more precisely, their spiritual culture. While farming life and material culture reflect how people lived and survived, spiritual culture encompasses their worldview, ethnic psychology, linguistic expression, and affirms their cultural identity.

It is clear that the people and ethnos living in each area develops and integrates its own spiritual culture and oral traditions. The oral folk art of Georgian Azerbaijani-Turks, including the population of the Tahla Valley, reflects their local traditions, way of life, worldview, kindness toward friends, and deep-seated animosity toward enemies. At the same time, deep love for motherland, family, work and family-household issues are very skillfully described.

Our goal is to show the unique and similar aspects of the rich verbal creativity, spiritual culture of the population of Tahla Chukay, and to provide a comparative analysis.

Material and method

While writing this article, ethnographic and ethnological data, along with literary materials collected from the population of villages in the Tahla Valley—Aghtahla, Garatahla, Karajalar, as well as Soganliq, which is considered the gateway to the city of Tiflis—were utilized. The research primarily employed a comprehensive ethnological approach, adhering to chronological sequencing, applying an objective and critical perspective to existing materials, and utilizing the historical-comparative analysis method.

Additionally, the author's personal observations and analyses conducted in these villages contributed to a unique methodological approach in the study. Various aspects of the subject were examined, revealing the true nature, value, and distribution of different art forms in the region, including oral traditions and other forms of spoken word art.

The spiritual culture of the Azerbaijani-Turks of Georgia was studied for the first time within a historical-ethnographic framework in our research, culminating in a candidate's dissertation. This dissertation was later published as a monograph in 1995 with a circulation of 1,500 copies. However, due to the scope of the dissertation, certain aspects could not be fully explored, meaning that the materials presented did not comprehensively reflect the full richness of our spiritual heritage. Therefore, this study seeks to further examine selected examples of spiritual culture in the Tahla Valley from a historical-ethnographic perspective.

Discussion

It is well known that every nation has created its own examples of oral art. In the oral folk creativity of the people of Tahla Chukay, an inseparable part of the Georgian Azerbaijani-Turks, their traditions, daily life, worldview, kindness toward friends, fierce struggle against enemies, and deep-seated emotions are vividly reflected. At the same time, their love for family, homeland, labor, and household affairs is skillfully depicted in their oral traditions.

This article explores several branches of the spiritual culture of this community—ashik (minstrel) art, songs, proverbs, parables, riddles, and beliefs.

The art of love. Ashik poetry is one of the leading branches of the spiritual culture of

the people of Tahla Chukay. Passed down from generation to generation, it embodies the spirit and aesthetic taste of the people, reflecting the socio-political realities and the spiritual world of its time.

The ashik is an artist deeply revered among the Caucasian peoples, particularly among Azerbaijani Turks, serving the community through his art—much like the Kazakh aqyn, the Uzbek bakhshi, and the Ukrainian kobzar. Ashiks not only preserve folklore but also enrich and refine it over time.

Ashik art is inherently syncretic, blending music, dance, performance, and poetry into a harmonious whole. That is why it is said that “the art of ashik poetry is as difficult as it is honorable; it is complex and demands exceptional mastery, sensitivity, and skill” (Bünyadov, 1993:100).

With its deep historical roots, ashik poetry occupies a special place in the rich spiritual world of Azerbaijani Turks, including their compatriots in Georgia and, in particular, the people of Tahla Chukay. Academician Teymur Bünyadov emphasizes that the origins of ashik poetry should be traced back to the advanced stages of the primitive communal system (Bünyadov, 1993:101). Commenting on this view, Professor Mahmud Allahmanli notes that Bünyadov’s connection of ashik poetry to such an ancient period suggests an implicit reference to shamanism. This correlation underscores that shamanism represents an integral layer in the worldview of all Turkic cultures and that exploring its lesser-known aspects remains an important task today. The shared heritage of all Turkic peoples is reflected in this artistic tradition, which spans a vast historical period (Allahmanlı, 2001:7).

Ultimately, today’s ashiks are the

successors of yesterday’s minstrels, who, in turn, evolved from the ancient shamanic tradition.

As is evident, the passion for poetry, music, and oral storytelling has been deeply ingrained in the spirit of all Turkic peoples, including the people of Tahla Chukay. The elders recount: “Since ancient times, renowned ashiks would gather under the glow of a thirty-wick lamp to engage in verbal duels. The most distinguished ashiks would come to Tahla’s weddings and engagements, knowing that verbal sparring in Tahla was no easy feat. An ashik who stumbled over words or spoke unartfully had no place in the Tahla Valley. Here, figures such as Gara Abzari, Bala Abzari, Tanrıgulu (Omarli, 2001:321), Tateroglu Hasani, Goy Söyün, Gulammirza Musayev, Allaz Aliyev, and Tahla Latifi, masters of the intricate art of ashik poetry, possessed exceptional memory and wit. The elders also claim that the first known ashik of Tahla Chukay was Ashiq Sadiq, and no wedding in the region was complete without his presence”.

The renowned philosopher and professor, the late Jamal Mustafayev, once remarked: “Not every ashik could withstand the test of Tahla’s audience.” The people of Tahla are sharp-witted, eloquent, deeply knowledgeable in the craft of poetry and performance, and possess keen critical judgment. Around 1905–1907, the legendary Ashiq Alasgar attended a wedding in Tahla. By that time, Alasgar was over 80 years old and no longer performed at weddings. Yet the people of Tahla did not invite him for his playing skills, but rather to hear his words” (Omarli, 2001:321).

Results

It should be noted that although they

are known in a wide area and do not hold wedding parties elsewhere, Tahla Chukay itself has hosted several weddings, which were carefully selected and not to be missed. Ashiq Abbas, Ashiq Mohammadali, and Ashiq Asgar are especially remembered among the population. The performances of these ashiks had their own uniqueness. When they sang: "These are ours, my dear, there is no fear or trepidation", said the late Kara Abzar.

Today, Ashiq Mashadi (Muradov) and Ashiq Tahar Bayramov are remembered with great respect. The fame of the Tahlali poet Nowruz has spread far beyond his birthplace.

A number of well-known artists, recognizing the importance of music and love in this region, have visited the Tahla Valley from time to time. Those who withstood the artistic challenges of this place gained prestige among the local population and secured a place for themselves at wedding celebrations. Among them were Ashiq Najaf from Alimardan, Ashiq Mirza Bayramov, Ashiq Asad, Ashiq Ibrahim, Ashiq Talib (son of Ashiq Alasgar), as well as Deda Amrah, Huseyn Saracli, Khindi Mammad, Ashiq Kamandar, Ashiq Alikhan Karayazılı, Ashiq Aslan Kosali, Ashiq Teymur, Ashiq Asabali, Ashiq Adalat Nasibov, Ashiq Mikayil Azafli, Ashiq Imran, and the woman Ashiq Askinaz, among others.

Many scholars believe that the legendary poet-knight Koroglu, whose name resonates throughout the Turkic world, and his trusted friend Ashiq Jun were from the renowned Tahla tribe. This view is supported by the following lines from Ashiq Junu:

Mən aşiq Təklədənəm,
Tək evli Təklədənəm.
Arazbar tərləniyəm,

Sonalar təklədənəm.

In the first verse of his bayati, saying "I'm from Tekla, I'm in love", Ashiq Jun implies that both he and Koroglu originated from the Tahla tribe. In the first volume of the Azerbaijani Folklore Anthology, the second line of the bayati appears as "I am from a single house". The scholar-poet I. Sadig considers this version more accurate, emphasizing that "the author regarded Çanlıbel as a single-married neighborhood". We concur with this perspective, as the great Turkic peoples, who marked their lands with the name of the Tahla tribe, could not have been "monogamous" (Aliyev, 2012:17).

Even today, the art of saz and soz is held in high regard in Tahla. No wedding, engagement, public holiday, or family celebration is complete without ashiks. Those who keep the saz tradition alive in Tahla today include Astan Huseynov, Ali Magalov, Ashiq Zindofir, Ashiq Karim, Ashiq Ali, and Rauf Magalov, as well as Elbandiyar Amirkhanov and Ali Isakhan oglu Aliyev, both skilled performers of saz melodies.

Tahla Chukay has also been home to musicians who played various instruments, including the clarinet, accordion, tar, guitar, ionica, black trumpet, and tambourine. Among them were Vilayat Mammadov, Nurahmad Mammadov, Sardar Mammadov, Imirkhan Aliyev, Gara Mohammad (Abdullayev), Hamid Sadigov, Nasreddin Mirzayev, Gadir Huseynov, Karamat Hajiyev, and Ilyas Agamalov, along with several others whose names are not mentioned here. Today, their artistic legacy is continued by Intizar Mammadov (son of the renowned tarzan-guitarist Vilayat Mammadov), Sadig Sadigov, Mubariz Hasanov (Soganlig), and others, who are well-known and respected both in

Azerbaijan and abroad.

The name of the harmonic-ionica singer Ratkhan Muradov is revered not only among Azerbaijani-Turks in Georgia but also in Azerbaijan. His performances of "Shepherd's Bayati", "Azerbaijani Anthems", "Sensizam, sensiz", "Yalgizam, yalgiz", and other musical pieces were always met with applause and deeply moved audiences. His son, Said Muradov, is also a talented ionica performer and is nearly on par with his father in this field. Another ionica performer, Azim Mammadov, is also recognized as a composer of several songs, which are occasionally performed by famous Azerbaijani singers.

One of the outstanding singers, the late Vakil Gullarli (also known as Vakil Borchaly), was originally from the village of Gullar but was famous for his performances at Tahla weddings. In Tahla and other regions, he was known as Vakil Tahlali. He had an extraordinary voice and an unmatched passion for folk music and ashig songs.

Many highly talented singers from the Agstafa region of Azerbaijan who lived in the Tahla Valley, such as brothers Salman and Nariman, Subhan Hagverdiyev, Subhan Khalilov, Rashad Ziyadkhanoglu, Yasin Agamalov, Rafiq Magalov, Badirkhan Gozalov, Anar Jafarov, and Yusif Hasanov (ionica), have continued this tradition. Additionally, instrumentalists such as Nizami Huseynov (guitar), Khasmammad Huseynov (clarinet), Aziz Imir oglu Aliyev (drums), Yunus Bayramov (drums), and Teyyub Hasanov (drums) have contributed to the region's rich musical heritage. Their performances have been deeply moving and have captivated audiences.

A special part of the spiritual culture of Tahla Chukay's population consists of

bayatis. Bayatis are the songs of our hearts, passed down through generations by our white-haired grandmothers, young brides with beaded necklaces, and daughters with double braids.

The history of bayatis, which are short, concise, and lyrical pieces expressing deep philosophical, moral, and social ideas, is as ancient as our nation itself. Experts suggest that the presence of holavars and counter-words from labor songs within the structure of bayatis traces their origins back to pre-modern times. Scholars also note that the term bayati, which consists of four verses, is linked to the names of Oghuz tribes such as "Varsagi" and "Afshari" (Dictionary of Literary Terms, 1978:18).

The thematic scope of bayatis, as seen in ethnographic sources, is diverse. They reflect various aspects of life, including people's daily existence, professions, economic activities, geographical names, rural and urban life, family values, education, folk attire, carpet weaving, love, separation, migration, fate, and the sorrows of exile. Some of these themes can also be seen in the ancient folk stories that have been passed down among the people of Tahla Chukay and even found their way into literary works.

Here are some examples:

Mən aşiq, Təklədənəm,
Tək evli Təklədənəm.
Arazbar tərləniyəm,
Sonalar təklədənəm.

Əzizim, təklə, yeri,
Qədim yurd -Təklə yeri.
Çəngəl-bıçaq oynama,
Canım, fələklə, yeri.

Əzizinəm, suvar gəl,
Çalamızda su var, gəl.
Buluda bel bağlama,

Bostanını suvar, gəl.

Əzizim, gözdən oldu,
Göz gördü, gözdən oldu.
Yağ içində üzməyim
Qaşqa öküzdən oldu.

Əzizim, qoşa gələ,
Qismətim qoşa gələ.
Kərə-kürə qoyunun
Quzusu qoşa gələ.

Əzizinəm, gül dərdim,
Çiçək üzdüm, gül dərdim.
Öz dərdim yaddan çıxdı,
Heç çıxmadı el dərdim.

Əzizinəm, dayansın,
Axmasın, su dayansın.
Məni oda salanın
Cəmdəyi qara yansın.

Əzizim, dilim yandı,
Saraldı, gülüm yandı.
Mənə bir gün vermədin,
Od tutdu külüm yandı.

Əzizinəm, göz üstə,
Qaş oynayar göz üstə.
Yığvalın üzü dönsün,
Yeriyirəm köz üstə.

Əzizim, hara gəldim,
Mən hardan-hara gəldim?
Məni ərə verdilər,
Ərə yox, gora gəldim.

Eləmi, yatan qarı,
Dağların yatan qarı.
Yıxar ər küməsinə
Axşamdan yatan qarı.

Əzizim, xırmanım yox,
Dərdim var, dərmanım yox.

Bağında bağbanlığa
Fələkdən fərmanım yox.

Apardı göy at məni,
Saxladı sayad məni.
Baş qoyum dizin üstə,
Çox yatsam oyat məni.

Əzizim, yara sızlar,
Düşmüşəm dara, sızlar.
Yaralının halını
Nə bilsin yarasızlar?!

Əzizinəm, ulduzam,
Telli-toqqalı qızam.
Gəndə dayanma, oğlan,
Yaxına gəl, yalqızam.

Yurddan aralı çoxdu,
Baxtı qaralı çoxdu.
Taleyi qan ağladan,
Yaslı-yaralı çoxdu.

Örənəkdə örk oldum,
Görənəkdə görk oldum.
Qız başında araqcın,
Ər başında börk oldum.

Əzizinəm, bala, gəl,
Yandırdı ah, nala, gəl.
Qoyma boy-buxununa
Anan həsrət qala, gəl.

Əzizinəm, göy dağa,
Çətir olub göy, dağa.
Düşmən kəsibdi, yolum
Nə sola var, nə sağa.

Əzizim, gərdək tutar,
Gərdəyi tər, tək tutar.
Halal ocağın qızı
Özünü ər tək tutar.

Bağlara bar düşəndə,

Dağlara qar düşəndə,
Gecələr yuxum qaçır,
Yadıma yar düşəndə.

Əzizim, narıncı gül,
Sarı gül, narıncı gül.
Ağlayanda qan ağla,
Güləndə narıncı gül.

Əzizim, bağa neynim?
Salıbdı dağa, neynim?
Diz çöküb ləliyərim,
Gəlmir otağa, neynim?

Əzizim, bağda yandı,
Şamama tağda yandı.
Dərdimi dağa açdım,
Alışdı, dağ da yandı.

Bu xalı Güzgülüdü,
Naxışı süzgülüdü.
Gülünü xəzan vurmaz,
Baxma ki, güz gülüdü.

İnandım hər sözə mən,
Düşdüm oda, közə mən.
Əsir etdi, qul oldum
Səndəki qaş-gözə mən.

Öylərimdə var kilim,
Tutulsun mənim dilim.
Gedəndə küsdürmüşəm,
Gəlsə necə dindiririm?!

Üzdü bu qada, neynim?
O verdi bada, neynim?
Qohumluqdan çıxıbdı,
Dönübdü yada, neynim?

Dərdə-qəmə bələdəm,
Demə ki, nabələdəm.
Məni yetim quzu tək
Həsrətindi mələdən.

Əzizim, ozana bax,
Dərmanı yazana bax.
Hər çin çıxan yuxumu
Tərsinə yozana bax.

Odlanan, yanan canım,
Dərdini danan canım,
Gecə çimir qaxmayıb,
Səhər oyanan canım.

Dəyə qurdum binədə,
Ahım çoxdu sinədə.
Kəməndinə salmışan,
Mən zalımı yenə də.

Mən aşiqəm, hasarı,
Sınıq qəlbim ha sarı.
Körpüm hicrandan oldu,
Qəmdən çəkdim hasarı.

Or, let's focus on the stale examples
on the literature page about the Tahla
depression:

Əzizinəm, min oxu,
At kamana min oxu.
Qanana bircə yol de,
Qanmayana min oxu.

Qara at yeriş eylər,
Zülfünü qarış eylər.
Ala gözün öy yıxar,
Bu candı, duruş eylər.

Çağır ha çağır oldu,
Yol-yolaq yağır oldu.
Adıma qoç kəsdilər,
Yediyim bağır oldu.

Əzizim, ala quzu,
Ağ quzu, ala quzu,
Dostu düşmən eləyər,
Adamın alağuzu.

Mən aşiq dağdağana,

Dərdimdi dağ-dağ, ana.

Yar məni yaralayıb,

Düşübdü dağda qana (Omarli, 2001:396).

Lullabies. Lullabies hold a special place in the spiritual world of the people of Tahla Chukay. These are mothers' songs, sung at the cradle of a baby with deep love, tenderness, and devotion. They are born from the emotions, excitement, and affection that mothers feel for their children. To the soothing sound of a lullaby, mothers gently lulled their newborns to sleep:

Laylay dedim yat, bala,

Qızılgülə bat, bala.

Həyat üzünə gülsün,

Öz arzuna çat, bala.

Laylay dedim boyunca,

Baş yastığa qoyunca.

Tez pardaxlan, çıxəyim,

Bir iyləyim doyunca.

Laylay, beşiyim laylay,

Evim-eşiyim, laylay.

Sən get şirin yuxuya,

Çəkim keşiyin, laylay.

It can be said that the foundation of a mother's sublime love for her baby is laid through lullabies. According to popular belief, those who develop bad habits and commit wrongful deeds are those deprived of lullabies. That is why people who engaged in disgraceful acts were referred to as "those who grew up without a song" or "half-baked".

G. Khobotyev suggested that perhaps some unresolved failures in children's upbringing are connected to the absence of lullabies in their early years (Khobotyev, 1989). The folk poet of Kabardino-Balkaria, the great Turkic writer Gaisin Guliyev, emphasized:

"There is no song in the world more humane and beautiful than a lullaby. Within it lies the human soul and the profound essence of life. It seems to me that the source of all world lyricism is the lullaby. Its conquering power is irresistible, for it carries a mother's heart—a heart that holds all the joy and sorrow of the world, all the tenderness and cares of the earth" (Kuliyev, 1975:279).

In some cases, a mother's personal emotions—her loneliness and inner thoughts—would take the form of a lullaby, which she would softly sing at her baby's crib:

Ağzımın dadı sənsən,

Gözümün odu sənsən,

Kimim yox, kimsənəm yox,

Qolum, qanadım sənsən.

Körpəm layla, a layla,

Balam layla, a layla.

Parables are similar to lullabies in both purpose and theme. As mentioned earlier, lullabies were mostly created by mothers. However, similar songs could also be sung by the baby's grandmother, aunt, or uncle.

A mother puts her baby to sleep with a lullaby, caressing him gently and wishing for his growth and well-being:

Balama qurban inəklər,

Balam nə vaxt iməklər?

Balama qurban ilanlar,

Balam nə vaxt dil anlar?

Through lullabies, a mother often expressed her love and wishes for her baby, but she also voiced her concerns about his future and cursed those who wished him harm or looked at him with an evil eye. The following similitudes, passed down from grandmothers and mothers living in the Tahla Valley, reflect these emotions:

Oğlum oğulcuq kimi,

Gözləri muncuq kimi,

Oğlumu sevməyən qız

Qudursun qancıq kimi.

Ağrın alım ağ tanrı,
Gəl bacadan bax tanrı.
Kim balamı istəmir,
Dam-daşını yıx tanrı.

Sığıra verim sağrını,
Yeyim qara bağrını.
Sığırçılar almasa,
Özüm alım ağrını.

Lullabies and caressing songs, flowing from the rich inner world of mothers, play an indispensable role in the emotional and spiritual development of babies. These songs not only contribute to a child's upbringing but also capture some of the happiest moments of a mother's life.

Proverbs and sayings. Proverbs and sayings hold a significant place in the spiritual culture of the people of Tahla Chukay. They reflect the history, traditions, beliefs, worldview, and life experiences of the Tahla Valley people, who are descendants of the Turkic world. Given their deep-rooted wisdom, proverbs are of great scholarly importance for studying the moral and intellectual heritage of the people.

H. Zeynalli expressed insightful thoughts about the value of these wise sayings, stating: "In our opinion, the meaning and importance of proverbs are immense. Their significance is so great that by studying them, one can learn everything about the family life, social relations, economic conditions, literature, spirituality, morality, religion, and philosophy of the people who created them" (Zeynalli, 1983:127).

Many classical poets, writers, and scholars—including Nizami Ganjavi, Afzaladdin Khagani, Mirza Fatali Akhundzade, Yusif Vezir Chamenzaminli,

Samad Vurgun, and Salman Mumtaz—have provided valuable insights into the significance of proverbs. They acknowledged their reliance on folklore traditions in their works. Similar perspectives are also found in the cultural discourse of other nations.

For example, Russian literary critic and poet N.A. Dobrolyubov emphasized: "Until our ancient monuments are fully explored, until all the obscure aspects of Russia are illuminated ethnographically and philologically, until the works of Russian national creativity are collected and analyzed, and until all historical and philological facts are compiled, we cannot engage in meaningful debates about the legendary periods of language and history" (Alizadeh, 1985:10).

As evident from the discussion above, proverbs and sayings are invaluable in understanding a nation's historical past.

The diversity of proverbs and sayings among the inhabitants of Tahla Chukay's villages reflects the richness of their cultural heritage. Many of these expressions are not only widespread in the region but are also known throughout Azerbaijan and among Azerbaijani Turks in Georgia. Additionally, numerous Azerbaijani proverbs share similarities with Georgian folk expressions.

Georgian writers such as Akaki Tsereteli, Mikheil Javakhishvili, and Ilia Chavchavadze incorporated Azerbaijani wisdom and proverbs into their works. This phenomenon can be attributed to the long-standing cultural and linguistic exchanges between the two peoples. On one hand, it reflects mutual familiarity with each other's customs and vocabulary; on the other hand, it highlights the historical role of the Azerbaijani-Turkic language as a primary means of communication in the

South Caucasus.

A.A. Bestuzhev-Marlinsky once noted that just as the French language is essential for traveling across Europe, the Azerbaijani language is indispensable for navigating Asia. Similarly, the Georgian scholar M.G. Beltadze referred to the Azerbaijani-Turkic language as the lingua franca of the South Caucasus. This perspective is also supported in the works of H. Valiyev and V. Hacılar (Hacılar, 2007:4; Aliyev, 1995:54).

Riddles. Riddles are one of the most widespread branches of folk creativity among the Azerbaijani-Turks of Georgia, as well as the inhabitants of the Tahla Valley, who are part of this cultural tradition. Riddles were often created collectively. According to elders, during the long winter evenings, relatives and neighbors would gather in each other's homes, posing questions and seeking answers to escape the monotony and oppressive silence of the night. Over time, these questions and answers evolved into riddles and spread among the people.

Regarding riddles, A.H. Hashimov wrote: "Undoubtedly, riddles were first created by the older generation. Elders would pose riddles to one another, especially to young people and children. The goal was to develop in them the ability to generalize and draw conclusions, to sharpen their thinking skills, to expand their knowledge, and to assess how well young people and children had absorbed that knowledge" (Hashimov, 1958:20).

Riddles contained implicit clues about a particular living being or inanimate object. Those with sharp minds and keen perception could decipher their meaning and share their understanding with others.

Riddles played a crucial role in the intellectual development, moral education, and resourcefulness of children. They

encouraged creative thinking and problem-solving skills. Below are some examples of riddles that have been preserved among the local population:

Tappa-tappa,
Gül yappa.
Məməli xatın,
Dişləri yox (Toyuq).
Dan üzü durdum,
Qırmızı oğlağı
Belimə vurdum (Səhəng).
Altı bulaq, içərlər,
Üstü zəmi, biçərlər (Qoyun).

Nizam ilə qurular,
Taxta üstə bənd olar.
Sinəsindən səs verər,
Qulağından burular (Saz).
Damda dana böyrüşür,
Qızlar ona yüyürüşür (Toy).
Nə əli, nə ayağı, nə başı var,
Amma istədiyi vaxt qapını açar
(Külək).

Çox şirindi, dadı yox (Övlad).
O nədir ki, yanınca gəzir,
Amma tuta bilmirsən (Kölgə).
Hamını bəzər,
Özü lüt gəzər (İynə).
Barmaq boyda misiri,
Bəylər onun yesiri (Güllə).
Əllə əkilir, gözlə biçilir (Yazı).

Bayatis with riddles: Əzizim, adınadı,
Adnanın adı nədi?
Su sudan körpü salıb,
Tap, onun adı nədi? (Buz).
Əzizinəm, baş aşağı,
Su axar başaşağı.
Kökü yuxarıda bitib,
Başı aşağı (Bulud).

Beliefs. Beliefs hold a special place in the lives of the people of Tahla Chukay. As the saying goes, "Beliefs are the artistic expression of judgments formed through experience". Superstitions serve as a way

to systematically observe people's thinking patterns, worldview, attitudes toward life, and their ethnic and ethnographic traditions, customs, and ceremonies.

The beliefs among the population of Tahla Chukay are diverse in nature. Here are some of them:

- Do not lean towards the moon, or you will suffer from poor health throughout the year.
- Those who place shoes on top of each other will experience misfortune.
- On the last Tuesday of the year, one should avoid speaking ill, as young people go out for “ear fortune-telling”.
- Hearing bad words brings bad luck.
- Do not pour hot water on the floor in the evening—doing so will bring misfortune to the household.
- Sweeping the house at night is forbidden, as it is believed to sweep away blessings and send them to the sky.
- Cutting down a fruitful tree will bring a curse upon the person.
- If a knife falls, a male guest will arrive.
- Those with naturally connected eyebrows will marry a relative.
- Meeting someone at the doorway is considered a bad omen.
- Counting shoes at the door brings death into the household.
- Destroying a swallow's nest brings a blood curse.
- Those who hammer a nail into someone else's door will experience misfortune themselves.
- Hair clippings should not be trampled on, or the person whose hair was cut will suffer from headaches.
- Polluting water is strictly forbidden, as those who do so are cursed by mermaids.
- If someone drinks polluted water, they may suddenly lose consciousness or

go insane.

- Spilling salt on the table foretells an argument in the house.
- Bread should not be cut with a knife, or blessings will leave the home.
- When moving to a new home, one should take fire from the father's hearth to ensure prosperity and warmth.
- Sleeping under mulberry or fig trees is discouraged, as it is believed that angels will warn the sleeper.
- Sweeping the house at night is said to “sweep away the wedding house”, leading to misfortune.
- Sewing clothes while wearing them is considered unlucky and may bring misfortune.
- If cups are placed side by side while pouring tea, a guest will soon arrive.
- Crossing one's arms while among sheep is thought to bring disaster.
- Playing with fountains indoors causes wealth to flee from the house.
- Placing shoes on a girl's knee is bad luck, as it signifies difficulty in finding a husband.
- Giving a pigeon's egg to a late-speaking child is believed to help them start talking sooner.
- Throwing coins onto the roof of a newly built house ensures prosperity and abundance.
- A person who often feels cold is said to have a warm heart.
- When swallows fly low, it is a sign that rain is coming.

Many of these beliefs are not only widespread among the people of Tahla Chukay but are also common in other regions where Georgian Azerbaijani-Turks live, as well as in Azerbaijan itself.

Conclusion

Thus, the conducted research

demonstrates that the spiritual culture of the population in the villages of the Tahla Valley, located in the Karayazi region of the Republic of Georgia—represented by various forms of folklore such as the art of love, bayati, lullabies, caresses, proverbs and sayings, riddles, and beliefs—shares a common essence with the rich heritage of the Azerbaijani-Turkic people. These cultural elements, refined over centuries, serve as a testament to the collective wisdom and artistic expression of the community.

However, the people of this region also possess unique cultural characteristics that set them apart. These include a particularly high appreciation for the art of ashik, the significant value placed on the ashik's craftsmanship, as well as the preservation of certain proverbs, sayings, and beliefs

that remain relevant only within this specific locality. These distinct features contribute to their cultural identity and differentiate them from other Azerbaijani-Turkic communities.

The study highlights the resilience and continuity of the spiritual culture of the Azerbaijani-Turks of the Tahla Valley, demonstrating how traditions have been preserved despite historical and geographical factors. While their cultural heritage aligns with that of the broader Azerbaijani-Turkic world, the region's unique customs and folklore elements emphasize the richness and diversity within this ethnic group. This cultural uniqueness not only strengthens their identity but also enriches the overall heritage of Azerbaijani-Turkic traditions.

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ИЗ ДУХОВНОЙ КУЛЬТУРЫ РЕГИОНА КАРАЯЗЫ (на основе материалов населения Тахла Чукай)

Аннотация. В статье исследуется духовная культура населения долины Тахла в регионе Караязы Республики Грузия. В центре внимания находятся образцы народного творчества — любовная поэзия, старинные песни, колыбельные, сравнения, пословицы, загадки и поверья, которые впервые вводятся в этнографическое исследование. Работа подчеркивает их значимость в повседневной жизни населения и показывает, что эти элементы духовной культуры, уходящие корнями в глубину веков, зародились в сердце народа, были отточены коллективной памятью и продолжают передаваться из поколения в поколение как ценное художественное наследие.

Не случайно, что население Тахла Чукай, обладающее древними корнями, стало объектом этнологических исследований. Ключевым фактором является наследие Короглу — поэта-воина и народного певца XVII века, который принадлежал к племени Тахла. По мнению профессора Джамала Мустафаева, выдающегося философа и ученого, широко известного в тюркском мире и пользующегося уважением среди многих академиков, сообщество Тахла выделяется среди всех жителей Караязы своей смелостью, прямолинейностью, любовью к истине, преданностью честности, верностью своим корням, стойкостью в моральных и духовных ценностях, а также уверенностью в себе.

Ключевые слова: Грузия, Караязы, население Тахла, духовная культура, этнография.

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КАРАЯЗЫ ОБЛЫСЫНЫҢ РУХАНИ МӘДЕНИЕТІ

(Тахла Чуқай халқының материалдары негізінде)

Аңдатпа. Мақалада Грузия Республикасының Караязы өңіріндегі Тахла жазығы тұрғындарының рухани мәдениеті зерттеледі. Зерттеудің басты назарына халық шығармашылығының үлгілері – махаббат поэзиясы, көне әндер, бесік жырлары, теңеулер, мақал-мәтелдер, жұмбақтар мен наным-сенімдерге алғаш рет этнографиялық зерттеу жасалынған. Зерттеуде жергілікті халықтың күнделікті өміріндегі маңыздылығы атап көрсетіліп, бұл рухани мәдениет элементтері ғасырлар тереңінен тамыр алатыны, халықтың жүрегінде қалыптасып, ұжымдық жад арқылы жетілдірілгені және ұрпақтан-ұрпаққа құнды көркем мұра ретінде беріліп келе жатқаны дәлелденеді.

Тахла Чуқай халқының көне тарихы бар этностық қауым ретінде этнологиялық зерттеулердің нысанына айналуы кездейсоқ емес. Бұл жерде басты фактор – XVII ғасырда өмір сүрген ақын-жауынгер, халық жыршысы Короглуның мұрасы болып табылады. Ол Тахла тайпасынан шыққан тұлға ретінде белгілі. Белгілі түркітанушы ғалым, философия ғылымдарының докторы, түркі әлемінде кеңінен танылған профессор Джамал Мустафаевтың пікірінше, Тахла қауымы Караязы өңіріндегі өзге халықтардан батылдығымен, турашылдығымен, шындыққа деген сүйіспеншілігімен, адалдыққа беріктігімен, ата-баба дәстүріне адалдығымен, моральдық және рухани құндылықтарға деген сүйіспеншілігімен, сондай-ақ өзіне деген сенімділігімен ерекшеленеді.

Кілт сөздер: Грузия, Караязы, Тахла тұрғындары, рухани мәдениет, этнография.

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