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THE ETYMOLOGY OF RELIGIOUS TOPONYMS

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses religious toponyms and the history of their origin. Also, the author, using the examples of the verses of the Holy Quran, expounds the etymology of such names of places as mountains, valleys, cities, hills, villages, which have preserved historical and national significance in their content.

KEYWORDS

Arafat, Uhud, Safo, Mavra, Sadum, Hijaz, Ethiopia, Tur, Najran, Hijr, Dovardon.

INTRODUCTION

It is known that every nation has ancient manuscript sources reflecting its religious views, history and traditions. Among them, the history of the creation of an ancient and sacred book of Muslim nations, the Holy Quran, dates back to the distant past. This divine book, which is the main source of Islam, was revealed during the period of Jahiliyyah in the Arabian Peninsula. It is known from historical sources that the Holy Quran is a divine book in the form of a collection of surahs

composed of a collection of oyats (chapters) sent as a revelation to the last Messenger of God, Muhammad (s.a.w.). Although more than 13 centuries have passed since the emergence of Islam, the Holy Quran remains one of the main classical masterpieces of Muslim nations.

METHODS

Like all historical processes, the spread of Islam has its ancient past. Obviously, the details of the struggle for the religion of Islam were not left out of the Quran. The fact that the names of the people mentioned in the Holy Quran are historical, as well as the existence of the names of cities and geographical places even today, indicates that this book is both divine and historical. In this article, we will discuss toponyms (place names), found in the Holy Quran considering that toponyms are the language units related to the language, culture, and religious thinking of people, not only from a historical, but also from a linguistic point of view. Here are some examples of the toponyms found in the Holy Quran:

RESULTS

The Mountain of Tur – A mountain attached to the Red Sea on the Sinay peninsula in Egypt. There is also a surah named “Tur” in the Holy Quran with the name of this mountain mentioned in the 63rd oyat (chapter) of Surah Baqarah. The surah was revealed in Mecca and consists of 49 oyats. On this very mountain, Allah talked with Moses (a.s.w) [6, 10].

The Mountain of Uhud – It is the name of a mountain near Medina. On March 23, 625 A.H., there was a battle between Christians, Jewish people and the Muslims on Uhud Hill. Muslims were defeated in this battle. [1, 500].

The Safo and Mavra Hills - the places which in accordance with the doctrine of Jahiliyyah, were circumambulated from ancient times. While Muslims were hesitating whether they should walk between these two hills during Haj (pilgrimage) and wonder if they would not become sinners for this action, the 158th oyat of Surah Al-Baqara was revealed, saying, “Obviously, Safa and Mawrah (hills) are among the slogans of Allah. Therefore, whoever performs Haj or Umrah and circumambulates them, there is no sin on him...” [6, 24]. These two hills are still circumambulated during Haj and Umrah pilgrimages.

Arafat – the name of mountain ranges in Arabia situated 20 km far from the city of Mecca, its length is 10-12 km and width is 6,5 km. Jabar-ur-Rahma (Mountain of Mercy), the main pilgrimage site of the Haj, is a part of this mountain range. On the 9th day of the month of Dhul-Hijjah, i.e. Arafa, pilgrims go to this hill and pray until sunset. According to Islamic sources, Gabriel (a.s.) showed this hill to Ibrahim (a.s.) and said: “This place is Arafat, you should know that the arcs of Haj will be completed here, and here you will confess your sins.” [1, 66].

The Valley of Najran – It is mentioned in the holy chapters of the Quran as a valley in the land of Yemen. In the Najran valley, Christians and Jews from Madinah lived in this place, and they were called the people of the Najran tribe.

The Valley of Hijr – It is one of the valleys between the city of Medina and the Levant. There is also a chapter named after this valley in the Quran. This surah is the 15th oyat in the Holy Quran, which consists of 99 oyats. Surah Hijr states the stories of the destruction of the people of Sodom who opposed Lut (a.s.), and that all blessings such as the earth, the sky, the sun, the moon, the wind, and water were at the service of man, the reproach of shaitan (devil) to the fact that Adam (a.s.) was made of clay, and the devil, who was created from fire as well as the stories Abraham, Lut, Shuayb, Salih (a.s.) and other events. [1, 653].

Sadum – the name of the village where Lut (a.s.) and his people lived. Angels came to Lut (a.s.) and said that they had to leave the place because the inhabitants of this city mentioned in the Quran were immoral, i.e. did not give up the habit of man and man relationship, and told him to leave the city together with his family and believers (except his wife, because his wife was cursed by God). This is explained in the Quran in the 61-65 and 74 oyats of Surah Hijr. In the morning, when Lut (a.s.) reached a certain distance, Allah commanded Gabriel (a.s.), and with one wing, he lifted the village of Sodom, where Lut's people lived, across the sky and threw it upside down on the ground. In some legends it says 400,000 of his people died in this incident, and in another version, four million people died. Similarly, in other versions it is stated that the city was turned upside down and clay stones were rained on the

people. Today, in the place of the city where this pagan people lived, there is a sea, which is called the Dead Sea and the "Island of Lut"[1, 273].

Hijoz – A historical region located in the north-west of Saudi Arabia. In the 76th oyat of Surah Hijr, it is stated that "By the way, it (the city whose inhabitants were destroyed) is on a permanent road." In the interpretation of the verse it states, "Hijaz is on the side of the road that goes towards Sham (Syria). Passengers can see its complications and learn from it" [6, 266]. Even during the period of Jahiliyyah, the main city of Hijaz - Makkah was the commercial and cultural center of Arabia. At the beginning of the 7th century, Muhammad (s.a.w.) propagated Islam and founded the Muslim community in Hijaz. Today, Hijaz is considered as a holy place of pilgrimage for Muslims.

DISCUSSION

Dovardon – The explanation of the 243 oyat of Surah Baqara the village of Dovardon is mentioned. It gives the following explanation: "According to the books of explanation, in the past, the plague spread among the inhabitants of a village called Dovardan. A group of people escaped from the city and survived and those who remained in the city, died. Then the people who saw this, decided that if such a disease occurs again, they will also leave the city. The next year it spread again in this village making all the inhabitants go to a place where there was no plague. Suddenly, an angel

from below the valley where they were located, and an angel above them, with the command of God, shouted “Die!”. Then, they all died. Hadith says: “Do not go to the place where the plague is spread, if the plague spreads where you are, do not leave it” [6, 39]. No information about the name of this place was found in other sources.

Habashiston (Ethiopia) – The ancient name of the country of Ethiopia, located in northeastern Africa. Even today, in the East, the country of Ethiopia is known as Abyssinia. Abyssinia is mentioned in several verses of the Holy Quran. For example, during the time of our Prophet (s.a.w.), the king of Abyssinia named Najoshi secretly converted to Islam, and when this person died, the Prophet (s.a.w.) performed funeral prayers in absentia with his companions near the Jannat-ul-Baqi' cemetery in Madinah [6, 76]. Also, in the commentary of the 75th oyat of the “Anfal” surah, the migration to Abyssinia and Medina after the conquest of Makkah is described.

CONCLUSION

As can be seen from the examples given above, religious toponyms have a long historical past and express religious and historical information in their content. Before independence, the study of religious issues was limited in linguistics, as in all fields. The development of the field of linguistics and the emergence of directions such as theo-linguistics,

pragma-linguistics, linguistic and cultural studies proved that religious knowledge is harmonious with worldly views.

In conclusion, it can be said that the religious language units, in particular the place names mentioned in the Quran, their history of origin as well as their semantic-stylistic functions, have not yet been studied from the point of view of linguistics. This, in turn, requires more in-depth scientific research on religious toponyms. After all, science and religion are the only ways that lead a person to perfection.

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