

Linguistic Features of Phraseological Expressions of Biblical and Quranic Origin

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Annotation: The proposed article provides a comparative analysis of phraseological units of Biblical and Quranic origin that include proper names (primarily anthroponyms and toponyms). Detailed explanations are given for each onym, and their correlations are noted. The introduction emphasizes the relevance of the chosen topic; the main part analyzes the collected material; and the conclusion summarizes the results of the analysis.

Keywords: Phraseological units with a proper name component, winged expressions, phraseological expressions of Biblical/Quranic origin, anthroponym, toponym, correlation of onyms



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“Proper names reflect traces of human caprice and imagination... They serve as a condensed history of the inner life and spirit of the people, and where sagas fall silent, names begin their tale.”

(Mikhail Moroshkin)

Proper names within phraseological expressions, as key carriers of cultural and linguistic information, continue to attract the attention of many researchers. Among phraseological units containing proper names, a special place belongs to Biblical (in Russian) and Quranic (in Uzbek) expressions, as well as to winged expressions.

Winged expressions are figurative and fixed phraseological units that are widely used in speech. They originate from literary sources, myths, folklore, or various historical events. Modern events can also serve as sources of winged expressions, including speeches by well-known individuals and journalistic works.

Biblical phraseological units originate from the texts of the Holy Scriptures, which are rich in onyms (anthroponyms and toponyms).

Let us examine the anthroponym components within Biblical phraseological expressions in more detail:

The anthroponym *Adam* appears in expressions such as “Adam’s eyelids” (*Adamovy veky*) and “The old Adam” (*Vetkhiy Adam*). According to the Bible, Adam is the first man on Earth, created on the sixth day of creation, representing the beginning of humankind. The expression “The old Adam” refers to a sinful person who must undergo moral rebirth. Thus, the phrase “to cast off the

old man, Adam” has come to mean spiritual renewal and liberation from old habits and worldviews.

Cain (*Cain's mark*): this name belongs to the first murderer on Earth and is also used as a derogatory expression. The phrase “Cain’s mark” signifies the stigma of crime.

Balaam: in the Old Testament, Balaam is known as a prophet summoned from beyond the Euphrates by the Moabite king Balak to curse the Israelites. However, Balaam blessed them three times and foretold the coming of Jesus Christ, calling Him a star. The expression “Balaam’s donkey” originates from the biblical story in which Balaam’s donkey miraculously spoke in a human voice to protest being beaten (Numbers, 22,27–28). This phrase is used ironically to describe silent and submissive individuals who unexpectedly speak out or voice protest.

Gog and Magog: Gog, "the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal," and "the land of Magog" are mentioned together in the description of a "great assembly of armies" that will invade the Land of Israel under Gog’s leadership "in the last days" to plunder and devastate, but they will fall there by the hand of the Lord. In other parts of the Bible, Gog is mentioned as the brother of Magog. From biblical sources, the legends of Gog and Magog transitioned into the literature of the Christian Church. In the Book of Revelation by John the Theologian, it is stated that the wars of Gog and Magog will occur a thousand years after Christ's first coming. According to one interpretation, “Gog” refers to the name of a leader, while “Magog” is the name of a land or people. More commonly, they are interpreted as two nations led by the prince of Rosh.

Job: In the Old Testament, in the Book of Job, there is a story of a man named Job who was known for his virtuous life. This provoked Satan, who challenged God by claiming that if Job who had a large, happy family and great wealth were deprived of all of it, he would lose both his faith and piety. God sent Job many severe trials: He took away his children, servants, wealth, and health, and afflicted him with leprosy. Nevertheless, Job endured all his sufferings with dignity, without losing his faith in God. The anthroponym appears in phraseological expressions such as “long-suffering Job” and “as poor as Job.” This name has become a symbol of endurance and suffering in the cultural history of all Christian peoples, including the Russian.

Joseph: The expression “Chaste (Beautiful) Joseph” originates from the biblical story of the young Joseph. Joseph was the son of the patriarch Jacob and Rachel. As his father’s beloved son, he was hated by his older brothers, who even planned to kill him. However, fate took a different turn when a passing caravan appeared: they sold Joseph for twenty pieces of silver, and he was later resold in Egypt. There, the wife of Potiphar, an Egyptian courtier, attempted in vain to seduce him, but Joseph refused to share her bed. The phraseological expression is used to mean: a chaste and virtuous young man.

Judas: Judas Iscariot was one of the twelve disciples of Jesus. The expressions “Judas the traitor” and “Judas’s kiss” originate from the Gospel account of Judas Iscariot’s betrayal: he handed over his teacher to the Jewish high priests for thirty pieces of silver.

Bringing the guards to the Garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus was staying, Judas said that the one he kissed would be the man to arrest. He then approached Jesus and kissed him. The name *Judas* has since become synonymous with “traitor”; and the phrase “Judas’s kiss” is used to mean a treacherous act hypocritically disguised as a gesture of love or friendship.

Lazarus: This name has become a symbol of poverty. It originates from the Gospel (Luke 16,20–21), from the parable of the poor man Lazarus, who lay covered in sores at the gate of a rich man and longed to eat even the crumbs that fell from his table.

In earlier times, beggars would sing “spiritual verses” while asking for alms, often including “the verse of poor Lazarus,” based on this Gospel story. The song was performed plaintively, in a mournful tone.

From this tradition came expressions such as “to sing Lazarus” or “to play the part of Lazarus,” which are used to mean: to complain about one's fate, to weep, to beg persistently, or to pretend to be poor and unfortunate.

Magdalene: Mary Magdalene (from the city of Magdala), according to the Gospel narrative (Mark 16:9; Luke 7,37–48; 8,2), was healed by Jesus, who cast out “seven demons” from her. After this, she repented of her immoral life and became one of His devoted followers. Because of her story, the term “penitent Magdalene” came to refer to women who, after leading immoral lives, returned to honest labor. This designation first appeared in the rules of institutions created for such women during the Middle Ages, particularly at female monasteries across Europe. In the Russian Empire, Magdalene asylums had existed since 1833. The term “penitent Magdalene” is also used ironically to describe people who weepily repent of their misdeeds in an exaggerated or theatrical way.

Methuselah, Jared: In the Bible, Methuselah is one of the patriarchs of humanity, renowned for his extraordinary longevity—he lived 969 years. He is considered the oldest person whose age is specifically mentioned in the Bible. The Bible also refers to Jared, who is said to have lived 962 years.

In general, the Bible presents the following impressive ages for early figures: Adam lived 931 years, Seth 912 years, and so forth. The expressions “Methuselah’s age” and “Jared’s years” are used to signify extreme longevity or a life that extends to an unusually old age.

Nimrod: This name refers to a passionate hunter, known as the grandson of the biblical patriarch Noah. The Bible states, “He was a mighty hunter before the Lord; wherefore it is said, ‘Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord’” (Genesis 10:9). The expression “a mighty hunter before the Lord” is used as a description of a person who is strong and exceptional in significance or ability.

Noah: This anthroponym appears in the phraseological expression “Noah’s Ark” (the word *ark* means “box” or “chest”). According to the biblical account, Noah built a legendary vessel into which he loaded the ancestors of all animal species on Earth at God’s command, in order to save them from the great flood. The phrase “Noah’s Ark,” once reverently understood as a place of salvation from any natural disaster, is now commonly used in an ironic sense to describe a cramped, overcrowded space inhabited by a random assortment of diverse occupants.

Solomon: King Solomon of Israel, the son of David, was renowned as a great sage. Many legends have been told about his cleverness, but most of them focus on his wisdom and ingenuity in resolving disputes and legal matters. For example, the phrase “*Solomon’s judgment*” refers to a wise and swift court decision. The phrase “*Solomonic solution*” is also used to describe a witty, unexpected resolution to a difficult situation or a clever way out of a dilemma. Another expression, “*Solomon in all his glory (was not arrayed like one of these)*”, is used to mean: “Don’t bother yourself with things not meant for you,” or “Even the greatest splendor is not always necessary.”

Thomas: According to the Gospel, Thomas, one of Christ’s apostles, responded to news of Jesus’s resurrection after the crucifixion by saying: “Unless I see the nail marks in His hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.” From this account comes the expression “*Doubting Thomas*”, which refers to a person who is skeptical and hard to convince of anything without direct evidence. It describes someone who persistently doubts and refuses to take anything on faith.

In the Uzbek language, the following anthroponyms are observed within phraseological expressions of Quranic origin: A productive group of Quranic-based phraseological expressions consists of those containing the names of prophets.

Suleiman (*The Seal of Solomon, The Throne of Solomon*): He possessed a special powerful seal, after which any decision was considered final and could not be revised. He was regarded as the wealthiest prophet of his time. His throne holds special symbolic significance as it represents the highest seat of authority. The Uzbek expression “*On Solomon’s throne*” (“*Sulaymonning taxtida*”) is used to refer to a proud person who carries themselves arrogantly. Solomon was the only prophet who had a pact with the world of jinn. After his death, it is said that the jinn began to intrude upon the divine light and influence humanity. From this belief comes the ironic Uzbek expression “*Solomon died, and the jinn were freed*” (“*Sulaymon o’lib, devlar qutuldi*”), which is used humorously in contemporary Uzbek speech.

Yusuf (Expression: “*husni Yusuf*”): Known as the most handsome of all prophets, he also symbolizes truthfulness (*siddiq*). The phrase “*husni Yusuf*” is used in reference to a man of otherworldly beauty.

Ayyub (Expression: “*Ayyub sabrli*”): According to a Quranic narrative, Ayyub suffered from a severe, incurable illness, lost his power and wealth, and was abandoned even by his wives. Despite everything, he remained faithful to Allah. For his patience and dignified endurance, he was rewarded by God. The expression “*Ayyub sabrli*” denotes ultimate patience and can be considered equivalent to the idiom “angelic patience.”

Musa (expression: “*Muso qilichi tekkani*”). His sword had a miraculous power: whatever it touched would be split in two. The expression “*Muso qilichi tekkani*” is used to describe a situation where two people have quarreled and become estranged.

Qarun (expression: “*Qorun kabi*”) is a Qur’anic character, one of the companions of Musa, representing evil and worldly wealth. According to the Qur’anic narrative, he gave in to Satan’s temptations, prioritizing worldly matters over prayer. Through his labor, he amassed immense wealth. When prophethood was transferred from Musa to his brother Harun, Qarun instigated a rebellion, for which he was punished and cast into fire. The expression “*Qorun kabi*” is used to describe materially wealthy people who are excessively arrogant and short-tempered.

Among the Quranic-origin phraseological expressions, there are also components that include toponyms.

Zamzam (expression: “*as if bathed in Zamzam*”) – According to the Quran, this is the name of a sacred well near the Kaaba in Mecca. The expression means “someone who has bathed in Zamzam,” i.e., a person considered pure in every sense. It is used in a sarcastic tone.

This article attempts to identify and analyze the peculiarities of phraseological expressions containing proper names in the Uzbek language. The goal was to determine the main characteristics and sources of such phraseological units. Based on the collected material, it was found that the majority of phraseological expressions with proper names in the Uzbek language are of Quranic origin.

Taking into account the classifications mentioned above, it can be stated that Quranic idiomatic expressions form a significant layer within the study of Uzbek phraseology. They require more in-depth research and a specialized approach. To date, the methods for studying and systematizing Quranic phraseological expressions have not yet been clearly defined.

Thus, the most productive group of phraseological expressions with proper name components in both languages is composed of so-called Biblicisms and Quranisms—i.e., expressions of Biblical and Quranic origin that contain proper name elements. These components may appear as anthroponyms, toponyms, and so on.

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