

The Motif of Moral Education in Tajik Folk Proverbs

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Abstract

This article analyzes how these meanings are reflected in Tajik proverbs through symbolic, metaphorical, and philosophical expressions. Proverbs are considered as a specific linguocultural code that reveals the moral ideals of each nation and its attitude toward labor and truth. The study shows that exposing negative characteristics in society and encouraging an active response to them constitute a central purpose of Tajik proverbs. It is also emphasized that a spiritual and aesthetic orientation encouraging individuals to understand inner purity, conscience, and honesty plays a dominant role.

Keywords: Zarbulmasal, proverb, moral education, linguoculturology, value, comparative analysis, content, motif.

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1. Introduction

In Tajik folklore, zarbulmasal (Arabic: *ضَرْبُ الْمَثَلِ*) is a wise and instructive expression with deep meaning, widely used in speech as an illustrative example. It represents a genre that is commonly used in language and carries the spirit of moral advice. Its main characteristic is symbolism and figurative meaning. Through various parables and proverbs, zarbulmasals express life experience, moral values, and wisdom in a concise and laconic form.

The use of zarbulmasal gives speech vividness, expressiveness, and depth. It not only deepens the meaning but also enables the listener or reader to imagine more clearly the idea being conveyed. Thus, zarbulmasal is an integral part of folk wisdom, representing a valuable linguistic and cultural heritage that embodies values, moral norms, and life lessons transmitted from

generation to generation

For the analysis of Tajik folk proverbs, collections of Tajik proverbs published in different years were selected as research materials [1,2,3,4]. In addition, a number of scholarly works related to the semantic analysis of Tajik proverbs were examined [5] and considered as the methodological basis for the semantic analysis.

2. Analysis

Tajik folk proverbs reflect the culture, traditions, life experience, and moral values of the Tajik people. The semantics of Tajik proverbs are diverse and include a wide range of themes such as labor, family relations, nature, and universal human values. According to A. Yunusiy, many Tajik proverbs emphasize the importance of labor and perseverance in achieving success. For example, the proverb “Бекори кори бебарор нест” demonstrates that it is impossible to achieve the desired

result without effort. Tajik proverbs also place great importance on family, respect for elders, and mutual assistance. The proverb “Оилаи муттаҳид-қорҳои бузург” emphasizes the significance of unity and harmony within the family [9].

In Tajik folk proverbs, many examples also reflect honesty, conscience, and truthfulness as important elements of moral education. For instance, the proverb “Меҳнати ҳалол – нони бемалол” calls people to honest labor and expresses the idea that honest work brings prosperity and blessing to human life. The phrase “Mehnati halol” refers to work performed through one's own effort, conscience, and fair means, as well as the income earned through such work. The phrase “Noni bemalol” denotes sufficient material provision, peace, tranquility, and a worry-free life. In this expression, emphasis is placed on the idea that sustenance obtained through honest work is blessed and lasting.

This proverb reveals the Tajik people's attitude toward diligence, honesty, and justice. It conveys that honest labor is not only the basis of material well-being but also the foundation of inner peace and social respect. At the same time, it indirectly indicates that wealth obtained through dishonest means is temporary and devoid of blessing. Similar ideas can be observed in Uzbek proverbs that emphasize honest work and warn against dishonest earnings, which can be analyzed comparatively.

The proverb “Бо банди бегона ба чоҳ фуру мадав” represents a symbolic and metaphorical reference to conscience and honesty. It warns against blindly following another person's actions, ideas, goals, or intentions. In this proverb, the expression “Bandi begona” symbolizes another person's idea, promise, or interest, while “Чоҳ фуру рафтан” symbolizes danger, destruction, or falling into trouble. The meaning conveyed is that if one follows uncertain, suspicious, or harmful intentions of others, one may suffer personal loss.

The proverb “Одами умедашро аздастдода, имону вичдон надорад” reflects the relationship between a person's psychological state—hope—and inner moral values such as faith and conscience. The loss of hope weakens a person spiritually and may lead to the loss of justice and fairness. When a person becomes hopeless, they may abandon noble goals and allow themselves to become morally irresponsible. Hope is therefore evaluated as a spiritual support and a force that guides a

person toward self-improvement.

The proverb “Фиребгар нони худро танҳо меҳӯрад” focuses on the theme of deceit and dishonesty. The main image in the proverb is the deceiver—someone who gains benefit through fraud, trickery, or unfair means. In this context, “non” symbolizes not only food but also livelihood, benefit, and a source of living. The expression “tanho mexo'rad” indicates social isolation, lack of respect, and distance from other people in society. Because the deceiver deviates from honesty, society does not respect such a person. The sustenance gained dishonestly is not considered worthy of sharing with others. As a result, such a person becomes socially isolated. The proverb contains a folk moral lesson encouraging younger generations to remain honest and avoid deceit. Any benefit obtained through deception ultimately leaves a person lonely and unhappy. Social respect and reputation can only be achieved through honest work and a clear conscience. It also emphasizes that a person is responsible not only for their own destiny but also for the trust of those around them.

The proverb “Намгу вичдонро харида наметавон” expresses the idea that conscience is not a material but a moral value. In Tajik folk proverbs, moral qualities and spiritual values of a person are expressed through both direct and symbolic means. Semantically, this proverb places two important moral categories—honor and conscience—above material values. The phrase “xarida nametavon” (cannot be bought) indicates that these virtues cannot be measured by money or market value.

Therefore, the proverb reflects the idea that morality and spirituality are inherent and cultivated human qualities. From an educational perspective, the proverb encourages the younger generation to value conscience and honor as fundamental pillars of humanity. At the same time, it emphasizes that human perfection lies not in material wealth but in spiritual richness. Through such moral standards, trust, justice, and honesty among people in society can be strengthened. Thus, the proverb represents not only an artistic expression but also a strong reflection of folk ethics and life philosophy.

Similarly, the proverb “Одами умедашро аздастдода, имону вичдон надорад” is related to the same moral values and demonstrates the interconnection between hope, faith, and conscience. In this proverb, hopelessness is presented as the cause of moral deficiency. If a person loses hope, they may also lose their sense of responsibility toward life and others and become morally

indifferent. In comparison, both proverbs place the concept of conscience at the center. However, the first emphasizes that conscience cannot be compared with material wealth, while the second stresses that a spiritual foundation—hope—is necessary to preserve conscience. Thus, both proverbs function as tools of moral education and play an important role in shaping human character. They represent the moral and ideological immunity formed through folk oral creativity (see Table 1).

The proverb “Муқобили шахси беадолат тир адл аст” reflects the Tajik people's philosophical views on humanity, justice, and moral development. Semantically, the proverb reflects moral standards formed through the opposition of justice and injustice within human spirituality. In it, an “unjust person” is contrasted with his “opposite,” represented as “adl”—a just, fair, and honest individual. Through this contrast, the importance of justice in social life becomes evident.

From an educational perspective, the proverb aims to cultivate human virtues in the younger generation, particularly fairness, truthfulness, and impartiality. Justice here is presented not only as a personal virtue but also as a fundamental regulator of social relations. The idea is that injustice can be exposed and resisted only through the presence of just individuals. In this sense, the proverb expresses not only a single moral quality but also a broader spiritual system. It serves as an important educational tool in promoting equality and truth in society.

From both practical and theoretical perspectives, the proverb promotes moral standards and the value of just behavior in society. As A. N. Leontyev emphasized, “moral knowledge should not remain only at the level of cognition but must become a factor that determines a person's attitudes and activity.” In this regard, the proverb helps to form a moral position in young people

and encourages a conscious attitude against injustice.

Modern global philosophical and educational studies also place justice at the center of human relations. John Rawls, in his famous work *A Theory of Justice* (1971), defines justice as the “primary virtue” of all social institutions. Such universal ideas reflected in folk proverbs connect local spiritual traditions with global philosophical thought.

3. Conclusion

Proverbs serve as an important means of shaping justice, fairness, and an active attitude against injustice in human spirituality and social relations. They strengthen their educational influence through moral dualism such as good and evil, justice and oppression. In Tajik proverbs, a just person appears more clearly against the background of injustice, while Uzbek proverbs emphasize the idea of active resistance to oppression. In Russian proverbs, justice is often viewed as a systemic foundation of society, whereas English proverbs tend to express it through philosophical dualism.

A common feature of all these proverbs is the interpretation of justice as a sacred value and the emphasis on its educational role. Folk proverbs represent an important genre that promotes national spirituality and morality while expressing society's educational and ethical needs. Through the Tajik proverb “Муқобили шахси беадолат тир адл аст”, the opposition between injustice and justice is clearly expressed, promoting balanced moral principles such as fairness, impartiality, and justice. Semantically, the proverb shows that justice gains particular value when contrasted with injustice. Such constructions reflect moral norms in folk consciousness through the dichotomy of opposing concepts (see Table 2).

Proverb Criterion	Намгу виҷдонро харида наметавон[3]	Одами умедашро аздастдода, имону виҷдон надорад[3]
Main Theme	The superiority of conscience over material values	The moral consequences of hopelessness (loss of conscience and faith)
Meaning	Conscience cannot be bought; it comes from human nature	A hopeless person becomes spiritually weak and loses their conscience
Moral issue raised	Protecting conscience and honor and resisting their materialization	When inner strength (hope) disappears, moral values also disappear
Main idea	Spirituality is superior to material wealth	Spiritual stability is a guarantee of moral purity
Educational significance	It encourages young people to value conscience and honor and to live an honest and pure life	It calls on people not to lose their faith and conscience by maintaining spiritual strength
Field of application	Moral education, spiritual philosophy, and human values	Psychology, spiritual stability, and the education of conscience
Personal qualities of the individual	A conscientious person with pure intentions who supports an honest life	A hopeful, spiritually strong, and morally mature person
Form of influence of the proverb	It has a persuasive effect and gives a philosophical conclusion	A warning form that shows the problem and connects cause and effect

Table 1. Analysis of Moral Education Content in Tajik Folk Proverbs

№	Proverb	Nation	Content interpretation	Educational purpose
1	Муқобили шахси беадолат тир адл аст[3]	Tajik	The virtue of a just person becomes even more evident against the background of injustice	Encourages striving for justice and supports the idea of exposing injustice
2	Справедливость — мать порядка[3] (Adolat – tartibning onasidir)	Russian	Justice is the foundation of order and peace in society	Emphasizes the importance of a just system and stability in society
3	The opposite of injustice is justice[3] (Adolatsizlikning muqobili – adolatdir”)	English	The essence of justice is explained through contrasting concepts	Shows that moral concepts can be understood through alternative viewpoints

Table 2. Analysis of Educational Content in Tajik and Other Nations’ Proverbs

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