

Neo-Aramaic and Kurdish Folklore from Northern Iraq

A Comparative Anthology with a Sample of Glossed Texts

VOLUME 2



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29. TWO MULLAHS

Masoud Mohammadirad

Speaker: Hawsar Najat Bapir (CK. Shaqlawa)

Recording: Lourd Hanna

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Summary

Two Mullahs served in the same mosque in a village around Khoshnaw. One of them would constantly miss the prayer time. He asked the punctual one to give him some advice. The punctual mullah said that he had two wives who took care of the different home tasks, helping him to get ready for work. The unpunctual Mullah believed this and took another wife. Not long after the marriage ceremony, the two wives started arguing with him, and there was constant quarrelling in the house. From then on, the unpunctual mullah would go to the mosque early—just like the punctual mullah. It turned out that they were both on time for prayers because of the same problems in their homes.

(1) *tabʿan nāw-əm Hāwsar Nadzāt Bāpīr Rāhmān Sūrtsī-ya. | xar̥kī Šaqrāwāy-ma. | dāk-əm nāwī Jamīlā-ya. | la dūy dwāzday hazār-ū nosat-ū haštā-w hašt la dāyək bū-yma. |*

(2) *wà | awa=y ka ēstān da-m-awē bās-i kam | tsīrokak=a ba nāwī dū malān. | tabʿan la nāw kaltūrī kurdawārī | aw tsīroka galak jār ba ʿabrāt hātīt-oawa, | lo nasihāt kerdānī piyāwān | yā xod lo čāk kerdānī būwārākī komaḷāyati yā ʿijtimāʿī | la mābayni xarkʿī. |*

(3) *a-ḷē ha-bo na-bò | kas la xwāy gawratər nà-bo. | la ēkak law gundakānī dawrī xošnāwatī | dū malā ha-būn. | yakāk-yān | zū a-čū | la məzgaftē bāngʿ-i a-dā. | away dīka-yān | dəràng da-hāt-a məzgaftē-ū nwēž-iš-i a-čū. |*

(4) *řožak la řožān, | malāy yakām la malāy duam-i pərsi | got-i, ʿxēr-a ato? | wa lo xēr-a? | atū a-tsi zū a-tsi-ya bahaštē-o | qāzāndz-ət zīyātər-a, | čunka pēš-i mən har-astī-ū | ham bāndz-iš a-day | ū ham nwēžaka-š-ət nā-tsi. ʿ |*

(5) *ʿkatsi amən | nwēž-iš-əm a-tsi-ū da-m-awē bāw xēra-m bə-gam. | atū-š-əm nasihatak-əm bə-ka bə-zān-a | kù atū baw āmāndzay gayšti? |*

(1) Well, my name is Hawsar Najat Bapir Rahman Surchi. I am from Shaqlawa. My mother is called Jamila. I was born on the 2nd December 1988.

(2) What I am going to tell now is a tale called ‘two mullahs’. This story has often been told as a moral lesson¹ in Kurdish culture, in order to give people advice or to [encourage them to] amend social problems among them.

(3) It is said that once there was and once there was not [but] there was no one greater than God. There were once two mullahs in one of the villages around Khoshnaw. One of them would go early to the mosque and call for prayer. The other one would come late to the mosque and miss the prayer.

(4) One day, the first mullah (i.e. the one who was late) asked the second [punctual one and] said, ‘What’s up with you?’² Really, what’s up? You will go to Paradise sooner and achieve a greater merit³ [than me], since you wake up earlier than me, you call to prayers and you do not miss your prayers [unlike me].’

(5) [The unpunctual mullah continued] ‘As for me, I miss my prayers, but I want to have the same merit.⁴ Give me a piece of advice so that I know how you reached that goal?’

¹ Lit. It has come as a lesson.

² Lit. Is it goodness, you?

³ Lit. Your profit is more.

⁴ Lit. I want to reach that goodness for me.

(6) *malāy yakam goti=ya malāy duam, 'hay faqîr!| waz^çi mən lagar waz^çi tū gala galak dziyāwâz=a. | atû yak žən=ət haya | ba hič řā nā-gā. | hatā xwārdən=ət lo hāzər a-kā | yā xud jəlk-ū barg=ət lo da-ynē, | amən la mārē d-ēm=a darē-o ba āsāni-o | atò-š har la mārē=y-o ta'xîr a-bî. '*

(7) *got=i, 'ay waz^çi tu tsî=ya?' | got=i 'amən dū žən=əm haya. | žənē yakàm=əm goriyān=əm lo da-ynē | ē dūām dzuba. | ē dūam xwārdənē da-ynē | ē yakam=iš kašîda=m lo da-ynē. | law hālatay amən pēšî tu a-gam=a mæzgaftē. | ato-š hār la mārē dā-nəštî=û | řož=ət lē ba sar dā dē-o | nwēž=iš=ət a-tsî. '*

(8) *malā fəkràk^y=î hînā=w | fəkràk^y=î bərd. | got=i, 'ba xwāy | amən=iš da=m-hawē | zû bə-čm=a bahaštē. | tsandî amən zûtər | bə-čm=a sar mənāra-y-o | bāng^yi bə-dam | awandā xwā lē=m řāzî a-bî. '*

(9) *lo=ya nā-tsār bû | fəkrî kərd-ūawà=w | žənak^yi jəwān=û tař=i hînā. | got=i do řož pē tsûn. | hār-o waz^çàk=i lo dərust bə-bû. | jahanmāk bû aw mārā na-bît-awba. | nà away malāy yakam bās=i kərbû | hāt=a dî nà hičs. |*

(6) The first mullah (the punctual one) said to the second (the late one), 'Poor you! My situation is very different from that of yours. You have one wife who cannot cope with⁵ anything [including your daily tasks]. By the time she brings you your food or brings you your clothes, I'm already out of the house [heading towards the mosque], but you keep being delayed.'

(7) He (the late mullah) said, 'What's your situation then?' He replied 'I have two wives. My first wife brings me my socks, my second wife brings me my robe. The second one serves me food; the first one brings me the turban. That's why I reach the mosque earlier than you, [while] you're still sitting at home, the sun rises,⁶ and you miss the [morning] prayer.'

(8) The [late] mullah kept thinking.⁷ He said, 'Indeed I would also like to go to Heaven soon. The earlier and steadier I climb the minaret and call for prayers, the more God will be pleased with me.'

(9) He had no option but to ponder over the subject. Finally, he married a beautiful, youthful⁸ woman. Two days [of his marriage] passed by. He began to struggle. The house became a hell to him.⁹ It was nothing like the other mullah had said.

⁵ Lit. Does not arrive at anything.

⁶ Lit. The sun comes upon your head.

⁷ Lit. He brought a thought, he took a thought.

⁸ Lit. fresh.

⁹ Lit. The house became such a hell to him that it was not.

(10) buw=a šâr=û āžāwak bû. | arē šēxaḷā bû | yakakî a-go | ba šar hātbūn la sar yakdî. | yakî a-go, | 'gū ba qābr-ē malāy! | yakî a-go, | 'gū ba šidāy malāy! | yakî a-go, | 'gū ba qabrē bāb=î! | awî a-go, | 'gū ba qabrē dāk=î! |

(11) malā nā-tsār bû | aw šawa hār xaw=î lē na-kat. | sā'at sē-y šawē | čū=a sar mənārāy. | ū xò=y māt kərd. | dīt=î kas lə mæzgaftē nî=ya. | xo=y māt kərd xo=y māt kərd | hatā malā=y lo wa dīyār kat. |

(12) got=î, 'adî nà=m-got?! | malāy dū žəna, | dzārg=î kunkūn=a. | away dū žən=î ha-bî | zūtār d-ēt=a sar mənārē! | got=î, 'hay la'natî xwā=t lē na-dā! | aw āgəray la mārē tū bû | da mārē mən=īš-ət bar-dā! | amən tsəz-əm dābū la dū žənān?! |

amn=īš hātm=û | xaḷās bû bəřāw=a=w | hīts-əm pē na-bəřā. |

(10) It (the house) became [full of] arguments. Even though he was a sheikh, they (i.e. the wives) became united in quarrelling. One [of the wives] would say, 'May shit be on the mullah's tomb!' The other one would say, 'May shit be on the mullah's ancestors!'¹⁰ One would say, 'May shit be on his father's tomb!' The other one would say, 'May shit be on his mother's tomb!'

(11) The mullah could not sleep¹¹ that night. He had no option but to go up the minaret at three o'clock in the morning. He did not make a noise. He saw that there was no one in the mosque. He stayed silent until the other mullah appeared before him.¹²

(12) He (i.e. the usually punctual mullah) said, 'Did I not say so?! A mullah with two wives is heavy-hearted.'¹³ One who has two wives goes up the minaret earlier!' The [usually unpunctual] mullah said, 'May God curse you!¹⁴ Your life was hell and you inflicted the same hell upon me!¹⁵ What [benefit] was there for me in marrying two women!?'¹⁶

As for me, I have come [from the events of the tale]. It's finished. Nothing was allocated to me [by the characters of the story].'

¹⁰ Lit. origin.

¹¹ Lit. Sleep did not fall at him.

¹² Lit. became visible to him.

¹³ Lit. his heart is perforated.

¹⁴ Lit. Should not God curse you?

¹⁵ Lit. The fire that existed in your house, you threw it at my house too.

¹⁶ Lit. I would not have stung two women.

