

THE IMAGE OF GOD IN ENGLISH AND ARMENIAN PAREMIOLOGY:
A CONTRASTIVE STUDY FROM LINGUO-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

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The study of proverbs has application in a number of fields. One of the most important fields in the study of proverbs is the shift to ethnographic approach. This approach attempts to explain proverb use in relation to the cultural background rather than only in terms of the content and meaning of the proverb.

The research is aimed at the revelation and description of God-related proverbs on the background of ethnographic approach. The proverbs are examined from different integrities: from their origin and semantics.

The analysis is performed on the material of two languages- English and Armenian, revealing common and distinctive features.

A great number of linguists busied themselves with the issues of proverbs.

Cultural concepts deal with mental structures, which enable an individual to store or save perceptual and conceptual information of his or her culture, as well as to interpret cultural experiences and expressions. Proverbs have deeper relationship with particular culture since proverbs describe socially important aspects or thoughts within a specific community.

According to Mieder and Lewandowska (2008), proverbs make cultural knowledge linguistically visible.

The precise origin and source of each proverb is very difficult to trace. Any attempt to describe the present state of proverbs scholarship it is necessary to look back upon its past accomplishments.

The main sources of origin of English proverbs are well known: folklore, the Holy Scripture, literature. The proverbs stock was significantly enriched with proverbs from Religious texts and they still remain as one of the main sources replenishing the English language with paremiological units.

What about the chronology of Armenian proverbs? Aiming to answer this question we should get deeper into Armenian paremiology.

Gr. Grigoryan in his book *Armenian Folklore (Հայ ժողովրդական բանասիրություն)* relates the origin of proverbs and sayings to Armenian folklore. According to him, proverbs owe their creation to a hard working process of common people. The use of these language means made the work of the people much more organized. Within a time they lost some of their previous functions and came to be used with a new mission – to reverberate people’s worldview and cognition. (Գրիգորյան:34)

Furthermore, the author states that the main source of proverbs is folklore (fairy tales, fables and epic poems), literal works and the ordinary life of people with all its good and bad sides.

Grigoryan emphasizes the special relation between proverbs and the Bible. Many proverbs address matters of ethics and expected manners of behavior. Therefore, it is not surprising that proverbs are often defined as important religious texts. Within a period when the bulk of Armenian proverbs was coined, the Bible was the primary source of education, the advice and instruction for common people. Hence, not surprisingly, did these proverbs derive from the Bible as many proverbs being phrases and sayings convey such meanings as wisdom. (Գրիգորյան:52)

Another scholar who made a great contribution in Armenian paremiology is Aram Ghanalanyan. In the seminal *Առածանի* he states that proverbs and sayings are of great urgency in the life of common people. They are vivid and compact sayings about people’s social life, etc. (Ղանալյան:34)

Ghanalanyan states that proverbs convey nourishing information about everyday life of working people reverberating and generalizing its social-historical life experience, wishes and expectations, the struggle against the forces of nature and against the outer and inner oppressors, too. Proverbs, according to him, reflect the worldview, psychology and beliefs of the given nation.

1. Thematic Categorization of God-related proverbs in English

Every single culture creates its own image of God according to its linguo-cultural and religious peculiarities. Both in English and Armenian languages the image of God

is framed differently dictated by the ethno-cultural mappings of the given nation. Although God is usually thought of as an intangible spirit, and thus has no physical or even visual form, many religions use images to "represent" God for worship.

God as Savior

It is astoundingly interesting that in many English proverbs God is represented in different images: "God", "Lord" and "He".

The proverbs with "Lord" and "He" are mainly of biblical origin. The primary reason for the use of LORD in the place of God is to follow the tradition of the Israelites in not pronouncing or spelling out God's name. That's why God's Hebrew name "YHWH" in the Old Testament, is rendered into English as "LORD" either in all capitals or in small ones. Hence, in the proverbs originated from Bible, the word of "Lord" functions freely as an equivalent to God.

In a religious context, Lord is a title that is used for different gods and deities. Lord often refers to the almighty or the creator of the universe or the savior of mankind. Lord is one that rules over others. God is also referred to as supreme. Regarding their etymology, *God* comes from the Hebrew *Elohim* and the Greek *Theos*. Lord is a word that comes from Greek *Kurios* or Hebrew *Adonai*. Lord is also related to Old English word *'hlaford'* that means ruler or master.

In proverbs of folk source "God" is embodied as creator and protector, whereas the proverbs of biblical origin show the supremacy of Lord.

Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and he will establish your plans.

Do your efforts then put faith in Lord for the results, for He knows better and gives you reward accordingly.

What about the capitalized implication of pronoun "He"?

In the original languages of Bible, capitalizing pronouns referring to God was not an issue. In Hebrew, there was no such thing as upper-case and lower-case letters. There was simply an alphabet, no capital letters at all. In Greek, there were capital (upper-case) letters and lower-case letters. However, in all of the earliest copies of the Greek New Testament, the text is written in all capital letters. Hence, when translating the Bible the capitalized pronoun "He" remained to show the supremacy of God:

He protects them who ask for His help and follows His path.

Absolute trust in Him gets you protection; absolute faith in Him gets you anything; absolute love in Him gets you Him.

God is the one whom the protection acts are attributed in the collective mindset as well. These proverbs are some of many classical examples of protection depicted as "*shelter*".

God's lambs will play

God makes nests for the blind stork

God is a judge. The image of God as “judge” is expressed in some proverbs with the help of antithesis. He is kind to people who deserve it, and twice cruel to those who sin:

God comes with leaden feet but strikes with iron hands

God gives his anger by weight, but his pity without measure

People also expressed their fears in proverbs. Proverbs tend to enlighten the way man comes into touch with God. In order to be delivered from divine judgment and enter into an intimate fellowship with God, man must first humble himself by acknowledging his sin. He must cease trusting in himself, and put his confidence in God. Having forsaken the way of sin, he must flee from evil and pursue righteousness. (Matthew 14:26)

To fear the Lord is to respect him, but also trust in him.

The fear of the Lord is the first step in obtaining wisdom and knowing God.

The fear of the Lord turns one from death to life, from God's wrath to his life.

In English paremiology everything is predetermined by the will of God. God is almighty; He has complete power:

Man proposes, God disposes

Every word of God is flawless

The act of God does wrong to none.

The Notorious Image of God

There is hardly any nation in the world that completely believes in God's almighty. The English are not exceptions. For many centuries people have worshipped and idealized God and at the same time have criticized him and traduced. This attitude is exposed in English paremiology.

God achieved notoriety for his injustice. The injustice of God rooted seeds of anger and disappointment in the hearts of common people. They are filled with anger at the way they were treated; God gained notoriety for not sharing luck and power in a fair way. Everyone should share things equally as the saying runs: *Share and share alike.*

God sends fortune to fools.

God sends clothes to those with no proper figure, and bread to those with no teeth.

God is unjust and always sides with the strongest. The poor, who really needs His help, lacks His attention. However, he makes the things even worse not taking into account their extreme poverty.

God sides with the strongest

God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb

In many English proverbs we can see a hidden irony of poor people towards God, who does not lend them a helping hand and they have to take care of themselves.

God looks to clean hands, not full ones

God helps the rich, the poor can look after themselves

The other proverb is the reflection of people's disappointment, their mistrust towards God:

Trust in God, but lock your car.

Furthermore, the English believe that churches will not satisfy their religious hunger. This unbelief dates back from the 13-14th centuries. During this time, crusades occupied the whole Europe. The Crusades were a series of religious wars sanctioned by the Latin Church in the medieval period, especially the campaigns in the Eastern Mediterranean with the aim of recovering the Holy Land from Islamic rule. The crusades have been one measure of the ever-increasing power of the church in medieval life, with some estimates suggesting that as many as 40,000 clergy were ordained during the 13th century. This is also shown by the spate of cathedral building, common throughout Europe, at the time. These great buildings would often take several generations to complete, spawning whole communities of artisans and craftsmen and offering them jobs for life. A quarter of the land was owned by the Church. Its monasteries owned large tracts of land farmed by peasants.

(<https://www.britannica.com/event/Crusades>)

This resulted in belief that churches do not belong to common people, they are the clergymen's property.

The church is near, but the way is icy.

The nearer the church, the further from God

In the visible church the true Christians are invisible.

And, of course, God is opposed to devil. Jesus said, "*I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it*" (Matt. 16:18). From the first mention of the church in Scripture, Jesus taught that it would be in opposition to Satan. The picture of gates is not that of a church struggling to hold out against the incredible opposition of the near-overwhelming forces of hell, but rather that of an aggressive church smashing down the strongholds of the devil as he attempts feebly to keep the dynamic church from winning people to Christ. Throughout history, the devil has actively opposed the work of the church.

Where God builds a church, the devil will build a chapel

Let the devil get into the church, and he will mount the alt

God expresses his image as human

The “image of God” shows up in several ways throughout the Bible. The first is in Genesis, as the triune God creates humankind “in our image” (Genesis 1:26-27, NRSV). We are made in the image of God. That image is also expressed as male and female, complementary aspects of God’s character that, together with all kinds of people, help us appreciate the amazing breadth of God’s creativity and expression.

"To say that God is like a person is to affirm the divine ability and willingness to relate to others. This does not imply that God is human, or located at a specific point in the universe." (Alister E. McGrath, *Dawkins' God: genes, memes, and the meaning of life*, 2005)

We are convinced that the essential facts of the Gospel are clearly stated in The Book of Proverbs. It contains a detailed description of God. After all, proverbs are devoted to the development of godly character. If a man would be godly, he must first know what God is like. For this reason alone, we should expect Proverbs to contain a description of the character of God.

There is yet another reason why The Book of Proverbs has much to contribute to our understanding of the character of God. When Proverbs informs us about God, it reveals those divine characteristics which should shape our lives.

If we get deeper into proverbs, we can find many human characters ascribed to God:

- a) Like any human being God has a sense of perception; a strong sense of love and hatred.

God loves the righteous, but he hates the wicked

God hates arrogant (haughty) eyes

(Proverbs 22:17–24:22: "The Sayings of the Wise")

- b) God shares the needs and troubles of common people, as He is one of them.

God knows the deeds of men, both good and evil

God knows the hearts of men and searches out their motives

- c) God has got an ability to speak and to see; an ability of mental perception.

A person looks only on the outside of things, God looks into the very heart

God speaks for the man who holds his piece

2. *Thematic Categorization of God-related proverbs in Armenian*

The worship of the Almighty God

In the Armenian language the image of God appears as the highest worship. God is the Creator of everything and everyone. This image of God can be found in many Armenian proverbs.

Unlike English proverbs, most Armenian proverbs contain mostly the image of God /*Աստված*/. However, there are some proverbs implicating *Ter* (*Տէր*). But the number of such proverbs is limited. In any other case *Ter* equally functions with *Astvats*.

There are proverbs in Armenian paremiology created in the style of commandments and sermons of Christian church.

Աստված մեկ է, նորմութունը՝ հազար

Աստված մի դուրը փակում է, մյուսը բացում:

Here are displayed the obedience and humility of people to the church and God. People make their own plans, but the Almighty God plays a decisive role in their luck.

Խոսքը մեկ, Աստված մեկ:

Քյասիբի տերն Աստված է:

The image of God as Judge can be seen in many Armenian proverbs. In these proverbs the God is just and fair. God knows what people deserve and gives each of them what they need. And He does not approve people being evil and making bad deeds.

Here are proverbs showing God's unlimited power and fairness. Not favoring those who have material advantages in this life, He first offers His Kingdom to people who are mostly not rich and famous.

Աստված տվել է ու չի խնայել:

Աստված դարդ տվել է, դարման էլ է տվել:

Աստված հալալին կտա, հարամին կտանի:

The idea of the preciousness and equal worth of every human being is largely rooted in Christianity. For centuries people have believed in the almighty God and many of their appeals and begs are sounded in the following proverbs.

Աստված տա մորը, որ տա ձագուն:

Աստու պահած գառը գելը չի ուտի:

Very few proverbs in Armenian paremiology sound as curses and blessings.

To be blessed means to be favoured by God. Blessings in proverbs, therefore, are directly associated with God and come from God. Blessing is a beneficial thing for which one is grateful. Cursing is the opposite of blessing, it is a solemn utterance intended to invoke a supernatural power to inflict harm or punishment on someone or

something. (<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/curse>)

(<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/blessing>)

Աստված մեծի պակասություն չտա:

Ինչ կամիս ինձ, Աստված կամի քեզ:

Աստված ազատի մունջ մեղավորից:

Armenia is one of the fewest small nations that have managed to survive within the repeated invasions, destruction, and persecutions. During the last few decades the life of Armenian peaceful people has changed drastically. Because of the permanent struggle against the enemies, many soldiers gave their lives for the sake of peaceful people. And in their turn, people appealed to God to save the lives of their soldiers, their sons and grandsons, they prayed for the everlasting peace in the country. Thus, in the Armenian paremiology came into use proverbs revealing people's hope, trust and belief in the almighty God.

Աստված պահապան մեր զինվորներին:

Աստված կանչենք, անմեղ արյուն չթափվի:

The notorious image of God

Materialistic worldview of working people and rebellious soul against unfairness are displayed in proverbs. When life is filled with difficulties, people sometimes transfer their discontent from the accumulated shortcomings of people and the unreliability of this life to God. So they conclude that God is not fair. Most of the inequalities in life are the result of thousands of years of accumulated human customs and traditions, as well as the uncertainties of time and chance.

Under the immediate pressure of ruling classes, the image of God was altered in people's perception and came to be used as synonymous to king, lord, landowner, oppressor, and outgrew into " *celestial lord*" " *celestial landowner*" or " *celestial oppressor* ".

Վերն աստվածը, վարը թագավորը:

Վերն իրիշկեմ աստվածն ի, ցածը՝ ամիրեն:

God is unfair. That is the unwavering belief of people. They have looked at all the misery in the world and the pain in their own lives and are able to reach no other conclusion. We know that good and decency should be rewarded and evil should be punished. But obviously the world does not operate that way. In fact, bad people are prospering and good people are suffering.

Ա՛խ աստված, վախ աստված, որին կուտաս եղ ու մեղր,

որին կուտաս թան, աստված:

*Աստված մեկին տալիս է մի մատնոց խելք, մի կարաս քախտ,
մեկին՝ մի կարաս խելք, մի մատնոց քախտ:*

In many proverbs people showed God's ill-affected attitude towards the weak and the poor. People are bitterly disappointed by the unfairness of God and this injustice gave way to their anger and indignation.

Աստված սարը տեսնի, ձունը կը դնե:

Աստվածը արտը նայել, փուշը տվել է:

God is on the side of the rich and the strong, and the poor have to take care of themselves.

Աստված միշտ ուժեղի կողմիցն է:

Աստված հարստի դիմացն (կողմից) ա:

Thus, embittered and disappointed in God and having lost their belief and trust in Him, people began to count only on themselves.

«Աստված ողորմած է» ըստը անոթի կմնա:

Աստուց խնորի, բայց բահը ձեռքիցդ մի՛ գցիր:

Աստունն ապավինիր, բայց հույսդ քեզ վրա դիր:

Անաստված տեղը կաց, անարխա (անօգնական) մի՛ մնա:

To sum up, the paper makes evident that there are underlying linguo-cultural differences between the English and Armenian paremiologies. The language a certain community speaks and how certain people think and handle certain situations in their lives affect the culture of a particular country. Proverbs are cross-cultural phenomena that are not limited in time. Through the proverbs people reveal their way of thinking, their attitude towards God and different aspects of life.

Firstly, proverbs spread light on the historical background of peoples and nations, their way of thinking and the mode of their living, their psychology and worldview. Proverbs make cultural knowledge linguistically visible. They are also used to sum up life experiences and let the listener draw conclusions by himself and apply them to his behavior in the future.

Secondly, both in English and Armenian the image of God is framed differently dictated by the ethno-cultural mappings of the given nations. First and foremost, proverbs conveying the image of God are of biblical origin in both languages.

Alongside the image of almighty God, the notorious image of God is created in paremiology of English. This is the reflection of the historical development of the English society and sustainable alliteration of English church.

On the other hand, proverbs in the Armenian language, being of great urgency

in the life of common people, are hence of folk origin. The origin and dissemination of proverbs conveying the image of God are connected with the turns of the Armenian history. Being one of the smallest nations in the world and surviving permanent persecution, destruction and attacks Armenian people have laid hopes only on almighty God. That is one of the reasons that many proverbs in Armenian paremiology are used as appeals to God.

However, God has gained notoriety in Armenian paremiology as well. Aside from idealizing and worshipping God, people have criticized him and vilified. In many proverbs God is one of the oppressors, one of the rulers. In many proverbs, people showed their hidden anger and disappointment implicating different saints, church, clergymen and cross.

***Աստծո պատկերը անգլերեն և հայերեն ասացվածքներում.
գուգադրական քննություն լեզվամշակութաբանության դիտանկյունից
Հովհաննիսյան Ա. Ա., Միքայելյան Ա. Ա.***

Առաձները ուսումնասիրվել են տարբեր դիտանկյուններից: Կարևորագույն մոտեցումներից է էթնոլեզվաբանականը, որ հնարավորություն է ընձեռում քննության առնելու առաձները լեզու-մշակույթ հարաբերակցության մեջ:

Հոդվածի հիմնական նպատակն է ուսումնասիրել «Աստված» բաղադրիչով առաձները էթնոլեզվաբանության դիտանկյունից: Վերլուծությունները կատարվում են անգլերենի և հայերենի փաստացի նյութի հիման վրա և դուրս են բերվում դրանց ընդհանուր ու տարբերակիչ հատկանիշները: Լեզվական այս իրողությունները քննության են առնվում իրենց սերման ու իմաստաբանության տեսանկյունից:

***Сопоставительный анализ образ "Бога" в английской и армянской
пармеологии с точки зрения лингвокультурологии
Оганесян А. С., Микаелян А. А.***

Целью данной статьи является выявление алломорфных и изоморфных характеристик английских и армянских пословиц с компонентом "Бог". Пословицы изучались в лингвистических кругах с разных точек зрения. Однако, особый интерес представляет лингвокультурологический аспект изучения пословиц.

В рамках этой статьи исследуются рассматриваемые лингвистические явления с позиций их происхождения и семантики.

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