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**ETYMOLOGICAL ORIGINS AND SEMANTIC FEATURES OF RELIGIOUS
PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS IN UZBEK, ENGLISH AND RUSSIAN**

Kurbonova Marguba Sotvoldiyevna

Associate Professor; Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Philological Sciences

Department of English Philology and Teaching Methodology

Andijan State Institute of Foreign Languages

kmarguba2020@gmail.com

Orcid:<https://orcid.org/0009-0000-7000-3942>

+998 88 988 6480

Religious phraseological units constitute a significant layer of the phraseological systems of many languages because they preserve the traces of religious beliefs, historical experience, moral values, and culturally established ways of conceptualising the relationship between human beings and the transcendent world. Unlike neutral phraseological expressions, religiously marked units frequently contain sacred names, biblical or Qur'anic concepts, references to divine will, religious rituals, or culturally specific images associated with faith. Therefore, their analysis requires not only a structural-semantic approach but also an etymological and linguocultural interpretation. The comparative study of English, Russian, and Uzbek demonstrates that religious phraseology reflects both universal human ideas and language-specific cultural models. Contemporary research likewise confirms that religious phraseological units are characterised by symbolism, imagery, expressiveness, evaluation, and axiological significance, while their semantic structures encode religious, historical, mythological, and cultural knowledge.

The etymological dimension is particularly important because the contemporary meaning of a religious phraseological unit cannot always be understood from the literal meanings of its components. The historical source of an expression often explains why a particular combination acquired a figurative or evaluative meaning. In English and Russian, a considerable part of religious phraseology is connected with the Bible and Christian tradition, whereas Uzbek religious phraseology has been strongly influenced by Islam, Qur'anic concepts, Arabic religious vocabulary, and the religious worldview of the Uzbek people. This difference is not absolute, since cultural contacts and translation have resulted in the movement of religious expressions between languages. Nevertheless, the dominant religious traditions remain an important factor in determining the etymological and semantic organisation of the three phraseological systems.

The relationship between language and culture provides an important theoretical basis for interpreting such units. A. Wierzbicka argues that languages contain culturally significant “key concepts” through which the fundamental values of a particular community can be reconstructed. From this perspective, phraseological units are especially valuable linguistic evidence because they preserve culturally meaningful conceptualisations in compact and conventionalised forms. Wierzbicka's approach demonstrates that linguistic semantics can serve as a means of investigating cultural psychology and ethnospecific patterns of thought. In the case of religious phraseology, this principle becomes particularly relevant because concepts such as God, faith, sin, blessing, destiny, salvation, divine will, and repentance acquire culturally specific semantic associations.

The semantic structure of religious phraseological units is frequently based on metaphorisation. Religious experience often involves abstract concepts that are difficult to describe through literal language; consequently, concrete objects and human experiences become source domains for conceptualising the divine or transcendent. J. Hesse, analysing metaphor in religious language, notes that metaphors may communicate more than literal propositional content and can provide an imagistic perspective that cannot be fully reduced to literal paraphrase. His analysis of biblical expressions such as “The Lord is my rock”, “my fortress”, and “my shield” demonstrates how physical objects become conceptual models for divine protection and security. Thus, the semantic

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development of religious phraseological units can be interpreted as a process in which a concrete image becomes conventionalised and subsequently acquires an abstract, evaluative, or culturally symbolic meaning.

A similar mechanism can be observed in English phraseology. Expressions such as “the promised land,” “the forbidden fruit,” “a scapegoat,” “the salt of the earth,” “the writing on the wall,” “the apple of one’s eye,” and “by the skin of one’s teeth” demonstrate different degrees of biblical motivation and semantic transformation. For example, the promised land originates in the biblical narrative concerning the land promised by God to the Israelites. In contemporary English, however, the expression may denote any highly desirable place or condition. The religious source remains historically recognisable, but the phrase has undergone semantic generalisation and can function outside explicitly religious discourse. Similarly, a scapegoat derives from the biblical ritual concept of transferring collective sins onto a goat; in modern English it denotes a person who is unfairly blamed for the failures or wrongdoing of others. The transformation from a ritual-religious concept to a general social meaning illustrates semantic secularisation and metaphorical extension.

Another illustrative example is “the writing on the wall.” Its etymological source is the biblical story in the Book of Daniel, where mysterious writing announces the impending downfall of a ruler. In present-day English, the expression means a clear indication that something undesirable is likely to happen. The phrase therefore retains its historical motivation while developing a broader pragmatic meaning. Such examples demonstrate that religious phraseological units do not necessarily remain restricted to religious discourse. Through repeated use in literature, journalism, political discourse, and everyday communication, they may become conventional components of the general lexical and phraseological system.

Russian religious phraseology displays comparable processes of semantic transformation. Biblical and Christian cultural heritage has contributed numerous stable expressions containing the component Бог (‘God’), including Бог даст (‘God willing’), все под Богом ходим (‘we all live under God’s will’), Бог дал, Бог взял (‘God gave and God took away’), отдать Богу душу (‘to die’), без Бога ни до порога (‘without God one cannot accomplish anything’), and как Бог даст (‘as fate/God determines’). Contemporary lexicographic and corpus materials demonstrate that such units may express hope, resignation, uncertainty, acceptance of fate, consolation, or dependence on divine will.

The expression “Бог даст” is particularly revealing from a semantic perspective. Its primary pragmatic function is to express hope for a desirable future outcome. The expression is documented in literary usage as well. For example, A. Chekhov employs it in Ward No. 6: “Будущим летом, бог даст, махнем на Кавказ...” Here the expression does not constitute a theological statement in a strict sense; rather, it functions as a conventional marker of hope and uncertainty concerning a future event. A similar pragmatic function can be observed in Russian literary discourse in the expression как Бог даст, which indicates acceptance of an uncertain outcome or circumstances beyond the speaker’s control. Consequently, the religious component becomes integrated into the semantics of modality and evaluation.

The Russian expression “Бог дал, Бог взял” provides another example of semantic conventionalisation. Literally referring to divine giving and taking, the phrase is traditionally used as an expression of resignation or consolation in situations involving loss or death. Contemporary research on the Russian concept Бог demonstrates that such phraseological expressions construct a semantic opposition between divine power and human limitations. The human being is represented as existing within a world governed by forces beyond individual control. This semantic model corresponds to a broader cultural conceptualisation in which human agency is balanced against divine will and destiny.

Uzbek religious phraseology reveals a comparable but culturally distinct conceptual model. Expressions containing Xudo, Alloh, rizq, duo, and other religiously marked components demonstrate the influence of Islamic worldview on Uzbek phraseological semantics. The Uzbek Educational Corpus records numerous stable expressions with the component xudo, including xudo

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biladi, xudo haqi, xudo ko'rsatmasin, xudo saqlasin, xudo rahmat qilsin, xudoga shukur, xudoga topshirmoq, and xudo xohlasa. These expressions cover several semantic domains: uncertainty, oath, protection, gratitude, condolence, submission, and hope.

Particularly significant is the expression “Xudo xohlasa”, literally corresponding to “if God wills” or “God willing”. The Uzbek Educational Corpus defines it as an expression used at the beginning of an utterance to indicate the speaker's hope that a particular intention will be realised. Its semantic structure therefore combines the concepts of future intention and divine will. The speaker expresses an intention but simultaneously acknowledges that its realisation depends on a higher power. This feature distinguishes the expression from a simple future-oriented statement and gives it a culturally determined pragmatic meaning.

The same conceptual model appears in Uzbek literary discourse. In Nurullo Ostons's humorous work *Xudo xohlasa*, the expression is used repeatedly and becomes an important element of the narrative's cultural and pragmatic texture. The humorous interpretation of the phrase demonstrates that a religiously motivated expression can acquire additional contextual meanings while retaining its underlying cultural association with divine will. This example is particularly valuable because it demonstrates that religious phraseology may operate simultaneously at several levels: etymological, semantic, pragmatic, stylistic, and cultural.

A comparison of God willing – Бог даст – Xudo xohlasa illustrates both semantic convergence and cultural divergence. All three expressions communicate the general idea that the successful realisation of a future event depends on a higher power. Their common semantic nucleus may therefore be represented as FUTURE EVENT + HUMAN EXPECTATION + DIVINE WILL. At the same time, their cultural associations differ according to the religious and historical experience of the respective speech communities. English God willing is strongly associated with Christian cultural history but is also widely used in secular and contemporary contexts. Russian Бог даст combines religious semantics with colloquial modality and often expresses hope or uncertainty. Uzbek Xudo xohlasa retains a particularly strong association with Islamic cultural consciousness and functions not only as an expression of hope but also as a culturally conventional acknowledgement of divine agency.

An additional example of cross-linguistic interaction is *Insha'Allah*, an Arabic expression meaning “if God wills”. Although it originates in Islamic Arabic, it has entered the communicative practices of speakers of other languages. Its presence in English-language texts can serve not merely as a semantic equivalent of God willing but also as a marker of Muslim identity and cultural authenticity. Research on religious expressions in English and Uzbek notes that Arabic religious expressions may be retained in translated or culturally marked English texts in order to preserve religious and cultural colour. This demonstrates that equivalence in translating religious phraseology cannot be reduced to dictionary correspondence: the translator must also consider connotation, cultural identity, pragmatic function, and contextual relevance.

The semantic organisation of religious phraseological units can consequently be described through several recurrent conceptual domains. These include DIVINE WILL, FAITH, DESTINY, PROTECTION, GRATITUDE, BLESSING, PUNISHMENT, DEATH, HOPE, FEAR, MORALITY, and HUMAN LIMITATION. Research on English and Russian religiously marked phraseology has identified numerous semantic groups based on religious names, anthropological and somatic nominations, biblical realities, theonyms, spatial and temporal concepts, natural elements, and other culturally significant components. Such units frequently establish binary oppositions such as GOOD–EVIL, LIGHT–DARKNESS, DIVINE–HUMAN, and SALVATION–PUNISHMENT.

The comparative evidence therefore indicates that the etymological origin of a religious phraseological unit and its contemporary meaning are interconnected but not identical. A phrase may originate in a sacred text, ritual, theological concept, or religious narrative and subsequently undergo metaphorisation, generalisation, semantic weakening, pragmatic specialisation, or even partial secularisation. Its original religious motivation may remain transparent to speakers, become historically opaque, or survive primarily as a cultural reference. Consequently, the study of religious

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phraseology should distinguish between etymological motivation, literal religious meaning, conventional phraseological meaning, and contextual-pragmatic interpretation.

This distinction is particularly important for comparative linguistics and translation studies. A formally similar expression in three languages does not necessarily possess an identical cultural meaning. Conversely, formally different expressions may share a common conceptual basis. For example, God willing, Бог даст, and Xudo xohlasa are structurally different but semantically comparable because all encode the relationship between human intention and divine agency. At the same time, their pragmatic distribution and cultural connotations are not completely interchangeable. Therefore, the translation of religious phraseological units requires attention to functional and cultural equivalence rather than mechanical lexical substitution.

In conclusion, religious phraseological units in English, Russian, and Uzbek represent condensed forms of collective cultural memory. Their etymology reflects the historical interaction of language and religion, while their contemporary semantics demonstrates processes of metaphorisation, semantic extension, conventionalisation, and pragmatic adaptation. English religious phraseology is substantially connected with Biblical and Christian traditions; Russian phraseology preserves a large number of expressions rooted in Biblical and Orthodox-Christian cultural experience; Uzbek phraseology reflects the profound influence of Islam, Arabic religious vocabulary, and indigenous cultural conceptualisation. At the same time, the three systems reveal a common human tendency to conceptualise abstract experiences such as fate, hope, morality, protection, loss, and uncertainty through religious imagery. Thus, religious phraseological units should be regarded not merely as fixed combinations of words but as linguocultural signs in which etymological memory, semantic structure, pragmatic function, and collective worldview intersect. Their comparative investigation provides valuable evidence for understanding how different linguistic communities conceptualise the relationship between human agency, moral responsibility, destiny, and the divine.

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