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CHARACTERISTICS OF STORIES IN HADITHS

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Abstract: This article examines the concept of qissa (narrative/story) in Islamic sources, its linguistic and terminological meanings, and its distinctive literary and educational characteristics. It analyzes the role of narratives in the Noble Qur'an and hadith literature as an effective means of moral instruction, spiritual guidance, and psychological influence. The study also highlights the differences between Islamic narratives and modern literary storytelling, emphasizing their concise structure, didactic purpose, and historical significance. Furthermore, the article discusses the contribution of hadith scholars to preserving authentic narratives and distinguishing them from weak and fabricated reports.

Keywords: Story, khabar, hadith literature, narratives, storytelling, educational and moral teachings, Companions, Islamic history, moral development.

The word „qissa" (story) in Arabic carries the meanings of history, story, tale, short narrative, oral reports, transmitted accounts, and news or reports that have been narrated. It is also noteworthy that in the Noble Qur'an, Allah refers to the accounts of past nations in several places and describes them as qisas (stories). For example: "Thus do We relate to you (O Muhammad) accounts of what has passed…" (Ta-Ha, 20:99), among other verses that can be cited in this regard.

In its technical (terminological) meaning, qissa refers to a story, narration, or transmitted account about something, a person, and the events connected to them that are passed on orally from one generation to another. In literature, it is also used for works that describe real historical events[1]. Those who narrate stories are called qissakhon, qissagoy, qissachi, or maddah[2].

There is a general and specific distinction between qissa (story) and khabar (report). Every qissa is considered a khabar, but not every khabar can be considered a qissa. For example, reports

[1] Explanatory Dictionary of the Uzbek Language. – Tashkent: National Encyclopedia of Uzbekistan, 2006. – Vol. 5. – p. 113.

[2] The word maddah in Arabic means a praiser, someone who praises, or a narrator/storyteller. When the Russians occupied Central Asia, storytellers (qissachis) were referred to as maddahs. Detailed information about the activities of maddahs during the Russian Empire period is provided in Prof. A. Erkinov's article titled "The Islamic Institution of Maddah Preachers in the Turkestan Region: Ideologization of the Repertoire of Their Sermons by the Russian Administration" (ARS Islamica. – Moscow: Nauka – Vostochnaya Literatura, 2016. – pp. 746–796).

about Allah creating the heavens and the earth, the angels, and the jinn, as well as the names of the prophets and their fathers, are all akhbar (reports) but are not considered qisas (stories). However, accounts that include the prophets together with their peoples, such as the struggle between the righteous and the wicked, are considered qisas[3].

Scholars, in the course of their research, have mentioned the following conclusions regarding the distinctive stylistic features that set narratives (qisas) apart from other types of literature. These features can also be observed in narratives found in Islamic sources:

- The general characteristic of the narrative style. It is so continuous and interlinked that the reader always senses that it expresses a particular purpose and remains attentive and engaged until the very end;
- The narrative is logically coherent, well-structured, and concise, with insignificant details omitted; within the narrative, description, storytelling, and dialogue employ different stylistic forms;
- In order for the reader to remain connected to the events taking place in the narrative, expressions must be simple and clear; the narrative does not come in a fragmented manner, but rather has an underlying main meaning that can be understood throughout the text[4].
- There are several characters gathered around the main protagonist; it is not necessary to describe in detail all the events that occur in the life of the main character, therefore only a certain period of the person's life should be depicted. Even then, only one or several episodes from the individual's life are selected;
- The social content addressed in the narrative is broad and profound;
- The narrative does not continuously depict complex life processes or wide-ranging events in an uninterrupted manner;[5]
- The narrative is considered one of the means of exerting psychological influence on a person, using folk expressions[6].

In other words, a qissa (story) is an independent genre that subjectively narrates a certain period of a person's life, specific situations, and particular psychological states, while also retaining certain features characteristic of the novel, novella, and short story, without being entirely separate from them[7].

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[3] Umar Sulayman al-Ashqar. Sahih al-Qasas al-Nabawi. – Jordan: Dar al-Nafa'is, 1997. – P 12.

[4] Umar Sulayman al-Ashqar. Sahih al-Qasas al-Nabawi. – Jordan: Dar al-Nafa'is, 1997. – P 12-13.

[5] https://referat.arxiv.uz/index.php?do=files&op=download&fileid=63024.

[6] Rajapova F. Style and Poetic Language in Uzbek Short Story Writing of the Independence Period. Abstract of PhD dissertation in Philology. – Tashkent: Fan va Ta'lim Poligraf, 2018. – P 13.

[7] Kholdarov D. The Problem of Artistic Style in Contemporary Uzbek Short Stories (on the example of the short stories of Shoim Bo'tayev and Nazar Eshonqul). Abstract of PhD dissertation in Philology. – Tashkent: Fan va Ta'lim Poligraf, 2017. – P 14.

Narratives (qisas) have had religious and educational purposes, such as calling to goodness, forbidding evil, offering sermons and advice, and encouraging repentance, among other aims. At the same time, the practice of storytelling (qissachilik) also frequently reminds people of this miraculous, eternal consequence[8].

However, narratives in the Noble Qur'an and hadith are much more concise compared to modern developed literary short stories. For example, in a hadith reported by Imam al-Bukhari from Abu Hurayra (may Allah be pleased with him), the Prophet (peace be upon him) relates the story of two women who disputed over a child and sought judgment from Prophets Dawud and Sulayman (peace be upon them), where Sulayman ultimately identified the true mother through her compassion. Such narratives (qisas) are a distinct literary form that strongly engages people, influences their hearts, and conveys meaning effectively. In contrast, modern narratives have diversified into various forms, including long, short, symbolic, lyrical[9], realistic, and even imaginative stories, including those expressed through animal characters or about animals themselves[10].

The narratives mentioned in hadith literature can conditionally be divided into two parts. The first consists of those that are presented as explanations of the narratives mentioned in the Noble Qur'an; for example, the event between Khidr and Musa (peace be upon them) is also narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in his Sahih[11]. The second consists of the mention of narratives not found in the Qur'an, for example the hadith about the leper, the bald man, and the blind man among the Children of Israel[12]. Likewise, when the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) narrated stories about others[13], these can also be considered narratives. Similarly, events that occurred in the life of the Prophet himself, such as the splitting of his chest and the events of Isra and Mi'raj, are also considered narratives that are studied independently.

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[8] Shermurodov T. Short Stories, Prefaces... / http://www.e-adabiyot.uz/adabiyotshunoslik/550-maqola.html.

[9] In the Qur'an and hadith, imaginary (fantastical), symbolic, and lyrical narratives do not occur. Rather, what is presented is a clear account of actual events that took place. If a narrative is expressed through the language of animals, it is considered to have been conveyed through divine revelation.

[10] Dr. Muhammad ibn Hasan Zubayr, in his work al-Qasas fi al-Hadith al-Nabawi, identified six types of narratives (qisas). These are: 1. Events that took place during the lifetime of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him); 2. Parables or analogies made by the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him); 3. Narratives related to history; 4. Events that will occur in the future; 5. Narratives related to resurrection and the Day of Judgment; 6. Narratives related to matters of the unseen.

[11] Imam al-Bukhari. Sahih. – Damascus: Dar Ibn Kathir, 2002. – pp. 31-43.

[12] Imam al-Bukhari. Sahih. – Damascus: Dar Ibn Kathir, 2002. – P 857.

[13] Obidov R. Sunnah, Hadith and the Muhaddiths. – Tashkent: Movarounnahr, 2012. – pp. 36-37.

It should also be emphasized that the narratives in the Qur'an and hadith mention events that were already known to people or specific tribes. They are related in order for people to reflect on the conditions of previous nations, compare themselves with them, and thereby take lessons for themselves. If those who came before were unjust, they are encouraged to reflect and distance themselves from their ways; and if they were righteous, they are encouraged to take advice, lessons, and examples from them. For example, in the Noble Qur'an it is stated**: "So relate the stories, perhaps they may reflect"** (Al-A'raf, 7:176), and **"Indeed in their stories there is a lesson for people of understanding"** (Yusuf, 12:111).

In modern education as well, the storytelling method is widely used, and it helps individuals – especially children – acquire knowledge, skills, and habits in a more effective and solid manner. Indeed, telling stories and narratives quickly captures the attention of a person or learner, stimulates the desire to listen, and arouses interest in following events. For this reason, the use of stories in education and upbringing has been widespread among all peoples since ancient times.

In the Noble Qur'an, for the purpose of education and moral development –namely, refining human character and providing guidance – stories are used more extensively than exhortations and wisdom-based teachings. The sacred source expresses the educational and moral impact of stories as follows: **"Indeed in their stories there is a lesson for people of understanding"** (Yusuf, 12:111).

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) also effectively used narratives (qisas) among the Companions in promoting educational and moral teachings. This is because narratives have a strong educational impact in attracting attention and helping them understand the essence of wisdom and advice contained within them. At the same time, in his activities, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) also effectively used storytelling to explain to the Companions the essence of the religion of Islam.

Through narratives, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) called the Companions to believe in Allah, in themselves, in the sacred books, in the prophets, and in the Hereafter; to show mercy to people; to maintain good relations with them; to be conscious of Allah (taqwa) in the path of His pleasure; to perform obligatory acts of worship; and to possess the moral qualities and characteristics that should be manifested by a believer. It should also be particularly noted that Muslim scholars compiled books specifically dedicated to narratives. However, individuals from various fields and those without scholarly training also recorded narratives in writing, within which weak, fabricated, and invented stories became widespread. As a result, ordinary readers were unable to distinguish authentic accounts from fabricated ones. This situation also affected the science of hadith. Indeed, scholars of hadith, due to their role as historians, distinguished themselves from other specialists by including information about narratives in their works[14].

In conclusion, narratives occupy a special place in Islamic history and represent a literary genre commonly found among Eastern peoples. A qissa (story) is a concise form of storytelling that briefly describes the life of a famous person, a group of people, or a nation during a certain period of history, with the aim of drawing lessons from it. However, there is a distinction between such narratives in Islamic history and those that have been widely circulated among the people.

[14] Muhammad Abu Zahw. Al-Hadith wa al-Muhaddithun. – Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 1984. – pp. 365-367.

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