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THE SACRAL CONCEPT AND ITS INTERPRETATION

Abstract. The interest in the concept of sacral has been growing rapidly in science in recent years. The first definitions of this concept began to appear in the 80s of the 20th century. There is a lot of polemic in the definitions given to the concept of sacral. The term “sacred” was described in various ways by the English philosopher D. Hume, and German thinkers F. Schleiermacher, M. Scheler, E. Cassirer, and M. Heidegger. Representatives of the French school of sociology as M. Moss, L. Lévy-Bruhl, J. Bataille, and M. Leiris interpreted the term diversely. Therefore, to reveal the meaning of the notion of “sacral” thoroughly it is of paramount importance to explain the concept in the integration of religious studies, philosophy, cultural studies, art studies, archeology, ethnology, folkloristic, and philology.

This research paper clarifies the concept of “sacral”, and shows both well-known and unfamiliar aspects of the sacred as well as its typology that is made from the point of view of the aesthetic category. We also conducted a comparative analysis of definitions in different languages. Considering that the Latin word “sacer” cannot be translated like many international terms, it was suggested to use it as sacral in the Kazakh language as well.

The relevance of the topic was determined and a conclusion was made through comprehensive research, differentiation, and systematization of the concept of sacral.

Keywords: sacral, hierophany, religious consciousness, sacredness, mysticism.

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САКРАЛДЫ ҰҒЫМДАР ЖӘНЕ ОНЫҢ ИНТЕРПРЕТАЦИЯСЫ

Аннотация. Ғылымда *сакралды* ұғымдарға деген қызығушылық соңғы кездері қарқынды артып келеді. XX ғасырдың 80-жылдарында бұл ұғымның алғашқы анықтамалары пайда бола бастады. *Сакралды* ұғымдарға берілген анықтамаларда полемика көп. XVIII ғасырда «сакраль» термині ағылшын философы Д.Юмның, неміс ойшылдары Ф.Шлейермахердің, М.Шелердің, Э.Кассирердің, М.Хайдеггердің және француз әлеуметтану мектебінің өкілдері М.Мосстың, Л.Леви-Брюльдің, Ж.Батайдың, М.Лейристің еңбектерінде түрліше сипатталып келді. Сондықтан бүгінгі күні бұл ұғым дінтану, философия, мәдениеттану, өнертану, археология, этнология, фольклористика, филология ғылымдарының интерграциясында түсіндірілсе, оның мағынасы толығымен ашылатыны анық.

Бұл мақалада аталмыш ұғым нақтыланып, *сакралдылықтың* көпшілікке танымал да, таныс емес те аспектілері көрсетіліп, эстетикалық категория тұрғысынан оның типологиясы жасалды, түрлі тілдердегі анықтамаларына салыстырмалы-салғастырмалы талдау жасалды. Сонымен қатар латын тіліндегі «*sacer*» сөзі көптеген халықаралық терминдер сияқты аударуға жатпайды деп есептеп, қазақ тілінде де *сакралды ұғым* деп қолданылу ұсынылды.

Мақалада *сакралды* ұғымдардың жан-жақты зерттелуі, саралануы, жүйеге түсіріліп қорытылуы арқылы тақырып өзектілігі анықталып, тұжырым жасалды.

Тірек сөздер: сакральды, иерофания, діни сана, кие, мистика.

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ПОНЯТИЕ САКРАЛЬНОСТИ И ЕГО ИНТЕРПРЕТАЦИЯ

Аннотация. В последнее время в науке стремительно растет интерес к сакральным понятиям. Первые определения данного понятия появились в 80-х годах XX века, но вокруг них много полемики. В восемнадцатом веке термин «сакральность» был по-разному описан в работах английского философа Д. Юма, немецких мыслителей Ф. Шлейермахера, М. Шелера, Э. Кассирера, М. Хайдеггера и представителей французской школы социологии М. Мосса, Л. Леви-Брюля Ж. Батая, М. Лейриса.

С позиций сегодняшнего дня значение данного понятия будет полностью раскрыты, если рассматривать его на стыке таких смежных наук, как религиоведение, философия, культурология, искусствоведение, археология, этнология, фольклористика, филология.

В настоящей статье уточняется рассматриваемое понятие, отражаются как общеизвестные, так и неизвестные аспекты сакрального понятия, разработана его типология с точки зрения эстетической категории, проведен сравнительный анализ его определений в различных языках. Также предлагается использовать в казахском языке латинское слово «sacer» (сакральное), как и многие международные термины, которые не подлежат переводу.

В статье посредством всестороннего изучения, дифференциации, систематизации понятия сакральности определена актуальность данной темы и сделаны выводы.

Ключевые слова: сакральное, иерофания, религиозное сознание, святыня, мистика.

Introduction

Today, the term “sacred” is frequently used. Theses and various books have been written on this topic, and it has become a widely used word both in discussion forums and in everyday life. We try to interpret the meaning of this concept by scrutinizing “sacred places” and sacredness in human destiny.

Before having a particular approach to this concept and studying it as a separate phenomenon, we need to understand that this term is an element of certain discourse, and understanding the concept of “sacred” is the same as knowing the general human ontology. Because the term sacredness is a philosophical concept. Therefore, studying it outside of the human worldview is futile. If our research is to be fruitful, we must consider it in the context of anthropology and the philosophy of religion.

The word “sacred” began to be used first in philosophy, and then in other humanitarian sciences in the 80s of the 20th century. This concept appeared for the first time in the works of Western scientists E. Durkheim, R. Otto, and M. Eliade in the middle of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. Subsequently, sacredness began to take a permanent place in the science of literary studies as a new scientific definition. Nowadays, sacredness is considered to be the main concept of philosophy and religion. Since there are many contradictions in the definitions and opinions to explain this concept, sacredness, and sanctity are absolute synonyms and are accepted in science as a general and ephemeral phenomenon of conventional nature.

The purpose of our research is to make a comparative analysis of the representatives of the sacral phenomenon in different languages. Currently, this phenomenon needs to be studied in the integration of the sciences of religion, philosophy, archeology, ethnology, folkloristics, and philology to solve the problems of specific disciplines and consider various aspects related to the object of the research. Because the concept of sacral cannot be explained unilaterally.

“It is during this period that things considered holy and sacral are desacralized, and the world is losing its sanctity. The political, social, psychological, and economic problems of modern Russia are directly related to this sacredness issue,” says A. Dugin. (Dugin, 2003). Furthermore, A.M. Lidov called the new framework of knowledge in creating a sacred space that is a form of history and culture a special form of human creativity with the term hierotopia. (Lidov, 2009: 352). It's worth noting when the term “sacred” first originated in this context. It appeared in the era of the formation of social sciences. Ogyust Kont introduces the term “sociology” in the middle of the 19th century formulating the science of society. The term “sacred” is a legitimate result of a scientific phenomenon known as intellectual reduction.

Materials and methods

Sacredness in Islam and the sacred image in the modern Kazakh worldview became the subject of research taking into account the opinion of A.M. Lidov follows “Religious and national model is important in the creation of sacred space”.

The characteristics of any nation depend on its religious consciousness. It is known that Kazakh religious consciousness originates from Islam. Our worldview is informed by Islamic values, and that information is sorted through Islamic knowledge. As a permanent or temporary characteristic, the term sacral is related to some objects of worship (wood, stone), people (prophet, saint), settlements and places (grave, mausoleum, mosque), and specific times (Friday, Thursday, fasting month). As a result, not only religious worship but also national traditions and rituals get holy content. Is it possible to see and touch such features in the national consciousness and worldview? Of course, it can be found in our literature and traditions. However, the increase of destructive currents in religion is depriving them of their sacred meaning and making them profane these days.

If the above-mentioned scientists associate the term sacral with Christianity, we will consider this methodology in connection with Islam. That is why we took the concept of the sacred in general, its philosophy, sacredness in Islamic values, and its literary typology as the object of our research. Following the purpose of our research work, we used historical-genetic, historical-comparative, and typological methods, and as a source, we were guided by the scientific-theoretical views of well-known scientists such as T. Fitzgerald, E. Durkheim, R. Otto, M. Eliade, G. Esim, and D. Kenjetai.

Literature review

The study of the sacred in Western culture began in the 18th-19th centuries, and its intellectual history began at the time when this concept was a separate concept from the meaning of the creator, God. The first statements about sacredness as a phenomenon of religious consciousness are in the works of Charles de Bross (1760), and Joseph de Mestra (1821). These scholars considered the concept of sanctity outside of religion. British anthropologists and religious history researchers of the 19th-20th centuries, James George Frazer and Marcel Moss concluded that sacredness is a separate concept from religion. The French sociologist E. Durkheim in his work called “Simple principles of religious life” (1912) said that the beginning of religious experience does not begin with belief in God, but with the division of the world into sacred and profane. (E. Durkheim, 1998: 231).

In the study of the phenomenon of sacredness, scientists said that it has an internal and external direction, and if the internal direction refers to a person's own or another person's feeling of the world, what he experienced in recognizing it, the external direction refers to objectively observing and evaluating the actions of people who have experienced such feelings at the beginning of the 20th century. The first direction is reflected in the works of Rudolf von Otto, Martin Heidegger, and Mircea Eliade, and the second direction is reflected in the research of Max Weber, Mary Douglas, Maurice Godelier, and Yuri Lotman. The German philosopher-theologian Rudolf von Otto was one of the first to define the boundaries of the concept of sacredness and give a clear explanation. Even though his work in this field has been severely criticized, it is apparent that it laid the foundation for future research. Romanian philosopher and theologian M. Eliade created his concept based on the works of R. Otto. Some things outside of this life are sacred to man. Professor M. Eliade suggests using the term hierophany to explain this (Eliade, 1994:144). “Hierophany” means the concept of holy, and sacred without any indirect meaning. It is safe to say that the history of any religion is devoted to the description of this hierophany. Some consider the simple manifestation of hierophany as a paradox, such as the worship of places, stones or trees, and other things that people consider sacred. In other words, the whole of nature is perceived as a cosmic sacred space, and the cosmos appears as a complete hierophany for people with a religious experience.

Kazakhs considered sacred the graves and mausoleums of saints and especially holy people, the things they consumed, and all the surprising phenomena in nature. Sh. Walikhanov says: “All the mounds are called plague; they are mounds with heaps of dirt”. Be it a pair of trees in a remote area or a plant with amazingly shaped branches, the place where they stand is considered sacred. People

tie clothes, and horse hair, place dishes, and sacrifice animals to the saint when staying overnight at or passing by such holy places. (Walikhanov, 1984:432). The content of this opinion of Shokan and M. Eliade's definition of hierophany is the same. The research findings of the above-mentioned scientists expanded the nature of sacredness and paved the way for various scientific research, in particular, not only philosophical, and theological but also philological ones.

There are almost no research works on sacredness in the science of Kazakhstan. However, we find the methodological foundations of this problem in the scientific research of Sh. Ualikhanov, M. Auezov, A. Margulan, A. Sovetkazy, G. Esim, and D. Kenzhetai. Although these scientists do not use the term "sacred" for the concepts considered holy and sacred in the Kazakh worldview, they have determined the place of sacredness in the modern understanding of the general Turkish culture, its social forms, the ambivalence and transformation of sacredness, the spiritual value of the "father-to-child" concept.

After distinguishing the above-mentioned thoughts and conclusions, we will analyze the concept of sacred and holy from the cognitive point of view, and focus on its interpretation in different languages and Islam.

Results and discussion

The interest of linguists in this category arose from some unresolved issues in the definition of the concept of sacred in the field of linguistics. The most important ones among them were the uncertainty of the conceptual and terminological status of sacredness and the scarcity of works showing the features of mutual influence of the language and spiritual culture of the people in the modern period.

When defining the conceptual and terminological boundaries of sacredness, scientists encountered the abstract problem of this concept. "Sacral" belongs to the category of complex, heterogeneous concepts; its definition requires a wide range of structural concepts, not just one. This can be verified by referring to etymological dictionaries.

Mahmud Kashgari defines the sacred word in the Kazakh language in the "Diwani Lughat at-Turk" dictionary as follows: "Kie (holiness) – "personality" with virtue". (Walikhanov, 1984:432), and in Yusuf Balasaguni's "Kutadgu Bilig" the word "owner" was used instead of the word "kieli" (holy):

"Aitty Odgurmysh olimnin shyn kelgenin (Odgurmysh said that death has come,), Tusine enip iesi ayan bergenin (He realized that the owner had given him a vision)" (Egeubai, 1998: 600).

This expression refers to the owner of the soul, that is, the creator. As a result, throughout Y. Balasaguni's work, the concept of the sacred is referenced concerning the transcendental, mystical universe.

In the encyclopedic dictionary of Kazakh traditional culture, *KIE* (holiness) is a mythological concept in the meaning of virtue, aruak (ghost), negative consequence, or harm of something. (Kazak dasturli madenietinin entsiklopediyalyk sozdigi, 1997: 368).

'*Kie*' is a special mystical power and property in living and inanimate objects in the folk concept. The traditional system of ethnographic categories, concepts, and names of the Kazakhs, who considered holy people (prophets, saints, fortune-tellers), animals and birds (wolf, deer, swan), land, and water in traditional beliefs. (Encyclopedia. 2012: 736)

The definition of the word '*kie*' in material mythology from the dictionary of the Kazakh literary language is "A property of something or being that has a special magical power" (Kazak adebi tilinin sozdigi, 2011:744).

According to the data from the aforementioned etymological dictionaries, sacredness refers to two polar concepts that are considered sacred and holy, but also cause fear and dread.

What does European lexicography say about the concept of sacredness? According to German lexicographer A. Walde's Latin etymological dictionary the word sacredness, denoted by the Latin term "sacer" has the following meanings:

1. heilig- kasietti, kieli (holy, sacred);

2. geweiht/weihe- nurlangan(consecrated);
3. verwünscht-sikyrlangan (bewitched or charmed);
4. mystisch- mistikalyk (mystical);
5. aufs Opfer bezüglich – kurban (sacrificial) (Walde A., Hofmann J.B., Berger E. 1965: 2045)

In the Etymological Dictionary of Latin and the other Italic languages, the term “sacer” refers to the concepts of “votive – kudaiga arnalgan”, “holy – kieli, kasietti”, “dedicated-kiegearnalgan”, “pray – zhalbarynu”, “sacrifice – kurbandyk” (Etymological Dictionary of Latin and the other Italic Languages. 2008: 825)

According to the data of the German etymological dictionary DUDEN. “Hercunftswörterbuch” the term “sacerin German sakral” is a religious concept explained by means of geheiligt - bright, geistlich - spiritual, kirchlich - church, nicht weltlich - non-secular (or worldly), religiös - religious, theologisch - theological (Etymological Dictionary of Latin and the other Italic Languages. 2008: 825)

Looking up the definitions of *sacral* and *holy* in various dictionaries, we can see that this notion has a unique quality and aura, an undiscovered mystical secret, a living or non-living item that must be reversed.

In our opinion, the study of sacred images and concepts in any religious tradition should begin with the analysis of the language of religious traditions, the source of which is the sacred books of that religion.

There are several root words in the Qur'an that denote sacredness. They are: *قدس* - purity, holiness which is used 10 times; the word *روح*-spirit is used 21 times, and the word *سكن* -peace is used 6 times in the Qur'an.

The concept “*سكن* - peace” will be the object of our study. This concept is mentioned in the Qur'an 6 times in 3 surahs, namely in verse 248 of Surah Al-Baqarah, verses 26, and 40 of Surah At-Tawbah, and verses 4, 18, 26 of Surah Al-Fath. For example, in Surah Al-Baqarah: The Prophet said to them: “In his kingdom, there will be a sign: An ark will come to you from your Lord. Inside the ark are relics from the families of Moses and Aaron, which will give you *peace* of mind. The ark is carried by angels. If you are a true worshiper (of God, doomsday), this is a great sign for you” (Etymological Dictionary of Latin and the other Italic Languages. 2008: 825)

According to the interpretation of theologians-scientists (Imam Iskander al-Mihr, Ibn Kasir, Imam V. Porokhova), the chest (with the staff of Moses, Aaron's turban, and papers with the text of the Torah) was brought by angels, and the people who witnessed it were assured that the creator is true and that there is a doomsday. That is, the chest, in this particular case, had a sacred character. On the other hand, in the remaining 5 contexts, the term “*ring*” is used in connection with believers. In the 40th verse of Surah At-Tawbah, it is said that Allah sent the ring to Prophet Muhammad, and in Surah Fatih, “Allah stopped the prayers of the believers so that faith would be added to their faith” (4) (Kuran Karim, 1991:589)

“Allah knew the truth in their hearts and then made them *cease* (18)” (Kuran Karim, 1991:589) and “When the fervor of the age of ignorance was boiling in the souls of the unbelievers, Allah made the hearts of both the Prophet and the believers *cease*” (Kuran Karim, 1991:589). It is mentioned in the Qur'an that there is also anger, anger, revenge, illness, resentment, doubt, and distrust alongside peace, goodness, charity, and spirit in the heart of a person. So, the concept of “*ring*” containing sacredness is used in the Qur'an in the sense of “*holy power*”. The contextual meaning of the term is the creator's help in doing good, awakening people's compassion, specifically in creative works for the benefit of humanity, and it is considered sacred in the human mind.

Thus, we understand that the concept of sacred in Islam is not an ontological category that shows any specific processes, connections, and relations, but a concept that shows the connection of religious or extra-religious, and non-religious concepts.

Analyzing the meanings of the term *sacral* in various texts, we understood that it has a wide range of meanings and that it is a religious cult that expresses its special relationship to what is considered sacred for a person in its variable meaning, that is to say, an attitude that elevates the

spiritual values of human existence to the level of a cult. The distinction between the concepts of religious and non-religious, sacred and profane in Islam causes a lot of discussion in religious-philosophical issues. Because religion covers all aspects of Muslim society and everything related to religious belief is considered sacred.

Conclusion

As a result of current research, we come to the following conclusion:

1. The concept of sacral is an absolute category that does not fit into the framework of only one science.
2. When a person is faced with the sacred world, he experiences many feelings, such as wonder, belief, understanding, fear, and trembling. Many take it as a sign from the Creator. According to R. Otto's concept, the sacred structure is a complex religious phenomenon in this regard.
3. According to M. Eliade, sacral is a category that is not familiar to a human, which expands his knowledge about the world, outside of his daily life. He coined the word *Hierophany*.
4. Sacral is an abstract category that includes many other structural concepts.
5. The words of several languages of the world that convey the concept of sacral are synonymous with each other, there are only contextual differences.

Sacred and religious life, on the one hand, and worldly life and profaneness, on the other, have been opposed in past descriptions of the religious phenomenon.

The concepts of sacred and profane are often ambiguous and fluid in modern society. What was sacred yesterday becomes a joke today and causes indifference tomorrow. Sometimes we pay attention to holy places, sacred things that we consider sacred only when others pollute them or try to destroy them, and we realize their importance for our spiritual world too late. Every time we try to reveal the boundaries of the sacred, we come across difficulties both theoretically and practically. Therefore, it is clear that the mysterious world unknown to science is always of interest to researchers. Studying and formulating such a topic puts a lot of burden on scientists.

**Мақала ҚР ҒЖБМ Ғылым комитетінің гранттық қаржыландыруымен ЖТН АР14870690 «Сыр өңірінің киелі орындары мен ислам құндылықтарының әдеби-танымдық ерекшеліктері» атты жоба аясында жүргізілді.*

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