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## **CHAPTER 7**

# **PSYCHO-SEMANTICS OF CREATION IN AZERBAIJAN AND TURKISH FOLKLORE: THE ARCHETYPE OF THE WISE OLD MAN AND THE ARCHETYPAL STRUCTURE OF SACRAL SPACES**

**Hikmat GULIYEV**

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STRUCTURE OF SACRAL SPACES**

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**Abstract**

In the study the problem of creation in the context of a common Turkic culture was analyzed within the framework of the analytical psychology by Carl Gustav Jung - through the prism of the “Wise Old Man” archetype. The main goal of the study is to investigate the concept of creation in the context of the common-Turkic culture within the framework of Carl Gustav Jung’s analytical psychology, especially on the basis of the “Wise Old Man” archetype and to analyze the cosmogonic, norm-creating and sacral functions of this archetype in Azerbaijani and Turkish folklore samples from a psychosemantic perspective. The research questions such as how the Wise Old Man archetype functions as a symbolic and psychosemantic model of creation in Azerbaijani and Turkish folklore samples, what functional and meaning-forming roles the archetype performs in the formation of cosmogonic ideas, normative order and sacral spatial understanding in the common Turkic culture are identified and analyzed. As a result of the study, it is found out that the archetype of the Wise Old Man symbolizes the psychosemantic and cosmogonic principles of creation in the folklore of Azerbaijan and Türkiye, ensures the preservation of the normative order and plays a decisive role in the formation of the meaning of sacral spaces, thus, it acts as the central determinant of symbolic and ideological structures in folklore patterns. In the study the examples of Azerbaijani and Turkish folklore being investigated comparatively analyzed within the framework of C.G.Jung’s theory of archetypes and M. Eliade’s concept of central symbolism, the relationship of the Wise Old Man archetype with sacred spaces, normative behaviors, ancestral and trickster characteristics is systematized at the psychosemantic level and comparatively evaluated across regional contexts. The study reconsiders the psycho-semantic structure of Wise Old Man archetype in the context of Azerbaijani and Turkish folklore fundamentally, systematically proving that its age-independent function is a sacred and metaphysical beginning that forms the basis of cosmogonic creation and social normativity.

**Keywords**

*Wise Old Man Archetype, Cosmogony, Central Symbolism, Azerbaijan, Türkiye*

## **The Archetype of the Wise Old Man and Cosmogony: An Introduction to the Problem**

Before carrying out the comprehensive analysis of the relationship among the archetype of the Wise Old Man and cosmogony, it is necessary to consider the manifestations of this archetype in mythological and folkloric texts. The meaning that we express under the guise of the archetype of the Wise Old Man does not include only positive types of heroes in culture. So, the archetypal image can be presented in different forms of manifestation and from different prisms.

The term “wise” in the term “archetype of the Wise Old Man” used during the investigation has greater semantics than the characteristic of positive knowledge. Here the word “wisdom” means nature, society, connoisseur of divine laws. However, this “knowledge” can not be expressed only through positive image semantics. Here, “wisdom” not only contains the rules of regulation of nature, society and morality, but also expresses its potential for destruction and degradation. In this aspect, a complete study of the semantics of the images that we analyze under the guise of the archetype of the Wise Old Man requires us to investigate their attitude to creation, order, norms in the context of the preservation and destruction of the existing cosmic order.

It is necessary to note the briefly comment on one issue here. First of all, the question may arise whether the concept of “Wise Old Man archetype” can be replaced by the concept of “the image of the Wise Old Man”? To answer this question, it should be noted that the concept of “Wise Old Man archetype” is one of the main archetypes identified by C.G. Jung, embodying psychological reality. It means, it is a psychological motif that lies in the collective subconscious, expressing a specific level of human needs determined by vital instincts. This need includes acts such as self-protection, seeking advice in difficult times, receiving sacred information, following traditions, etc. Accordingly, the images that will ensure the satisfaction of these needs are also born or provided by consciousness itself. As soon as any of the needs listed above arise, images of the male gender that will “psychoautomatically” (Юнг, 1996, p.300) satisfy them become relevant. These images are analyzed in science under the name “Wise Old Man archetype”. It becomes evident that, across various spheres of culture, this archetype is embodied not only in traditional heroic figures (such as Oghuz Khan, Dada Gorgud, Bayindir Khan and Koroglu) but also in dreams and in social contexts (the status of elders), transforming into various figures and entities. In all instances, these images ensure protection, guidance in critical situations, reception of sacred knowledge, and the transmission of tradition. Because the images of this archetype belong to a unified emotional and symbolic system, they can encompass multiple functions such as simultaneously facilitating reception of sacred knowledge and providing guidance or these functions may be realized by different images.

However, the images belonging to this archetype are included in a single emotion, they can easily include several functions (for example, one image can include the reception of sacred information and guidance, or different images can perform these functions). Just as the Mother archetype manifests in female representations, the Wise Old Man archetype primarily appears in male contexts. It is also important to mention that these images can perform their functions not only in individual life, but also within the life of a particular ethnos. Moreover, their manifestations are not limited to human forms they may appear in the guise of certain animals or objects.

In order to deeply investigate the context of the relationship of the Wise Old Man archetype to the original creation (cosmogony) based on Azerbaijani and Turkish folklore materials, it is appropriate to approach the problem in the following directions:

(1) The Wise Old Man archetype and the mountain cult, (2) The normative and norm-creating semantics of the Wise Old Man image, (3) The trickster paradigm of the Wise Old Man archetype and issues of creation.

It is evident that the semantic of wisdom is frequently expressed through the lexemes “father”, “grandfather” and “dede” (great-grandfather). As a result of the research, it became clear that these image levels of the Wise Old Man archetype are related to the mountain cult and places that are considered the center of the world.

The study demonstrates that these archetypal levels are associated with the mountain cult and places considered as the “navel of the world” which, in turn, can be understood in the context of their relationship to the cosmogonic act. A particularly significant issue concerns the persistence of objects such as the hearth, sacred sites, and shrines in locations imbued with the semantics of the “world center.” A detailed examination of the collected materials reveals that these locations, associated with the lexemes father, grandfather, and dede, collectively form a unified system embodying central semantics. This can be explained in the context of their attitude to the cosmogonic act as a whole. But the important issue that interests us here is the establishment of those objects (hearths, sacred places) in places that carry the semantics of “the navel of the world”. When we examine the collected materials in detail, it becomes clear that, in the case of these places, the names of father, grandfather and places carrying the semantics of the center are combined into a single system. To understand the semantics of the issue in depth, let’s pay attention to three important facts that Mircea Eliade put forward for studying archaic culture:

(1) Facts showing that reality for archaic man emerged from imitation of the divine archetype, (2) Facts that show that reality is achieved through association with “a central sign”: cities, temples, houses become real through their resemblance to the “center of the world”, (3) Certain actions performed by gods, heroes, or ancestors gain specific meanings through repetition and rituals and significant non-religious gestures embody and convey these meanings (Eliade, 1994, p. 20).

Continuing his thought the scholar writes: “The designation of the center can be formulated in this way:

(1) The sacred mountain (here Earth and Sky meet) is the center of the world, (2) Every temple and palace (accordingly every sacred city and the center of the kingdom) is a sacred mountain, in other words, a center, (3) The sacred city, or temple is “the axis mundi” (center of the world) and is therefore known as the point of union of heaven, earth and the underworld (Eliade, 1994, p. 26).

In order to clarify the semantics and manifestation paradigms of the concept of the “center of the world” the author writes: “The center is, above all, the sacred region of absolute reality. Other markers of absolute reality (trees of life and immortality, fountains of youth, etc.) are similarly positioned at the center... Reaching the center confers sanctification and initiatory rights: the place of yesterday’s profane and misleading existence is taken by a new, stable and enduring life” (Eliade, 1994, p. 31).

The author notes that in archaic human thought, neither extraterrestrial beings nor human activities have a value that is limited to themselves in the true sense of the word. Objects and activities acquire their own value by being connected in one way or another with another reality that transcends their own essence. “The reason why a stone among countless stones is sacred, in other words, acquires essence, is that it is the manifestation of a saint or contains a meaning related to it or recalls a mythical activity... a rock appears sacred: because its appearance is the manifestation of the sacred” (Eliade, 1994, p. 18).

Then the scientist tries to clarify the semantics of the spaces that mean “center” based on numerous examples: “The peak of the cosmic mountain is not only the highest point of the world, but also the navel of the world, the starting point of creation. In the cosmological tradition the concept of center is sometimes expressed in terms borrowed from embryology” (Eliade, 1994, p. 29). “The creation of a human also took place at the center point, at the center of the world” (Eliade, 1994, p. 29). At the center of the world, “the three cosmic levels: earth, sky and underworld are given in communication” (Eliade, 1987, p. 36).

As it can be seen, the constant connection with the “center of the world”, the cosmic point, serves the continuous organization and maintenance of the cosmic order. Connecting with this point helps people to distance themselves from the world of chaos and maintain order. However, since the “center of the world” archetype is related to thought and emotional desire, it does not manifest itself in the form of an entity in cultures. In order to understand this issue more deeply, the following approach of Claude Levi-Strauss, interpreted by Yavuz Demir, is interesting: “Myths do not try to give meaning to them (objects of the external world), but on the contrary, express their own meaning through them” (Demir, 2013, p. 24). In

other words, the world center can be actualized within the myth through diverse motifs and details. This semantic pattern is reflected in the work “The Hero with a Thousand Faces” by Joseph Campbell:

In any culture still drawing energy from mythology, the entirety of human existence, as well as the natural environment, is experienced through symbolic interpretations. Hills and trees have their own guardians connected to local histories of the world’s creation. There are also special shrines. Places where heroes were born, acted or disappeared are identified and sanctified. Temples are constructed to mark and propagate the miraculous center because this site represents a transition to abundance. Someone has discovered infinity at this point. Therefore, this area can be helpful for a successful mediation. Such temples, shrines and altars are designed to reflect the four directions of the world as a sign of the endless point. The person who enters the temple building and going towards the altar imitates the activity of the real hero. Its goal is to repeat the universal pattern in order to regulate and renew life within itself. (Campbell, 1999, p. 57).

That is, the reason why “the central semantics” is attributed to individual objects and things in culture does not directly derive from the essence of those objects themselves. This understanding, or rather, this search becomes possible as a result of the convergence of the potential possibilities of myth with the internal psychological needs of people (eternal life, substantiating various events). It is clear that one of the functional properties of myth is modeling. It means, myth with its inherent “capabilities” transforms the surrounding world into a form that is “understandable” for the emotional world. Of course, one of such capabilities of myth is the search for central semantics. Based on this search, it becomes clear that “...every place (every human cosmology) is at the center of creation. Every person and every community has one (and the same) center. Although what happens around the center has some local peculiarities, it revolves around a single axis: human development” (Saydam, 1997, p. 51). Therefore, in any area, there are various mountains, rocks, springs, trees and houses belonging to people who are considered sacred, to which people turn for their wishes and prayers. “Despite the fact that prayers are made and sacrifices are made to a seemingly miraculous person, it is understood that these beliefs and behaviors are mountain-centered” (Duymaz, Shahin, 2008, p. 119). Of course, although the events, that occur around objects such as mountains have some local characteristics, carry a central semantics with their own structures and beliefs around them.

### **The Wise Old Man Archetype And Central Symbolism: The Archetypal Structure Of Sacred Spaces**

In spaces where the semantics of the center manifest, various paradigms of the Wise Old Man archetype also become relevant. Moreover, this manifests itself not at the level of any particular genre and facts, but at all levels of creative possibilities. During our observations, we see that the same semantics manifests itself not only in epics, fairy tales, legends, but also in various hearths, sanctuaries and sacred places, in the process of social and moral regulation. These images can be manifested through a wide variety of wisdom units, such as old man, old man, father, grandfather, great-grandfather, king, khan, etc. Their connection with the central semantics indicates that all the units belonging to them are ritual in nature. In order to determine their place in this ritual and creation, it is appropriate to refer to various texts. In our opinion, “the central symbolism” in Turkic culture is revealed in the images included in the cult of the father, along with the places mentioned by Mircea Eliade. But here we will not be satisfied with looking only at the legends and tales about certain hearths and sanctuaries, but will also try to look at the rituals performed around them, as appropriate.

To explain our idea more deeply and thoroughly, we will devote extensive space to samples collected from Türkiye, in addition to Azerbaijani folklore materials.

Studying the relationship of the images associated with the Wise Old Man archetype to the central symbolism and ritual semantics, the place of the archetype in the creation process can be clearly identified:

(1) The relationship of the images included in the Wise Old Man archetype with space, (2) The place of the images included in the Wise Old Man archetype in the context of social and moral relations, (3) The semantics of the ritual leader in various folklore information of the images included in the Wise Old Man archetype.

To keep in mind the issue of the spatial relationship of the images included in the Wise Old Man archetype, it is first necessary to look at the context of the place where he is referred to by various names (great-grandfather, grandfather, father, dervish, etc.). During the research, it becomes clear that the most obvious nature and function of these places, although explained in an Islamic context, is closely related to the semantics of the center of the world, which is widespread in mythologies. Islamic relations are used in these explanations only to satisfy the “current belief”. But the rituals performed in and around these spaces carry more of the semantics of linking a certain area (living space) with a cosmogonic act. Due to Josef Kempel’s words, the person who reaches this point achieves rebirth, resurrection, by repeating the hero archetype in a ritual context. This symbol “navel zone, the center of the world” connects that area with “the divine cosmic model”. As soon as certain deficiencies or problems arise, people turn to those points and ensure re-creation in the cosmic order through rituals. We also observe this semantics in the image paradigms of the Wise Old Man archetype, Dada Gorgud and Molla Nasreddin. One of the legends about Dada Gorgud it is said that Dada Gorgud, who was traveling around the world to escape death, heard a voice from the unseen “O fool! Return to the place where you first set foot... There you will find eternal peace. The place where you sit is the center of the world” (Bayat, 2003a, p. 37). Or in one of Molla Nasreddin’s famous anecdotes, Molla says that the place he is standing is the center of the world (Tahmasib, 2004, p. 87).

The connection of the Wise Old Man archetype with the navel of the world, the center symbol, is realized in the following models:

- 1. Grave model.** In this case, a person who possesses some kind of miracle is depicted as having a grave at the head of a spring, on a mountain peak, by a river, under a large tree, in an area far from the place of residence. However, here it is more of a father cult than a grave cult that has become relevant. It is no coincidence that Jean-Paul Roux writes about it so: “... currently, we have come to the conclusion that the cult of the dead and the cult of ancestors are two separate cults” (Roux, 1999, p. 188). Because visiting these places is not a desire to visit the grave (to please the soul of the dead person), but rather a desire to overcome certain problems.
- 2. Miracle model.** Each of the images included in the archetype of the wise old man is depicted performing a feat at the head of a spring, on a mountain peak, on the banks of a river, under a certain large tree, after which these territories turn into a sanctuary or a sacred place.
- 3. Trace and dwelling model.** Each of the images included in the archetype of the Wise Old Man has a place of residence or sacred imprint, which is considered sacral in a certain area. Among such places, the footprints of Hazrat Ali’s horse Duldul and Koroglu’s horse Girat should be especially mentioned.
- 4. Model of covenant and desire.** In this case the certain areas and means (tree, spring, etc.) become a sanctuary in accordance with the wish and covenant of one of the characters included in the Wise Old Man archetype.

However in all cases, these areas are associated with archetypal images and the cult of the father. The information provided about the “*Haji Dede Yatiri* (Hacı Dede Yatırı)” states that this place of vows, located north of the village of Hasanoglan, “is a place visited for the purpose of taking precautions against and finding healing from gray disease in sheep. One can meet the information that they cut the sacrifices by spinning them around a sharp stone (Tanyu, 1967, p. 95). As it can be seen, in this information the stone at the pilgrimage site called “*Haji Dede*” acts as the protector of the zoosphere and the troubles that come to these areas (gray sheep disease) are eliminated by visiting the site near the village. Here, *Haji Dede* and the shrine stone form a single center, creating a cosmo-energetic center.

In a large number of examples collected from the territory of Karabakh, it is said that a shrine or a sacred place associated with a saint heals people (correcting the crooked mouth) (Qarabağ: folklor da bir tarixdir, 2013a, p. 65). In one of the texts it is described that “When the grasshopper arrives, if anyone goes and takes water from that pond (meaning the *Tup-Tup (Tup-Tup)* sacred place – H.G.) and returns without looking at the ditch, the bird of wish will come at that hour and will not allow the grasshopper to eat the wheat» (AFA XII, 2005, p. 58). If in the above mentioned text the sanctuary protects the animals, in this text the water brought from the sacred place saves the wheat from pests. Of course, in both cases the sacred center, the holy person and the supernatural quality converge at one point.

It should be noted that the macrocosmic order is sometimes influenced by the cult of the grandfather, which is related to the semantics of the center. This is not accidental. Because the center of the world semantically symbolizes the point where the Earth and the Sky meet. The relationship established with this point has the power to influence the Sky and the Earth to the same extent. It is said about the sacred place “*Piral-Mursel* sanctuary” (*Pirel-Mursel*) located in the Shiddi village of the Vedibasari district of the Western Azerbaijan that “Some people such as the seriously ill, the childless and those who have experienced mental trauma have come here with hope, found healing and sacrificed and distributed food” (AFA X, 2004, p. 91). As it is clear from the information, those who come to this hearth are familiar with its sacred, extraordinary effects. The hearth, in other words, the semantics of holiness with which it is connected - the cult of the father (*Piral-Mursel*) has become a manifestation of the central symbolism.

Sometimes, various objects and tools of the Wise Elders become sacred along with the space and territory to which they belong. For example, in the Afyonkalahisar region of Türkiye, people visit the grave of a man named *Sultan Divani (Sultan Divani)* and make various wishes there. But the most interesting information is the following: “Here, Sultan Divan’s shoes are kept with special respect. Wrapped in a green cloth, these shoes are worn on the feet of children who are not walking on time, ensuring their ability to walk soon” (Tanyu, 1967, p. 152). Or, in one of the texts collected from the Agdash area, it is said that there was a holy man named Haji Bulud. “There is a man in our village and he keeps *Haji Bulud’s (Hacı Bulud)* things such as his coat, shoes and other things. Whoever has a trouble, he goes to that man and puts on those things and becomes better” (AFA XVI, 2006, p. 100). In these texts the creative center semantics of the father cult is symbolized through his personal clothing (shoes, coat, things). Here, these objects embody the creative father cult by acting as cosmic regulators.

### **The Semantic Connection of the Cult of Father and Grandfather with Sacred Spaces**

Investigating the models of the ancestor cult transformed into different locations through the personification of different individuals, it becomes clear that there is a protective and patronizing activity in this area.

“The childless women visit the sanctuary named “*Bardaggiran Baba*” (*Bardakkıran Baba*) before the sunrise on Saturday during Khidirallez and on three Saturdays, including the previous and following Saturdays. They pray two units of prayers and recite the surah Yasin from Holy Quran. They say to the father: “If you give me a child, I will break a plate here” and take three stones from the grave. They put them under their pillows and sleep on them for three nights. Then they tie the stones together and store them in a chest. If a child is born that year, on the day of Khidirellaz of next year, they leave the stones on the grave again and break a new plate at the grave” (Tanyu, 1967, p. 175). Or in one of the stories, it is described that a woman named Humay did not have a child and made an intention and lay down on a stone in the middle of the rock. After that, she had a child. That is why that place is called *Humay* Rock (AFA XIII, 2005, p. 39; AFA XXIII, 2011, p. 44).

These texts also allow to reveal deeper layers of the semantics of the father cult. In the first text, the fertilizing function of the father is more evident. A stone is taken over the father’s grave and women without children lie on it for three days, taking three stones from here and placing them under a pillow. Then they keep it in a box chest and when it is a child, they return it and take it to the grave. If you pay attention, the fertilizing function of the stone (mountain cult), which is a key detail in both texts and the fertilizing

function of the cult “grandfather” are concentrated in a single center. Three stones are taken from the grave and after the ritual period is completed, they lie on them (also lying on the rock) and place them in the coffin. In essence, the women are having symbolic sexual intercourse with the figure “grandfather” in a symbolic plan. The placement of the stone in the chest is not a random event. The “chest” symbolizes the period of childbirth, being a symbol of the female womb. The return of the stone to its previous place (on the grave) after the birth of a child stems from the fact that the cult of the father is the “cosmogonic” center: just as the problem of chaos arising from the non-birth of the child is reported to this point, the information about the birth of the child is also reported here. In this example the creative semantics of the cult of the father as a cosmoenergetic center is revealed.

One of the striking features in the texts about hearths and sanctuaries is the visit to these places and the performance of certain necessary acts on the grounds of childlessness. The creative semantics of the father cult is clearly evident in the sacred place “*Ship-Ship*” (*Şıp-Şıp*) in *Kadıkoy*, Türkiye. In one of the texts describes that “They take eatings to grandfather Ship-Ship on a hill near Kadıkoy”. Those who do not have children take offerings to the grandfather Ship-Ship. “After the sacrificed roosters are slaughtered here, their heads and feet are hung on the bushes on the edge of the stone pile and the remaining parts are given to the poor of the village. They also take the water from there. They go to the places where there are many pine trees in spring and summer” (Tanyu, 1967, p. 179). If attention is paid, the grandfather “Ship-Ship” is addressed with a request for a child. And most interestingly, a rooster is sacrificed to the tree, which is a symbol of the world tree and its legs and head are hung from that tree. In our opinion, the “head” and “foot” hanging here are phallic symbols, embodying the emotions of the woman who sacrificed. But in all cases, it is desired to impregnate the sacred places, who is mentioned here as the grandfather.

The same fact can be also seen in Zangezur folklore. It is said about the hearth “*Tup-Tup*” (*Tup-Tup*) that “if you go to that hearth, you must bring a rooster. You cannot bring an other animal there” (AFA XII, 2005, p. 58). Here again, the inclusion of the rooster detail directly links the hearth (as a place) and the owner to whom the sacred place is attached to the status of the creative father (rooster - male gender).

The text about the sanctuary of “*Khidir Baba*” (*Hıdır Baba*) also provides interesting facts for analysis in this regard. It is said that Khidr Baba, located on a hill, is a shrine. It is visited especially on Fridays and people walk around his grave three or seven times from right to left. On the other side of Khidir Baba, about five meters away, there is a place where intentions are monitored by climbing onto a black stone that is 20 centimeters above the ground. Prayers are recited while climbing onto this stone. A rooster is also sacrificed as a offering. It is killed by circling around Khidir Baba three times. It is believed that if the intention comes true, the stone on Khidir Baba will turn to the right and if it does not come true, it will turn to the left (Tanyu, 1967, p. 197).

As it can be seen, in this text there is an unbreakable connection between the cult of “grandfather” and the mountain. The most interesting point here is the fact that a divine dialogue takes place through a stone at the Khidir Baba hearth. Thus, while the turning of the stone here to the right indicates that the wishes of the person making the prayer will come true, turning it to the left indicates that the wishes will not come true. It should not be forgotten that the fact of “divine communication” itself only becomes relevant in places that are related to “the center of the world”. It is in such places that it is possible to learn about future events. It is no coincidence that this divine communication is actualized through one of the images belonging to the Wise Old Man archetype. We know from folklore that a person who wants to learn the cause of injustices wants to meet with God. He meets a white-haired, elder man under a tree and the person with the question receives a very wise answer from this man. The content of one of the texts we collected was as follows: A man wants to meet God to find out why good people in the world die faster. On the way, he meets a gray-haired old man under a tree. The old man asks him where he is going and he reveals his purpose. Without telling the boy who he is, the old man tells him to come out and eat a good apple from the tree. Even though it was difficult, the boy went out and picked the most prominent apple at the very top of the tree and fell. The old man told him that even though there were many apples below, you picked the one at the top. Because it was the best and most prominent apple. I am like that too, I choose the best and most prominent people and quickly take them to my place” (personal archive).

As it can be seen, here the divine dialogue (with God) is carried out in the image of an old white-haired man. As a rule, such dialogues take place more often in places with sacred content, such as “where there are no people”, “at the foot of the mountains”, “a place surrounded by fogs” and “under a tree”, “at the head of a spring”, which is based on linking these areas with “the semantics of the center” where Earth and Sky meet. In short, in our opinion, the shrines, hearths, and sanctuaries realized through the cult of the father should also be understood in the context of “divine communication.” Although in the synchronic plan these shrines played the role of a means to reach God (although many of the sacrificial customs here contradict Islamic customs), in our opinion, in times when mythological thinking was dominant, these places concentrated sacred power and spirit in a single center. But even though the multiplicity (cosmoenergetic centers in mythology) in the stage of monotheism linked its entire existence to the “one”, it was able to continue the more archaic beliefs around itself with some changes in the new environment. It is as if the spaces that played the role of sacred centers for mythological reality “adapted” to the new system, retaining their functional semantics in later belief systems, specifically in Islam. In this sense, the hearth, sanctuary and other sacred places “... are the pre-Islamic ancestor cult, shamanistic beliefs, ancient religions and religious systems gaining a new status and continuing their existence within Islamic culture” (Mukhtarzade, 2012, p. 157), which “have also preserved ancient traces” (Farhadov, 2001, p. 6). This can be seen in the fact that the activities carried out around shrines, hearths and sacred places have no connection with Islam. It again confirms that the essences (place, image, event) associated with the symbol of the sacred center in consciousness operate on the basis of a single mechanism, regardless of the belief system.

Investigating these sacred places it is also observed that certain areas are sanctified by the traces and signs of the images (or their transformed substitutes) included in the Wise Old Man series. From the information given about “Hazrat Ali’s footprints”, it is clear that it is believed that the footprints of the horse *Duldul of Hazrat Ali* were found in *Anatolia*, in Amasya (Tanyu, 1967, p. 163). In the territory of Azerbaijan, one can also find various symbols of Hazrat Ali or any saint or person (Qarabağ: folklor da bir tarixdir, p. 47; AFA V, 2002, p. 204; AFA IX, 2004, p. 88; AFA XIII, 2005, p. 181). The most interesting of these traces, however, is the hearth “Amudug”, which he built for his beloved. According to a version collected from the Zangezur region, during a campaign against the infidels, the girl whom he had promised to marry upon his return passed away before *Imam Ali* arrived: “He said this and, before Ali’s army came, went off to fight the infidels. When he returned, he saw that the girl was ill and on her deathbed. He built a room in *Amudukh* and after the girl died, she was taken there. Now her grave is in the hearth *Amudukh*. Next to it there is a spring. For one week or forty days, the water flows and then for one week or forty days, it dries up. They say the girl had accepted the phrase “*la ilaha illallah*” (“there is no God but Allah”) in words, but not in her heart. Even now, when the water flows, it means she is “Muslim”, when it dries up, she is “infidel” (AFA XII, 2005, p. 52).

Many of the ravines and springs found in various rocks are often remembered as traces of *Imam Ali*’s sword. For example, in the legend “Ali’s spring” collected in Karabakh, the origin of the Ali Spring is explained. According to the text, a pomegranate tree sprouted from the dry branch he had planted, a spring gushed forth from the strike of his sword, and even the imprint of his hand remained where he had placed it to drink water. The text also reveals that this place later turned into a site of pilgrimage. (Qarabağ: folklor da bir tarixdir, 2012b, p. III, p. 84).

At the same time, traces and sites of this kind can also be found in connection with the figure of *Koroglu*, one of the heroic paradigms of the Wise Old Man archetype. In one of the folklore texts collected from Zangezur region it is said: “According to legend, *Koroglu* mounted his horse *Girat*, tied one stone behind his saddle and another in front. The elders say he rode across that plain, to the area called *Aghap*. There are similar traces in the region *Gubadli* and Jabrayil too bright stone formations in the flatlands. The ones we have here are two large stones. The upper parts have been carved, they are hollow, places for lamps. They used to pour oil into them and light them as signals. At night, they would send signs across to the other side of River Aras” (AFA XII, 2005, p. 51).

As it can be seen, this text does not characterize those places as sacred sites. However, the association of the character with a creative principle and in this context, the transformation of his presence into various

locations (particularly rocks and fortresses), (for example, a shelter attributed to Koroglu on a rock in the region *Tovuz*, or the place known as “*Koroglu Fortress*” in the *Misginli* valley of the *Gadabay* region, indicates the potential activation of the “Chanlibel” mytheme. In this case, the *Chanlibel* (*Çanlıbel*) mytheme is not transformed into a toponymic element; rather, it manifests itself through Koroglu’s various associations with heights and rocks in one form or another. In almost every instance where a rock is linked to Koroglu, the semantics of Chanlibel become activated. S. Rzasoy characterizes “Chanlibel” as a ritual-mythological space (epic locus) as follows:

(1) A transitional space defined by archaic ritual, (2) The world of goodness, which stands in opposition to the chaotic (evil) world of pashas and beys – Cosmos” (Rzasoy, 2009, p. 363).

In another place the scientist writes: “Chanlibel is the space and period in which individuals are located in the initiation ritual. The individual who comes here from the community gets out of his previous status and gets the status of a madman” (Rzasoy, 2009, p. 315). We think that S.Rzasoy correctly defined the ritual-mythological semantics of the Chanlibel space. Indeed, this space is a ritual “zone” of young people who have reached the age of initiation. This semantics of “Chanlibel”, which is regarded as a place of status change for young people, is associated with “central symbolism”.

Looking at the epic text, it becomes clear that the man Ali does not agree to camp elsewhere. And his search for a place of refuge continues until the moment when the Chanlibel place is found. As it turned out, the man Ali is also a blind old man. It is also known that “blindness” is associated with sacral awareness in the semiotic plan. As a wise old man, Ali man’s search for space is, in fact, the search for the “center of the world”. The burial of Ali at the top of the mountain has the same semantics in the semiotic plan as the graves of holy persons, grandfathers, fathers on the top of the mountain. In this sense, N.Jafarov mentions: “By serving the establishment of harmony between “that world” and “this world”, Ali approaches Khizir in the Azerbaijani epics of the late Middle Ages” (Jafarov, 2002, p. 297). Of course, the images of Ali, Khizir, Hazrat Ali, father//grandfather//grandfather and sayyid, as manifestations of the Wise Old Man archetype, all join the symbolism of the center with their graves on the mountaintop, with any sign of it. In short, sayyid and folk wisdom men, including a single model of myth that forced Ali man to climb a mountain peak (as well as to be buried at a spring, at four crossroads, under a tree), even in the context of a tomb, is a “search for the center”. F. Bayat also pointed out that there was a deep connection between Ali and the mountain cult: “According to Seyidov’s thought, Ali, who symbolizes the mountain spirit, chose Chanlibel as his residence for two purposes: 1) The protective function that Chanlibel would play in the future; 2) Chanlibel is connected to the mythological worldview; There is a deep connection between Chanlibel and Ali”. This is confirmed by the fact that Ali, after being blinded, aspired to the mountain, found comfort in the mountain, died in the mountain, etc. As it can be understood from ethnographic materials, the ancient Turks imagined that the mountain spirit was blind. This blind mountain spirit with white hair was transformed into the male type of Ali in the epic (Bayat, 2003, p. 29). However, F.Bayat also confirmed the connection of the image of Ali with the mountain and the height in the context of the mountain and its essence. This model itself confirms the fact that the image of the Wise Old Man and the mountain cult, which carries the central semantics of the world, are united in one center and form a single mold.

### **The Wise Old Man Archetype and the Act of Creation: “Noah’s Flood”, “Alexander’s Water of Life” and the Motif Buta**

The wise old man and the mountain, the wise old man and the spring, the wise old man and the four crossroads, the wise old man and the tree are mythologemes concentrated in one center and molded in culture. When activated, they create conditions for the organization of cosmic order. It is worth taking a closer look at a few of them.

In one of the legends about Noah’s flood it is said: “When the world was flooded, God said, “Oh Noah, I have given you this ark, save yourself”. The Prophet Noah enters the ark. He takes refuge in the mountain of pain. It is said from God that there is no one left on earth except you, O Noah. I send you a woman, increasing the human race on earth. All men came from that woman with the Prophet Noah” (Ajalov,

Beydili, 2005, p. 44). From another legend collected from Karabakh about Noah's flood, it is clear that when the storm began, he took a couple of all the creatures and boarded the ark. "It is said that how many thousands of years have passed, Noah's Ark came and stopped on Mount Ararat, it had started in the same place" (Acalov, Beydili, 2005, p. 121). The study of the legends about Noah shows that in them archaic mythological views and religious views were intertwined, becoming a single poetic form (Rzasoy, 2012, p. 70). However, "if attention is paid, in addition to the end of the world, one can see the motif of death and resurrection. The world enters the point of death and at this time Noah, as a mythical savior, creates an artificial environment (Ark) and becomes a ritual guarantor of the next resurrection of the world, the continuation of life" (Garayev, 2013, p. 118). Apparently, a new beginning of life, the birth and birth of generations, in other words, their creation takes place on a mountain peak-in the heart of the world. Here, the new creation is also led by the Prophet Noah, who belongs to the paradigm of the archetype of the Wise Old Man. The central semantics and the archetype of the Wise Old Man act as a cosmogonic mold in the semiotic plan. Since the center of the world is due to the act of creation, as soon as there is a problem in society, people turn to this place and try to ensure that the creation is repeated in the micro model, confirming the holiness of this place with rituals (lighting candles, making sacrifices, tying cloth, taking stones and sand from the grave). As A.Khalil said, "... the mythology of any people has been closely associated with a cult since ancient times. Mythology is realized through cult, where each ritual embodies the actions of people to worship God" (Khalil, 2013, p. 43). Approaching from this point of view, the visit to the mountaintop graves of persons considered sacred and the implementation of various rituals around them serve to direct the will of God through the influence on sacred objects.

As it can be seen from our analysis above, at this time the distinction between the sanctified space and the image of the Wise Old Man is lost. In this case, it is difficult to make a semiotic distinction between the presence of a mountain peak (or spring head, four crossroads, six trees ) or the presence of a divine person buried in a ritual in a certain area. Because in this case, the space and the person emerge as a single mold that serves cosmicization.

The characters included in the Wise Old Man archetype are located in the central area and maintain traditional behavioral models: they achieve the preservation of the traditional model by providing advice at the central point to those who want to make changes in the existing order of the world. It is appropriate to explain the sayings based on the following legend about "Isgandar": "Gulam Baba says that at that time, Isgandar was also offered to drink the water of life and stay alive forever. He says that he goes and reaches the water of life, finds it and just as he is about to fill his cup and drink it, a voice comes from the unseen. It says: "Isgandar, don't drink that water, if you do, you will regret it like me". He pours the water on the ground. When a third warning comes, he sees a figure approaching and it is Khidr the Prophet. He says, "If you drink this water, you will suffer as I do. You are not meant to be immortal yet. Wait until your time comes"" (Qarabağ: folklor da bir tarixdir, 2012a, p. 101).

We should note that here Isgandar / Alexander is a hero who wants to change the order of the world. If he, as a ruler, had drunk from the water of eternal life, certain changes could have occurred in the existing order of the world. People could have achieved immortality by drinking from the water of eternal life. As one can see from the idea mentioned above from Mircea Eliade, the fountain of life is also semantically related to the center of the world. It reaches that area, but when he wants to drink from the spring water, the prophet Khidir appears there and explains the meaning of "immortality". As we mentioned above, the Prophet Khidir is also one of the images included in the Wise Old Man archetype. And this scholar, who appeared at the center of the world and managed to protect the norm of death, actually acts as a protector of the cosmic order. This activity of his serves to protect the heroic image of Isgandar. Otherwise, the world conqueror who shook the world could turn into an old man and a nobody. In short, as it can be seen from the text, the image of the Wise Old Man, who is located at the center of the world, acts as the justification and protector of traditional models (life and death). Here one can see that the Wise Old Man and the spring, which is the cosmoenergetic center, act in a single model.

One of the places where the images included in the Wise Old Man archetype manifest themselves by forming a mold with the center of the world is evident in the ceremony “buta”. In Azerbaijani epics, the buta is usually given to the hero when he is sleeping at a spring, under a tree or in a garden, which in turn carry the semantics of the center. Our point can be better illustrated through the excerpt taken from the epic “Abbas and Gulgez”: “Haji Seyid’s son Sagi was Abbas’s friend. One day, Abbas went with his companion Sagi to walk in the garden. After walking around for a while, each of them lied down and fell asleep under a tree. After some time, Sagi woke up and saw that it was already evening, but Abbas was still asleep. No matter what he did, he could not wake Abbas. He quickly went and informed Abbas’s mother, sister and the neighbors. They carried Abbas home while he was still in deep sleep. All the fortune-tellers and old women gathered and each gave a different interpretation. Some said he had gone mad, others said he had lost his senses. One old woman took his pulse and said: “He is in the dream of love, he will awaken tomorrow” (Tehmasib, Akhundov, 2005, p. 109).

It is clear that the buta motif is connected with the cosmogonic act. M. Jafarli shows that the hero receives his love from the Divine. The sacred powers mediate between him and the Divine and convey to him the love that comes from the Divine (Jafarli, 2010, p. 147). Sh.Albaliyev also writes that the place where lovers and beloveds receive their buta (garden, grave, sanctuary, cave, etc.) is the address of the common denominator of both worlds, “in other words, lovers are given buta in a chaotic space, in a place where that world and this world intersect and at the same time at a moment where that world and this world intersect – in the plane of time” (Albaliyev, 2012, p. 37). “In fact, it is possible to see a cosmogonic motif here too. According to the archetypal cosmogonic model, the Sky is symbolized by a man, and the Earth by a woman. The buta is given by a dervish in the Sky and on the ground the old woman understands his pain. She knows that the buta was given to her. In this motif, the lover-beloved relationship is reflected in cosmogonic relationships (sky-man, earth-woman). As we mentioned above, the profane transition gives rise to creation in a sacred context, which in turn emerges in the context of cosmogonic-mythological ideas. It means, in adolescence, the young man is re-created by joining the cosmogonic act of creation. In the example of the dervish and the old woman, he connects his relationship with the cosmogonic act” (Garayev, 2013, p. 65). And the most interesting thing is that these events occur in places that carry central semantics. Thus, a person who reaches adolescence achieves rebirth in a new status by connecting with the cosmogonic act in a place that carries central semantics - at the head of a spring, under a tree, in a garden and other places. It is no coincidence that the dervish (or one of the images included in this series) also presents the information about the transition to a new status. It is possible to examine this information presentation on many levels. One of these is the granting of a new status by the images of the wise old man, the guardian of tradition. If someone looks closely, it becomes clear that here the Wise Old Man forms a single pattern with the spaces that carry the semantics of the center. The person who reaches this point and has reached adulthood receives new status information through the Wise Old Man. It is possible to conclude that there is a tradition of perceiving the world model through the language of images included in the Wise Old Man archetype. Of course, the number of such models can be increased as much as desired, but it is worth considering other levels of the semantics of creation of the Wise Old Man images in folklore.

### **The Social-Regulatory Function of the Wise Old Man Archetype: The Cult of Elders**

The wise old man also appears as an image that stands at the center of social and moral relations. It should be noted that not only are the various images included in the Wise Old Man archetype deeply revered among the people, but living examples of this cult are also found. Thus, the Wise Old Man archetype preserves itself not only in image creation, but also in the background of public, social and moral relations. Despite the norm-destructive power of the culture of urbanization and globalization among the people, the cult of elder man still lives today. This cult manifests itself more clearly in the following spheres of activity:

(1) When there is a blood feud between two generations and, in general, any problems arise, one of the images included in the archetype of the wise old man is turned to eliminate it (the village elder, the eldest of one generation, etc.), (2) When a certain act of establishment is carried out, blessings are received from fathers and grandfathers, older representatives. For example, when building a house, the blessing of fathers and grandfathers is usually expected with great joy. (3) During the establishment of new families, a person who has accepted the status of an elder usually conducts an embassy and talks with representatives of other generations in general.

In short, the status of the elder is an image that becomes relevant in solving various issues in society: it is based on the archetype of the Wise Old Man. We must remember that although the elder takes his entire metaphor from old age, he should be understood more as a specific status. Thus, among the people, the leadership of the implementation of all the above-mentioned tasks is characterized as “acting as an elder”. Sometimes, the one who “acts as an elder” is not an old person, but a representative of the younger generation. In short, in society, eldership is not measured only by the factor of old age. It is a social mask that has taken all its metaphors from old age. During the organization and regulation of various relationships in society, the person who adopts this mask stands at the center of events by acting as “an elder”. But regardless of the age group in which the person adopts this mask, it is the wise old age that becomes relevant and is considered worthy of respect. Therefore, eldership should be studied in all cases as a manifestation of the Wise Old Man archetype. Each settlement and district has a focal point that connects with living people, just as it has a focal point that connects with space. In this case, individuals with elder status (seyids, people believed by the people to be elders, etc.) stand at the center as the regulator of all social relations. They act as heads and managers of all ritual processes in society. Whoever these people go to, those people will not remain indifferent to the wishes of that persons. The main reason of it is, on the one hand, respect for that person, and on the other hand, public condemnation. For example, according to informants, Seyid Ashraf agha was a person who was given the status of an elder in the Fuzuli region: due to his activities, the hostility that existed in various blood feuds was eliminated.

But the concept of eldership has a large and complex meaning structure and other statuses in society act as parts of this whole. The person who accepts this status also becomes the guardian of tradition. People looking for a way out of various problems turn to these people and find a way out. Because once again, we say that “eldership” is a knowledge and regulation of norms. They also carry out such regulatory acts in the processes of creation in society: the functionality of the eldership status in each of the cosmic acts such as giving a daughter, receiving a daughter and naming is undeniable.

Respect for the cult of elders in society preserves its existence in several fundamental models. Paying attention to the proverbs or sayings told by elders, it becomes clear that these words consist of modeling society, nature and various events. At this time, behavior and actions in the most diverse situations and circumstances are perceived as the advice of the father.

In the example of proverbs, the norm-setting, regulating and controlling quality of the Wise Old Man archetype is manifested. The subject behind proverbs is the image of the wise father/grandfather/great-grandfather, a product of collective consciousness. Although it is sometimes presented in the context of an indefinite subject, it is sometimes attributed to a specific wise figure. To understand the semantic essence of the issue, it is worth referring to several texts collected from Zangezur and Karabakh, which are attributed to wise fathers and embody the model of creation: “The infidel chased him (*Father Tumas (Tumas Ata)*) and took him out to the mountainside. He went and entered the juniper bush. The partridge showed his place. He changed his place and entered a different place, the partridge again said his place. He went and disappeared there after five minutes. He said:

- Juniper, may your color stay, partridge, may your children not to increase, hey, girl, may your dowry not to be enough”. Now, if a girl given a dowry of nine cars, it still won't be enough. The juniper is always green. The partridge doesn't have many children” (Qarabağ: folklor da bir tarixdir, 2012b, p. 71).

The acts of creation in this text (the partridge being a low-breeding type, the juniper tree being evergreen, the girl's dowry not running out) are based on the words of Father Tumas. His attitude determines the type of creation. Thus, here the person who embodies the cult of the father acts as the creator. This creativity, in turn, is understood as a component of our cosmogonic thought. This creative semantics of the cult of the father preserves itself in the structure of proverbs. At this time, fathers or elders should be understood as creators of models to get out of all existing situations and to justify them. The words attributed to fathers by the people draw the boundaries of people's behavior with affirmations and denials. But all these modeling by the father take themselves from the Wise Old Man archetype. In short, the reference to the father in the sayings that we have collected under the name of proverbs is not a random event. This is the preservation of the creative, regulating and modeling power of the Wise Old Man archetype at the level of a linguistic fact. Belief in the cult of the father, the need for an internal psychological guide, form the basis of this model.

## Conclusion

In the investigation it is shown that the Wise Old Man archetype and its associated sacred spaces such as mountain, spring, under a tree, four crossroads, hearth, sacred place and shrines play a central role in the psychosemantic structure of creation in common Turkic culture. In short, the concept of creation was brought into focus based on legends and tales recorded from the folklore environments of Azerbaijan and Türkiye and an analysis was conducted in relation to the images of wise old men. These spaces fulfill the function of a cosmogonic center on both the mythological, religious and social levels and are associated with the organization of the initial order in the process of creation. The hearthes, sanctuaries, shrines and sacred places acted not only as a means of divine communication, but also as objects that united sacred power and spirit during the times when mythological thought was dominant and they adapted to the new religious-cultural environment while maintaining their functional semantics even during the monotheistic period.

The Wise Old Man archetype manifests in a variety of folkloric and religious figures such as Noah, Khizir, Hazrat Ali, Koroglu, Alexander and Mullah Nasreddin and others performing functions that include the maintenance of cosmic order, the facilitation of creation acts and the regulation of social and legal relations. These images serve to organize and protect the cosmoenergetic order by functioning in a single central pattern in ritual-mythological spaces (Chanlibel, springs, mountain peaks) and in the context of social relations (images of elders, fathers, and seyids).

Analysis of selected texts from Turkish and Azerbaijani folklore indicates that the symbolic role and semantics of sacred spaces, the normative content of proverbs, the regulatory functions of elders and notions of male agency in creation are all derived from the Wise Old Man archetype. In folklore the concepts of "wisdom" and "elderhood" are not measured solely by age and experience, but are conditioned by the metaphysical function in the act of creation. Elders, sayyids and other knowledgeable individuals play the role of social regulators and preservers of tradition in society and perform a central function in ritual and everyday relationships.

The psychosemantic structure of this archetype is expressed through metaphorical symbols linked to the ideology of masculinity, the cult of ancestors and the images of Khizir and grandfather in common Turkic culture. Thus, the Wise Old Man archetype symbolizes both the starting point of creation, the spiritual and cultural center of society, and the protector of the cosmogonic and harmonic order. Its archetypal structure, combined with a cosmogonic center, sacred spaces and ancestor cult, acts as a protector of both creation and social and ritual order. In this regard, the Wise Old Man archetype is considered a universal model that combines a cosmic, social and ritual central function.

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Hikmat Guliyev is a folklorist and Doctor of Sciences in Philology, Associate Professor. In 2015, he successfully defended his dissertation on the theme “The Wise Old Man Archetype in Azerbaijani Folklore” in a PhD degree. In 2018, he was awarded the title of Associate Professor in the field of folklore studies. In 2024, he successfully defended his Doctor of Science (DSc) dissertation on the theme “Internet Folklore: Theoretical-Methodological Context and Folkloric Meaning-Making”. Hikmat Guliyev is the author of six books and approximately 60 scholarly articles published both nationally and internationally. He has participated in numerous national and international conferences and four of his articles have been published in journals indexed in Web of Science and Scopus.