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THE RITUAL AGAINST INFERTILITY چله بری ĆELLEBORI AS A SPECIFIC STEREOTYPICAL FORM OF IRANIAN BEHAVIOR (BASED ON THE MATERIAL OF FOLK OMENS AND SUPERSTITIONS OF ARTISTIC DISCOURSE)

Summary. In today's globalized world, with advancements in science and technology, widespread use of information technologies, and increased international trade, there is a blending and intertwining of different national cultures. Misunderstanding these cultural nuances often leads to international rifts and conflicts. Culture delineates fundamental human values and life orientations, significantly shaping cognitive processes, behaviors, work ethics, managerial approaches, communication patterns, interpersonal dynamics, and related aspects. In the contemporary context, marked by significant Russian aggression against Ukraine and the alignment of the Islamic Republic of Iran with the adversary, a comprehensive examination and scholarly inquiry into the Persian-speaking populace's mindset, linguistic expressions, cultural norms, and behavioral paradigms appear particularly pertinent. This scientific inquiry scrutinizes the operational intricacies of the ritual against infertility چله بری «ĉellebori» as a distinctive stereotypical behavioral manifestation among Iranians, based on the material of Persian folk beliefs and superstitions. The study aims to delineate the idiosyncrasies of stereotypical behavior formation within the Persian linguistic-cultural milieu, utilizing material from Persian omens and superstitions of artistic discourse pertaining to the rituals against infertility. The history of studying language-cultural rituals, particularly in contemporary domestic and Western European linguistics, is succinctly characterized. It has been elucidated that a language-cultural ritual is a complex of speech acts performed in a specific order, in a traditional manner, and at a defined time, serving as a primary mechanism of collective memory. The concept of آبستنی *ābestāni* (pregnancy) is characterized in relation to its relevance in Persian superstitions and beliefs. It has been ascertained that traditional patriarchal attitudes towards women, whose role is seen as the continuation of the family line, are still prevalent in contemporary Iranian society. The inability to become pregnant is often associated with an evil eye in the minds of Iranians, leading to specific ritualistic manipulations against it, notably the چله بری "ĉellebori" ritual.

Key words: behavioral stereotypes, ritual, Persian omens and superstitions, linguacultural studies.

As is known, human behavior is variable and diverse, yet at the same time it is typified because it adheres to norms and standards established in society. Any society, in order to preserve its

integrity, creates its own system of social codes or behavioral programs for its members. Behavior is a form of human activity based on stereotypes that are preserved in the collective memory and passed down from generation to generation. Under semiotic behavior, we understand behavior in which a specific action (e.g., splashing water behind the departing person) serves as a symbol for another action (in order for the journey to be safe), which is not directly related to the first action.

Ukrainian scholar S.I. Shyroka notes in her research that the equivalent of the concept of "stereotypical behavior" is "ritual." Ritual is a means of overcoming critical life situations for an individual or group of individuals. By performing rituals, a collective develops and reproduces uniform forms of behavior in order to "manifest allegiance to common values through collective actions" [1, p. 109].

According to the definition by F. S. Batsevych, a "lingua-cultural ritual" (from Latin "ritualis" – ceremonial) is a set of established speech acts, a pattern of speech behavior that, in a symbolically ordered form, reproduces the connection of individuals, social groups, and society with the most important phenomena for them: historical events, people, natural objects and processes, etc. Lingua-cultural rituals are typically accompanied by verbal formulas, songs, gestures, marches, actions with special objects ("cultural objects"), and so on [2, p. 148].

Numerous scholarly works by Ukrainian and international researchers, such as O. Kondratyuk [3], K. Lorenz [4], A. R. Brown [5], E. Tylor [6], G. V. Volkova [7], and others, have been dedicated to the study of linguistic and cultural rituals. However, the issue of the formation of ritualized stereotypical behavior among Iranians based on folk omens and superstitions has not previously been the subject of specific academic investigation.

Thus, this article **aims** to demonstrate peculiarities of the specific Persian ritual against infertility called **ĉellebori** that is widely used in the context of Persian omens and superstitions, and analyze the stereotypical behavior of Iranians manifested in this ritual.

Women occupy a special place in the culture of any people. The study of their status is, in fact, an examination of the vicissitudes of public and private life within a particular society. The status of women in society, and their place and role in the complex system of social relations, have always been linked to motherhood.

One of the most critical stages in a woman's life is pregnancy, along with the period of pregnancy and the associated challenges. In Iran, women have always been held in particularly high regard because they give life to future generations. This approach to women is either traditional or patriarchal, seeing a woman's primary role in her natural biological function of reproduction. Even an ancient Iranian proverb states that زن تا نازیده بیگانه است *zan tā nazāide bigāne ast* "until a woman has given birth, she is a stranger".

In the Persian language, there are several words denoting the concept of "pregnancy," including *ābestani* آبستی بارداری *bārdāri*, *hāmelegi* حاملگی (from Arabic حامله literally, "the one who carries"). In the context of Persian omens and superstitions, where pregnancy is the central component, the word *ābestani* آبستی is typically used, therefore, we will examine its etymology in more detail.

According to A. Bolukbāši Persian word *ābestani* آبستی originates from *ābestan* آبستن/*āboštan* in Middle Persian and *āpoštan* آپستن or *āpoštanīh* آپستانیه in Old Persian. *Āpoštanīh* – consists of the prefix *-ā*, the word *pos* (meaning boy), the word *tan* (meaning body) and the suffix *-ih*. So, on the one hand, this word describes the state of a woman who has a boy child in her body or belly, and on the other hand, it shows the value of a male child in the consciousness of Iranian society [8].

Since in traditional Iranian society the status of a woman is directly related to the birth of a child, one of the main problems of a woman was and remains infertility. Iranians often attribute a woman's inability to become pregnant after marriage to an evil eye. The concept of an evil eye in the context of pregnancy is verbalized by an expression *čelle be u oftāde ast* آو چله به او افتاده *čelle gir šode* (literally 'a čelle fell on her'). According to the Persian dictionary by A. A. Dehxodā a concept *čelle* چله means: 1) forty-day period (e.g. after childbirth, wedding, death) 2) forty-day period for Sufis (during which they fast and pray alone) [9]. However, in the context of omens and superstitions, this word means "the misfortune of a woman who cannot get pregnant several years after marriage." In order to get rid of this misfortune, there is a special rite in the Iranian tradition *čellebōri* چله بری (lit. 'cutting the čelle'). From the point of view of grammar, the word *čellebōri* is a derived abstract noun formed by semi-affixation (*čelle* + the present tense root of the verb *boridan* (bar-) 'to cut' + the suffix of the formation of abstract nouns *-i*) and semantically it can be explained as the breaking of charms or the annulment of spells, i.e. the removal damage. Some Iranian researchers deny the connection of the word *čelle* with the number 40 and give it only the meaning of "spell" or "knot". However, in most manifestations of this rite, one can observe the presence of the number 40, which has long had a sacred meaning in Iranian culture. Traditionally, there were three types of *čellebōri*:

1) *Čellebōri* in a Jewish women's hammam (public bath).

On Saturday or Wednesday, a young wife or a woman who could not become pregnant would go to the Jewish women's hammam with a relative or close friend. She would sit on one of the steps of the bath pool with her back to the center, and her relative or friend would place a few coins under her feet. Then the bathwoman would pour a jar of water over the barren woman's head. After that, the woman would crush forty green onions with her hands, pour them into the bath water, get up, take a handful of water from the hammam, wash her face, and leave the bath. The bathhouse would keep the money that had been placed under the woman's feet.

2) *Čellebōri* with centipede.

A live or freshly dead centipede was dipped into a bowl of water and then removed. On Wednesday, a woman who could not get pregnant would wash herself with this water, finding a sense of calm as she did so.

3) *Čellebōri* in the corpse-washer house.

– They would go to the house where the dead were washed and take a glass of the water used to wash the deceased. In exchange, they would give money or sweets to the corpse-washer. They then took this water to the hammam, poured it over the barren woman's head after bathing, and left.

– They would go to the building where the dead were washed, give a bunch of green onions and some money to the corpse-washer. Then the woman had to lie down on the washing table. The corpse-washer would chop onions and pour them on the woman's belly, saying, *be niyat-e čellebōri*, which means 'with the purpose of čellebōri'.

– They would take a glass of water from the house where the dead were washed, and before going to bed at home, the woman would wet her head with it and then go to sleep [10, p. 22–23].

In the Encyclopedia of the Islamic World, it is also noted by F. Bahrāmi that in addition to the ritual washing of the body of the deceased and wrapping the body in a shroud, in such institutions, among women who sought to become pregnant and had problems with it, the performance of the "*čellebōri*" rite was widespread [11].

Let's consider an excerpt from the work of J. Ale Ahmad "Those who cook sumalyak":

– دختر جون صد بار بهت گفتم این دکتر مکتراها رو ول کن. بیا پهلوی خودم تا سر چله آبستنت کنم.

– عمقزی، من که حرفی ندارم. گفتمی چله بری کن کردم. گفتمی تو مرده شور خونه از رو مرده پیر که پریدم و نصف گوشت تنم آب شد. خدا نصیب نکنه. هنوز بادش که می افتم تنم می لرزه. گفتمی دوا به خورد شوهرت بده که دادم. خیال می کنی روزی چهل تا نطفه ی تخم مرغ فراهم کردن کار آسونی بود؟ اونم یک هفته تموم...

– Doxtar jun sad bār behet goftam in doctor moktorhā-rā vel kon. Biyā pahlu-ye xodam tā sar-e čelle ābestan-et konam.

– Amqezi, man ke harfi nadāram. Gofti čellebōri kon kardam. Gofti tu mordešur xune az ru morde bepar ke paridam o nesf-e gušt-e tanam āb šod. Xodā nasib nakone. Hanuz yād-eš ke mioftam tanam milarze. Gofti davā be xord-e šowhar-et bede ke dādam. Xiyāl mikoni ruzi čehel tā notfe-ye toxm-e morq farāham kardan kār-e āsun-i bud? Unam yek hafte-ye tamum...

– *Girl, I've told you a hundred times not to go to those doctors. Come to me, and I'll help you get pregnant with the help of "čelle".*

– Sister, I don't mind. You told me to perform the "*čellebōri*" ceremony, and I did. You told me to jump over the deceased in the corpse-washer's house – I did it, even though I was terrified and lost half my weight from fear. God forbid anyone should go through such a thing! When I think about it, I still shake. You said to give the potion to my husband – I did that too. Do you think it was easy to collect forty chick embryos a day for a whole week? [12, p. 27–28].

The given passage demonstrates the stereotypical situation of "the desire to get pregnant" typical for Iranian society and the use of the "*čellebōri*" ritual by women, which can be considered as a type of stereotypical behavior of Iranian women in the relevant context. In this case, there is a third option for performing the rite in a corpse-washer house.

A cousin advises a woman to ignore conventional medicine and resort to the "*čellebōri*" ritual, which she had previously performed,

involving jumping over a deceased person in a corpse-washing house. However, as indicated in the text excerpt, this ritual not only failed to produce the desired result but also caused significant stress to the young woman, a quite predictable outcome. Moreover, apart from the "čellebori" ritual, as the excerpt shows, Iranian women resort to other methods in their pursuit of pregnancy, including traditional healing practices, which also proved ineffective according to the text. The number forty is also significant. M. Karbāsyān states that in Persian linguoculture, the number forty can have several meanings: a) it denotes a large quantity of something, a limit often used as a hyperbole. For instance, in Ferdowsi's epic poem "Shahnameh," Rostam kills forty heroes in battle with Akvan-Div. Or, when something needs to be shared among many people, the Persian proverb **yek maviz o čehel qalandar** (literally 'one raisin and forty dervishes') is used; b) it plays an important role in actions aimed at overcoming witchcraft or magic. It is believed that the number forty symbolizes the period necessary for physical and spiritual transformation. It is commonly thought that talismans hold power for forty days, and reciting Ayat al-Kursi protects a home from evil spells for a forty-day period [13].

Thus, the author's use of the number forty in the dialogue can have both meanings.

Let's consider an excerpt from the work "Adventures on the Street" by S. Daneshwar:

بعد دیگ را روی زمین گذاشت و گفت: "خانم جون اولاد ستون زندگی پدر و مادره. شما چرا بچه ندارید؟"

– نمی دونم

حتما چله بهتون افتاده – از قوم و خویشاتون کسی پا به ماه نیس؟ دلاکای؟ حموم رو نمیشناسید؟

– نه

خانم جون بذارید امروز تکلیف من معلوم بشه، خیالم که راحت شد، به روز با هم میریم مرده شور خونه

– مرده شور خونه؟

بله خانم جون، بله، آدم مرده شور خونه نزدیکش باشه و نره چله بری؟ عجب حکایتیه. باید از رو مرده رد بشید تا چله تون بیفته

Ba'd dig-rā ru-ye zamin gozāšt va goft: "Xānom jun owlād sotun-e zendegi-ye pedar-o-mādare. Šomā čerā bačče nadārid?"

– Nemidunam.

Hatman čelle behetun oftāde – az qowm o xišātun kasi pā be mäh nis? Dallākā-ye hammum-rā nemišenāsīd?

– Na.

Xānom jun bezārid emruz taklif-e man ma'lum beše, xiyāl-am ke rāhat šod, ye ruz bā ham mirim mordešur xune.

– Mordešur xune?

Bale xānom jun, bale, ādam mordešur xune nazdik-eš base van are čellebori? 'Ajab hekāyat-iye. Bāyad az ru morde rad bešid tā čelle-tun biyofte.

She then placed the pot on the ground and said, "Miss, a child is the pillar of a parent's life. Why don't you have children?"

– "I don't know."

– "You must have been cursed. Do you have any close friends or acquaintances who are in the last month of pregnancy? Do you know any bathhouse attendants?"

– "No."

– "Miss, let me fix my own matters today. Once I'm free, one day we'll go to the corpse-washing house."

– "The corpse-washing house?"

– "Yes, miss, yes. Living near a corpse-washing house and not going to remove a curse? What a story! You need to step over a deceased person to lift the curse" [14, p. 58].

The above excerpt is a vivid example of the dominance of traditional Iranian views on childbirth, which are expressed in the words of an old woman **owlād sotun-e zendegi-ye pedar o mādare** (literally 'a child is the pillar of a parent's life'). As we can see from the above passage, the absence of children is again associated with an evil eye: **hatman čelle be-hetun oftode**. And the solution to the problem is seen in the removal of evil eye (čellebori) in a third way, in a corpse-washing house.

Let's consider the following example from J. Shahri's work "Wish Fulfillment":

اول از کارهای متداول چله بری شروع کرده. از آنجا که مردم گفته بودند. خواهر شوهر، مادر شوهرش، شب عروسی حتما از دشمنی مرغ مرده یا موش مرده توی اطاقش آورده اند چله به سرش افتاده است. آب خونابه مرغ سر بریده سرش ریختند. از کهنه چاک داده آلوده بخون نفاس تازه را بیرونش کردند. آب طهارت بچه ی تازه آمده بصورتش پاشیدند. حمام جهودها بردند. آب غسل تازه عروس بخوردش دادند. در جای زانو خواباندند و چون هیچکدام نتیجه نداد کارهای خودسرانه را کنار گذاشته پیش دعانویس بردند

Avval az kārḥā-ye motadāvel-e čellebori šoru' karde. Az ānjā ke mardom gofte budand. Xāhar-e šowhar, mādare šowhar-aš šab-e arusi hatman az došmani morq-e morde yā muš-e morde tu-ye otāq-aš āvarde-and čelle be sar-aš oftāde ast. Āb-e xunābe-ye morq-e sarboride sar-aš rixtand. Az kohne-ye čak dāde-ye ālude be xun-e nefās-e tāze zā birun-aš kardand. Āb-e tahārat-e bačče-ye tāze āmade be surat-aš pāšidand. Hammām-e jahudhā bordand. Āb-e qosl-e tāze arus be xord-aš dādand. Dar jā-ye zā'u xābāndand va čun hičkodom natije nadād kārḥā-ye xodsarāne-rā kenār gozāšte piš do'ānevis bordand.

She first tried common methods of curse removal. People would say, "Her sister-in-law or mother-in-law, harboring ill intentions, threw a dead chicken or mouse into her room on the wedding night and cursed her." They poured the blood of a slaughtered chicken, mixed with water, over her head. She was passed through a cut sheet smeared with the blood of a new mother. They splashed her face with water in which a newborn baby had been bathed. She was taken to a Jewish hammam. She was given water to drink that had been used to wash a bride. She was placed in the spot of a new mother, but since nothing worked, they stopped these efforts and took her to a prayer scribe [15, p. 77].

The plot of J. Shahri's work "Wish Fulfillment" revolves around the desire of a young woman named Mehrangiz to become pregnant. Throughout the story, the protagonist resorts to a wide variety of often completely absurd and even dangerous folk methods, following the advice of elderly Iranian women to achieve the desired pregnancy. The entire work is literally woven with various superstitions and folk beliefs related to pregnancy, including the description of the "čellebori" ritual. Mehrangiz immediately resorts to this method of curse removal. As evidenced by the excerpt from the work, her performance of "čellebori" involved a series of stereotypical ritual actions that, however, did not yield any positive results. An interesting fact is that while Mehrangiz undertakes the most peculiar rituals in her quest to become pregnant, she does not seek medical advice. In our opinion, the author uses this allegory to highlight the absurdity of the methods prevalent among common people in late 20th-century Iran. Despite the rapid development and modern approaches in medicine, practices such as "čellebori" continue to exist among the populace in contemporary Iran, as evidenced by forums and pages on the Internet.

Conclusions. The analysis of the ritual against infertility, چله بری (čellebori), within the context of Persian folk omens

and superstitions, as reflected in contemporary Persian literature, allows us to conclude that traditional patriarchal attitudes towards women persist in Iran, where a woman's primary role is still seen as childbearing. In Iranian society, the inability to give birth is often attributed to the evil eye. To counteract such curses, Iranian women engage in various manipulations, including prescriptive forms of behavior, specifically the "čellebori" ritual.

Future research should focus on further studying the stereotypical behaviors of Persian language and culture bearers, particularly the ritual of egg breaking, as seen in Persian folk omens and superstitions.

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Сопільняк С., Березанська К. Ритуал проти безпліддя چله بری čellebori як специфічна стереотипна форма поведінки іранців (на матеріалі народних прикмет і забобонів художнього дискурсу)

Анотація. В умовах сучасних глобалізаційних та інтеграційних процесів, науково-технічного прогресу, інформатизації та інтернаціоналізації світової економіки відбувається зближення та взаємопроникнення національних культур, нерозуміння специфіки яких породжує міжнародні прірви та конфлікти. Культура визначає основні людські цінності та життєві установки, які здійснюють неабиякий вплив на спосіб мислення, дії, відношення до роботи, стиль управління, спосіб комунікації, взаємодію з іншими людьми й тому подібне. У сучасних умовах, що склалися на тлі масштабної російської агресії проти України, коли Ісламська Республіка Іран стала на бік нашого ворога, особливо актуальним видається всебічне вивчення та дослідження носіїв перської лінгвоментальності, їхньої мови, культури та поведінки. У науковій розвідці розглянуто специфіку функціонування ритуалу проти безпліддя чله بری «čellebori» як специфічної стереотипної форми поведінки іранців на матеріалі перських народних прикмет і забобонів. Метою дослідження є встановлення особливостей формування стереотипної поведінки в представників перської лінгвокультури на матеріалі перських народних прикмет і забобонів художнього дискурсу, в яких відображається ритуал проти безпліддя чله برі čellebori. Стисло охарактеризовано історію вивчення мовно-культурних ритуалів, зокрема у сучасній вітчизняній та західноєвропейській лінгвістиці. З'ясовано, що мовно-культурний ритуал – це комплекс мовленнєвих дій, які виконуються відповідно до визначеного порядку, традиційним способом та у визначений час, а також є головним механізмом колективної пам'яті. Охарактеризовано поняття **آبیستی** **ābeštāni** (вагітність) з огляду на його актуалізованість у перських прикметах та забобонах. З'ясовано, що у сучасному іранському суспільстві до сих пір спостерігається традиційне патріархальне ставлення до жінки, чия роль вбачається у продовженні роду. Неможливість завагітніти досить часто в уявленні іранців пов'язано з пристригом, що відповідно породжує специфічні ритуальні маніпуляції проти нього, а саме ритуал «čellebori».

Ключові слова: стереотипи поведінки, ритуал, перські прикмети і забобони, лінгвокультурологія.