

EXPLORING THE NATIONAL-CULTURAL SPECIFICITY OF TERMS IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES: ENGLISH AND UZBEK PERSPECTIVES

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Annotation: *This article explores the national-cultural specificity of terms in religious studies, with a focus on English and Uzbek perspectives. Religion is a fundamental aspect of human culture, and understanding religious concepts requires an appreciation of the linguistic and cultural nuances inherent in different languages. In the English context, terms like "God," "spirit," "enlightenment," "sacrifice," and "faith" have varying connotations across different cultural and religious traditions. Similarly, in Uzbek, the official language of Uzbekistan, Islamic terminology such as "namoz" (prayer) and "ro'za" (fasting) carry specific religious and cultural significance. Additionally, Uzbek idiomatic expressions convey profound religious insights. Recognizing and appreciating these national-cultural specificities enhances the understanding of religious concepts and facilitates cross-cultural dialogue in the field of religious studies.*

Key words: *national-cultural specificity of terms, religious insights, Uzbek and English perspectives*

Introduction:

Religion is a deeply ingrained aspect of human culture, shaping worldviews, values, and social structures. The field of religious studies delves into the exploration and understanding of various religious traditions, their beliefs, practices, and their impact on society. However, when it comes to discussing religious concepts and terminology, a challenge arises due to the national-cultural specificity of language. In this article, we will examine the national-cultural specificity of terms related to religious studies in English and Uzbek, shedding light on the nuances and diversities of these languages in expressing religious idea.

English is a global language widely used in academic and professional settings. It encompasses a vast vocabulary, including terms related to religious studies. Many of these terms have their origins in Christianity, given the historical influence of Christianity on English-speaking societies. For example, words like "sin," "salvation," and "redemption" are deeply rooted in Christian theology. While these terms have wider applicability across various religious traditions, their specific connotations may differ when examined through the lens of different cultures.

Additionally, English has borrowed terms from other religious traditions, such as "karma" from Hinduism and Buddhism or "halal" from Islam. These borrowed terms often become part of the English lexicon, but their original cultural and religious contexts may not be fully captured. Consequently, the English language provides a framework for

understanding religious concepts that transcends specific cultures but may lack the depth and cultural nuances associated with the original terms. Uzbek is the official language of Uzbekistan and is spoken by millions of people in Central Asia. As a Turkic language, Uzbek has its own unique set of terms related to religious studies. Islam is the predominant religion in Uzbekistan, and many religious concepts and terms in Uzbek have Islamic origins. For instance, the term "namoz" in Uzbek refers to the Islamic practice of prayer. The word "ro'za" is used to describe fasting during the holy month of Ramadan. These terms are deeply intertwined with Uzbek culture and carry a specific religious and cultural significance that may not be fully captured in their English translations.

Moreover, Uzbek has cultural idioms and expressions that reflect the religious beliefs and practices of the local population. These idiomatic expressions often convey profound religious insights and values. For example, the Uzbek phrase "Hayot bir necha kecha emas" translates to "Life is not a few nights." This expression highlights the transient nature of life and the importance of spiritual contemplation and self-reflection.

Here are a few examples of religious terms in English that can have different connotations in different cultures: "God": In English, "God" is often used as a generic term to refer to the supreme being or deity in various religious traditions. However, the connotations and characteristics associated with the concept of God can vary significantly across different cultures and religions. For instance, the monotheistic understanding of God in Christianity, Islam, and Judaism differs from the polytheistic conceptions of deities in Hinduism or the pantheistic views in certain indigenous religions.

"Spirit": The term "spirit" can have diverse interpretations in different cultural and religious contexts. In English, it can refer to a non-physical entity or essence, often associated with supernatural or divine forces. However, the specific meanings and interpretations of "spirit" can vary. For example, in indigenous cultures, "spirit" may refer to ancestral spirits or nature spirits, while in Christian theology, it can denote the Holy Spirit, considered the third person of the Holy Trinity.

"Enlightenment": In religious studies, "enlightenment" generally refers to the attainment of spiritual insight or awakening. However, the connotations and interpretations of enlightenment can differ across religious traditions. In Buddhism, enlightenment (nirvana) signifies the ultimate liberation from suffering and the cycle of rebirth. In contrast, in Hinduism, enlightenment (moksha) represents the union with the divine and the realization of one's true nature.

"Sacrifice": The term "sacrifice" can have varying connotations depending on the cultural and religious context. In English, it typically refers to an act of giving up something valuable or offering something to a higher power. However, the nature and significance of sacrifices differ across religions. For example, in ancient religions like those practiced by the Aztecs, sacrifices involved the offering of human lives to appease deities, while in Christianity, the concept of sacrifice often relates to the selfless act of Jesus Christ on the cross.

"Faith": "Faith" is a term that encompasses beliefs, trust, and confidence in religious contexts. However, the understanding and implications of faith can differ across religious

traditions. In Christianity, faith is often associated with trust in God's promises and the acceptance of Jesus Christ as the savior. In Islam, faith (iman) includes belief in the teachings of the Quran and the prophethood of Muhammad. These examples demonstrate how religious terms in English can carry distinct connotations and meanings when viewed through the lens of different cultures and religious traditions. It highlights the importance of considering the specific cultural and religious contexts to fully comprehend the nuances and implications of these terms.

Cultural differences play a significant role in shaping the interpretation of religious terms in English. Here are a few ways in which cultural variations impact the understanding and interpretation of these terms:

Contextual and Historical Significance: Cultural differences bring diverse historical and contextual backgrounds that influence the interpretation of religious terms. For example, the term "church" in English generally refers to a Christian place of worship. However, the connotations associated with the term can differ based on cultural contexts. In English-speaking countries with a Christian majority, "church" typically refers to a specific denomination or a building. In contrast, in countries with different religious traditions, the term may be used to describe non-Christian places of worship, such as mosques or temples.

Symbolism and Imagery: Cultural variations impact the symbolism and imagery associated with religious terms. For instance, the term "tree" may have different meanings and connotations depending on cultural contexts. In some indigenous cultures, trees are considered sacred and represent the connection between the divine and the natural world. In Christianity, the Tree of Life is a symbol of spiritual nourishment and eternal life, whereas in Hinduism, the banyan tree is associated with wisdom and immortality. These cultural variations influence the interpretation and depth of meaning attributed to religious terms.

Linguistic Nuances and Translation Challenges: Cultural differences affect the translation and interpretation of religious terms from their original languages into English. Certain religious concepts and terms may not have direct equivalents in English, leading to challenges in accurately conveying their full meaning. Translating terms from languages with rich religious traditions, such as Sanskrit or Arabic, requires careful consideration of cultural and religious nuances that may not be fully captured in the English language. As a result, the interpretation of religious terms in English may lack the depth and cultural specificity associated with the original language.

Religious Practices and Rituals: Cultural differences influence the interpretation of religious terms based on the specific practices and rituals associated with them. For example, the term "pilgrimage" in English denotes a journey to a sacred place for religious or spiritual reasons. However, the nature and significance of pilgrimages vary across cultures. The rituals, destinations, and motivations behind pilgrimages differ based on religious traditions, cultural beliefs, and historical practices. These cultural variations impact the understanding and interpretation of the term "pilgrimage" in different contexts.

Social and Ethical Values: Cultural differences shape the social and ethical values associated with religious terms. For instance, the term "modesty" can have varying interpretations based on cultural norms and religious teachings. In some cultures, modesty

may be closely tied to clothing choices and behavior, while in others, it may extend to attitudes, speech, and interpersonal interactions. These cultural variations influence the understanding and application of religious terms related to moral and ethical values.

In conclusion, cultural differences significantly impact the interpretation of religious terms in English. Understanding the cultural context, historical background, symbolism, and linguistic nuances associated with these terms is crucial for a comprehensive understanding of their meaning and implications. By acknowledging and respecting cultural variations, we can foster a more inclusive and nuanced interpretation of religious terms in English.

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