

## The physical culture and heroic motives in the Azerbaijani tales

Mobil Aslanli Hunturk\*

*Faculty of Philology, State University, Baku, Azerbaijan*

**Abstract:** The fairytales are one of the samples of the Azerbaijani folklore and deal with the valor and bravery shown by the Azerbaijani (Turkish) children in the juvenile fighting for the sake of truth and justice. The author takes into account heroes' high volitional, moral and physical qualities, as well as skillfully handling diverse physical and military weapons, especially craftsmanship of the Hercules shown in wrestling squares and martial arts in the fairytales.

**Key words:** *Bravery; Audacity; Heroism; Physical education; Physical development; Persistence; Humanism*

### 1. Introduction

One of the main problems of the mankind was people's health and their physical perfection. So people all over the world were interested in growing up their children healthy, powerful and active people. It is not accidental that our tales which are one of the branches of the physical education and folklore literature, about which we spoke, covered more fields of people's life. In our myths and legends, fairytales and eposes the braves and courageous heroes of people had always been distinguished with their high physical training and in this direction they put wide and compound requirements against the evils. Today one of the important problems is the growing up of the youth, their bringing up patriotically, in the spirit of heroism. Our fairytales which are one of the samples of the folklore literature play an active role in this mission.

Tales take a particular room within wide spread epic genres of the Azerbaijan word resources. Passing from country to country, from generation to generation, from mouth to mouth; spread for centuries and not having lost their moral value and freshness, our tales are such work of memorial, investigation of which enriches much more the history of national culture of our nation from time to time.

Heroes' legendary braveries, winning the innumerable troops, torturing the giant ogres, easily annihilating many-headed dragons which are represented in popular Azerbaijani tales that deal with either fauna or magician and welfare approve the heroes' inadmissible physical strength and energy.

We know from magic Azerbaijani tales, legends and ancient eposes that the "one-eyed" which annihilated millions of people, "magic arms" which endlessly swallowed them and magician ogres which

have unusual strength and destroy dragons, after some time passed, stooped at a man's power, his mental and physical-corporal maturity.

### 2. Orphan Ibrahim and a merchant

The myth displayed that he wanted a trap and rifle from his mother shortly after his birth. His mother, as the memory of his farther, gave him the trap with a pipe out of the trunk. From that moment he informed he would abide to pursue his father's profession. He said: "Mom, I also will run my father's art. I'll be a hunter. He, who loses his originals, is a bastard" (Akhundov et al, 1968).

According to the myth, putting on his horse madam Khurshud who was captured by ogres ran away from Monsters' residence with her. After riding for a while, something like black power began to chase them from behind. That force, almost nearly could destroy them both.

It is clear from the content of the fairy tale, that the black smoke is an ogre; but black rain and wind are the dust rising from its delight. Black smoke, black thunderstorm, gale, blizzard, snowstorm, wind are not described as natural forces, but consciously moving creatures that endanger the man's live. The black mist on a horse, as if consciously chases its enemies, wants to destroy them.

There are too many such like episodes and examples in our fairy tales. The main thrust of their content is that, compared to the later stages of the development of society the Cyclops, the three-headed, seven-headed, forty-headed dragons, ogres who want to cut the human race, yield to the mind and strength of a man.

According to the People's pedagogy, parents drove their children of hope, natural strength and ability to a former coach and teacher for mastering from physical strength, stamina and steadfastness view point – (M.A.).

\* Corresponding Author.

We so often faced the facts in fairy tales and sagas, working in force houses, palaces and squares, coaches began to grow strong wrestlers in this or any other type of sport on the level of physical improvement background and didactic bases of learning.

In force houses the coaches, being constantly busy with wrestling, breaking the chain, lifting stones and etc, took care of the serious physical maturity of the young heroes.

The tale of "**A Child Knight**" is a striking example to this. It is said in the tale that a poor cobbler had a son. That child was given such physical strength and energy from the divine being that all the nation-hamlet people were fascinated by the magic of that event. The tale portrays that miraculous event as follows: At the age of seven he dropped a horseman down. There was such a power in his arms that while joking with the kids in the street he would break either their backs or arms (Akhundov et al., 1969). The kids were annoyed and complained to the king. It was pity that the boy, power and energy of whom were incompatible into the earth and heaven broke the back of the vizier's son on the same day. The boy was brought to the king. When the king wanted to kill the boy his vizier said:

- King, gets it right! Don't kill the child! We'll need him when the time comes. Let's give him to the force house, the wrestlers will teach him there. The vizier's words were stuck in the king's mind, and he sent the child to the wrestlers. From that day the king's wrestlers of big-name taught the child to shoot an arrow, to hold a spear and to mace. The Moon turned, a year passed, the child became a strong wrestler so, no one could move him. His name and fame spread far and wide (Akhundov et al., 1969).

It is known from the realistic description of the numerous archaeological excavations, anthropological studies, as well as ancient historical sources that the people of the Turkish genealogy had a lofty stature, big body, wide shoulders, and a strong limb and were very stocky. In this regard, information finds its comprehensive reflection more in the literature of our folklore, as well as fairytales. It is true that at all times people attributed every man's moral and spiritual value, inward and outward purity, dignity, mental perfection to the same level of his physical power, and the glory of the flesh.

One of the popular tales "**The Snake and the Girl**" is in the same vein. In the tale we read about an amazing physical appearance, giant body, physical maturity, strength and energy which are the cult of legendary Muhammad:" Once upon a time there was a man in ancient times. The man looked like as if Rustam Zal. In no time he folded and broke the neck and back of any wrestler whom he seized. No athlete could hit his back on the ground. He was called Muhammed - the wrestler" (Akhundov et al., 1969).

The amazing "**Tale of Simon**" is also among the tales of physical maturity and development, the mythical and magical power, patience, a majestic terror, as well as the legendary heroism. It is shown

in the tale that Simon- the teenage son of the gardener destroys the dragon that wants to squeeze into the nest of the phoenix with the purpose of eating its chick biddies.

The interesting thing here is that in most of the tales like this people estimate the courage of heroes in their early ages with their unusual physical training and development, strong and arrogant character, high perseverance and determination: "Simon had reached the age of fifteen. But he was such an athlete, if he forced the mountain **Qaf** he would have the power to move it..." (Akhundov et al., 1969).

From myths, tales, legends and eposes it became clear that people were not historically mistaken at all to feel and hear a certainty of the development of the financial security of our people, the natural evolution of spiritual growth and mental power being based on the physical improvement and physical perfection. From the earliest ages, from the moment of self-understanding and finding formation, Turkish people always attempted to pay the execution of the various as well as complex physical exercises, show courage and steal the victory. Undoubtedly, under the particular facts and materials, evidences and proves in the oldest scientific and historical documents beginning from the folklore, we can conclude that, our great predecessors who gifted to us great culture and art samples, priceless scientific wealth as well as an unprecedented wealth of valuable cultural monuments, left for us a unique physical training school which never lost its reality in the passage of time.

From the mythology up to the present day our people's ancient national sport like the galloping, throwing a spear, sword fencing, swimming, wrestling and others are reflected in physical training types at the contemporary Olympic Games which are contested in the most influential and respected sports arenas. It should be noted that it was possible to achieve the formation of future heroes, hearted husbands and ram braves at an early age through systematic and regular physical exercises and consistent training. For example, the same tale reads about Simon's efforts for different exercises to achieve necessary skills and habits to move: "Simon mounted a horse and began to gallop, hit the sword and mace". He did that till he learned all the ways of wrestling" (Akhundov et al., 1969).

Thanks to the health and strength of his body that was addicted to regular physical training, Simon became a tolerant and brave wrestler in a short period of time. Thanks to his immense natural resources and courage the fearless young man was treated as an enemy. An outward appearance and unprecedented power of Simon, presented as an awful hero in the work, confused all the country headed by the king and kept his rivals under the fear: "King Dashkuvar looked and saw that he was such a bulky hero that the mountain couldn't stand against him" (Akhundov et al., 1969).

In the tale Simon wrestled with an old myth and dropped him to the ground; sent to the hell

Ogibigikh-the giant hero; destroyed Khan-Khan-Chin -the mighty king together with his innumerable army and above all his conquer and invincibility there stood just his physical perfection and persistence.

Close knowledge about an ethnogeny and mentality of the Turkish people, in the spirit of whom an audacity and heroism flutter, gives us the truth about power and capability of the nation to show legendary braveries at any moment. It is not accidental that the legendary bravery, heroism and self-sacrifice shown by our people, despite the gender, were demonstrated by their physical perfection together with the mental and moral maturity.

To defend the truth and justice, depressed and poor, hold one's hand to the poor and homeless, inflict reprisals to the villain and tyrant, hate the parasites, dishonest and heartless with the despotic trait, give bow and arrow to braves are moral values which are acquired from the greats in our tales. Our people regard those ones the great, high, too far whose physical might and body splendor are based upon their volitional and moral qualities like the bravery and resistance.

In our tales we often meet dreadful heroes with their unusual physical strength and power and amazing fearless braves with unprecedented courage. Such stalwart heroes which rapture readers with their physical might in **"The Tale of Reyhan"** are Uyghur Hassan, Jahankechdy, Fazahir and others. Let's pay attention to some episodes of moments from the war battle of heroes who demonstrate their physical adroitness one over another: "As the morning came Uyghur Hassan went to the steppe. A man in the steppe was catching gazelles with millstones in each hand. Uyghur Hassan said to him:

- We can't drive gazelles out and catch them. How gallant he is!" (Akhundov et al., 1968).

Though Uyghur Ahmed surprised that man's natural strength and bravery and praised him that man (Jahankechdi) said that he was not brave. Brave Uyghur Hassan didn't avoid an offer. The tale said: "They both leaped in the square and began to wrestle. They wrestled boldly so that their knees dug the ground like the plow whenever they pulled each other. In the end he had had enough of him. He collected his strength, took him over his head at one assault, twirled and hit him on the ground on his back" (Akhundov et al., 1968).

It was shown in the tale that those two courageous braves finished the hard fought battle bravely in accordance with the true national rules. Then they gave each other a solemn promise for making good friends and left.

If we have a look at the folklore literature of the Turkish people we come across a lot of such like samples about courageous, heroic, strong, brave as well as noble and well-wishing people of our nation.

Thus both Hercules became happy-gay brothers and made their way to the steppe. On their way they saw that a man took a new mountain and put it on an old one. Both brothers were surprised at it. They

approached to him and got acquainted. The name of the Hercules who put the mountain on the other was Fazahir.

Eventually Uyghur Hassan had to wrestle with newly acquainted Fazahir: "Both of them agreed to wrestle. They grasped each-other's waistband and wrestled till the afternoon of the next day. Fazahir angrily roared, grasped Uyghur Hassan's lasso, lifted him and hit on the ground so that Uyghur Hassan sank into the ground up to his neck. Uyghur Hassan jumped out of the land. He hit Fazahir with a mace so that he lost his consciousness" (Akhundov et al., 1968).

In the tale of **"The Black Hercules"** we come across very interesting episodes about legendary wrestling, unusual physical might and unparalleled courage of the Turkish young brave men. We read about unique physical development and strength of the child Hercules who furiously rubbed the swords in his hands as bran, by the King's order, and sowed them on the ground: "The King ordered and a lot of swords were brought round. The child took the swords at both ends and spoilt all of them one by one. There were no swords left in the king's treasure-house. The child broke them all. In the end the King remembered the sword left by his grandfather in his treasury. It was very heavy and nobody could lift it up. The King sent two Hercules to fetch that sword. They brought it with great trouble. The child took the sword, curved a bit, shook it and said:

-What am I to do with this sword? If I break it I'll remain without the sword. I will need it. And then he tied it round his waist" (Akhundov et al., 1968).

One more feature which draws attention is that valuable importance is attached to the development of the physical culture that is an inalienable part of our national and moral culture which reflects the ancient history, culture, morality, mode of life and traditions of our people in our tales. It is clear here that in order to be mighty trained Hercules used to have been provided with appropriate sports equipments, appliances and special rooms. In that manner children and Youth used to do serious exercises under the leadership of the competent mentors in a planned, systematic and regular form to improve their physical skills.

In that tale we read about an exceptional importance of the exercises in the formation of the real Hercules: "The child had a set of clothes that any wrestler could hardly take it. He always put just those clothes on during the training. This time the vizier ordered to hide his clothes shortly before the training" (Akhundov et al., 1969).

Interesting scenes about the sport of wrestling can be found also in the **"Malik Mammed"** the most famous among our tales. Neither of the king's elder nor middle sons could please their father to catch the ogre which squeezed itself into the King's garden to steal apples. The King father assigned that job to Malik Mammed-his youngest son. Malik Mammed put on quickly, took his bow and arrow and went out immediately.

As it was known from the tale that thief was a horrible, giant and gruesome ogre. When the ogre attacked him none of his guns came in handy. Finally they began to fight: "... Malik Mammad jumped out of his place as a lion and fought with the ogre. Their wrestling continued for forty days and forty nights. No one could beat the other. In the end both lost their forces... The ogre said: ... give me some respite to sleep and then we would fight again".

Malik Mammad agreed. ...Got up and they fought again. Thus they wrestled seven days and seven nights" (Akhundov et al., 1969).

From the physical perfection view point one of the most attractive tales is "**Tumar Hercules**". Among the events that take place in the tale is the demonstration of brave men their physical skills in hitting squares, especially in the sport of wrestling. The heroes like Tumar, Beykesh, Babir and Mushk who differ by their fascinating physical preparation caused tremble mountains and stones by keeping a shield, rattle the saber, making mace, galloping, also put their knees on the ground by grasping a waistband and roaring in brawls and scuffles:" Babir Hercules got angry. He stretched his hand out for the sword. Beykesh did the same. They began to fight by swords. It was to no purpose. They seized each other's lasso..." (Akhundov et al., 1969).

As an ancient and main kind of physical education the wrestling, is historically spread among the Turkish people and finds its reflection particularly in folk tales that are always fashionable among the upper layer of the society, like the kings, sultans, khakans, khans and beys.

"**The Cockerel Dervish**" tale shows that the king of the alien country examines Jennet and Bahaman viziers to make sure of an origin, generation- noble, in a word, kin of the dervish belonging to a pure king's origin which occurred in the country. Bahaman vizier looks for a method and at last, finds a natural means to determine a man's gene and national mentality. Stubborn Bahaman vizier gives advice to the king to boost an unknown person's sense and spirit. The vizier offers to invite all the Hercules to wrestle with him.

If his enthusiasm wakes up while drums sound we'll know that he is the king's son, but if he doesn't move we'll make sure that he is a dervish (Akhundov et al., 1968).

"**The Tale of Buffalo Hassan**" also applies to wrestling- the favorite sport type of our people's children from the early beginning. The end of the battle of courageous gallants ends only with wrestling. In a word wrestling is the last hope of competitors in a hand-to hand fighting, the only and optimal variant and factor to determine the winner and an exact result to disarm and defeat the enemy. There, it was spoken about Buffalo Hassan who wanted to reckon with Kashkash Hercules which had kidnapped a good-looking and smart girl of Bandar push province. Adolescent Buffalo Hassan carried out that hard job which nobody dared to step for.

It was shown in the tale that Kashkash Hercules was a gruesome man. Nobody wished to come across

with him. Attaching no importance Buffalo Hassan took his horse and set off. The moment of battle and wrestling scene of those hefty braves were described like that:" Buffalo Hassan threw himself into the arena and they started to fight. Both Hercules used sword-shields, arrows and spears, but none of them overcame.

They began to wrestle. Kashkash tried to knock him down but couldn't manage. Hassan took him by the waistband, lifted and knocked him down so that he broke into pieces that even didn't fall to the greyhound's lot" (Akhundov et al., 1968).

In the folklore heroism of our brave men glorified by their audacity and savvy, nimbleness, gallantry, as well as brisk is straightly connected with their physical perfection. It is not accidental that these heroes which have untwisted arms, unbending knees, broad shoulders, steel chests and strong bodies are described as brave, noble, generous and humanist people in all our fairytales and eposes. First and foremost, human faces like manliness and courage stand at the head of moral-ethical qualities of the heroes. Historically, in life, brave and fighting people create immorality with their honorable deaths.

As usual in Azerbaijani fairytales and eposes all the braves are mature by morality, spiritually more complete and intelligent. These men of courage are usually perfect and mature from the physical perfection view point They can fulfill types of sport and military weapons that are very important especially in battlegrounds with high level of physical mastership. They skillfully can hold the girdle, fight hand-to hand, thrust spears, ride horses, shoot arrows and in short all.

In "Buffalo Hassan" the hero of the work says:"Hercules, keep in memory that the wrestlers have got three signs: to heft and menace, play swords and wrestle. I have got all three. I call you for fighting, please" (Akhundov et al., 1966).

In our tales the Turkish fearless descendants who come across the natural force and tolerance, divine talent and godsend improve much more this character on the basis of acquired experiments in their hard life style which is full of suffering. In the fairytale of "Buffalo Hassan" a man of courage, Hassan by name, becomes an invincible hero, who empresses all the country thanks to his strong trend to bold, motional skills and physical orders from his early age.

The hero had a magnificent power. His gigantic body and imposing appearance horrified everybody who saw him. Those, who witnessed Buffalo Hassan's unique physical strength, physical power and splendor of the flesh shivered with fear:" Buffalo Hassan has reached his sixteen. If you look for the Hercules of his potency you can't find him all over the world" (Akhundov et al., 1966).

The fairytale "**Hero**" also speaks about unthinkable natural power and energy of our hefty Hercules. It is noted in the tale that once upon a time a king had an extremely flexible, lively and valiant servant, Gahraman by name. There were two big

millstones in khan's yard. All his servants couldn't twirl them only aside, but even move them. The khan and lady Rari-his daughter were watching from the opposite side. That time Gahraman walked majestically forward, took and easily threw away those millstones which forty servants couldn't do it. The khan got gay for Gahraman's prowess and ordered to give Hercules Tush's clothes to Gahraman.

According to the tale khan's daughter and servant loved each other. The khan, by no means, would dislodge it into his glory to give his daughter to his groom only, but imagine as well. Thanks to his treacherous vizier the khan chose the best method to kill Gahraman. The happening of this plan, rather the neutralization of the operation required just complete physical training and organized physical-corporeal rigidity.

In the tale, not degrade between rounds, the repellent, dishonest and villain vizier advised the khan to kill Gahraman. The vizier recommended the khan to tie these three millstones to the top of the large oak tree and order Gahraman to throw and catch those three millstones three times with one hand. No doubt that stones, descended from the sky, would fall on his head and kill him; if that measure wouldn't take place chop his head off.

The vizier's advice soothed the khan. The khan promised to give his daughter to the vizier if the plan would be of success, otherwise chop his head off. The next morning the khan ordered to tie the millstones on the top of the tree. He called Gahraman and told: "If you throw and catch these millstones tree times by your one hand, you will get my daughter's hands; if you cannot do it, your head will be chopped off".

Gahraman agreed. He rubbed his hands against the land, roared and grasped the stones. Having lifted them upon his head he threw and caught them tree times with one hand, and then put them on the ground. He hit flick and played (Akhundov et al., 1967).

The fairytale "**Zengi**" also speaks about the porter's youngest son's unusual physical strength in Isfahan city. From the moment of birth grown hourly and day by day up the boy amazes, despairs and confuses people, especially in the shah's time.

It was spoken in the tale that Zengin's growth would obstruct the king in future. That's why the king thought about the boy's assassination. Therefore the king took a lot of troops and chased the boy. One day the troops attacked the boy, who came to the forest to break and take wood home. Zengi grasped a big baton and maimed all the troops of the country.

In the tale the unique bravery, splendor of the flesh and physical perfection of the brave boy, who had a divine talent, were glorified as follows: "No one could fold his arm... Zengi reached the age of twelve. He became such a Hercules that plucked any trees from roots" (Akhundov et al., 1969).

In the fairytale "**Tapdig**" two Turkish braves threw themselves to fight. Forcing each other those

two gallants highly demonstrated their physical deftness using some types of military weapons. From the physical perfection view point they were on the same level. To solve the problem drastically in the end they started to wrestle: "They took up the swords to each other's shields. The swords of both broke. They grasped spears and fought for three days. Both spears broke. They rolled sleeves up, seized waistbands and wrestled.

They tattered each other for seven days and nights. No one won. In the end Shamsi roared, lifted Tapdig, knocked him down and sat on his chest..." (Akhundov et al., 1967).

Together with the Turkish magnanimous and bold heroes, girls and brides' high physical and corporeal qualifications, volitional and spiritual characteristics and countless courageous battles are also clearly reflected in our tales.

Being completely rich with bravery and heroic motives the fairytale "**Tapdig**" is of this type as well. Fighting with a valiant Hercules as Tapdig, Shamsi is a complete image of the hero, who reflects the characteristic types of the Turkish women.

Shamsi was a young lady, at the same time a master wrestler, who skillfully played the sword and threw accurate sighting: "They took up the swords to each other's shields for three days and nights. The swords of both broke. They grasped spears and fought for three days. The spears also broke. They rolled the sleeves up and wrestled. They tattered each other for seven days and nights. No one won. In the end Shamsi roared, lifted Tapdig, knocked him down and sat on his chest..." (Akhundov et al., 1967).

Thus our folk tales need studying and researching in connection with physical education problems. They are our spiritual reality. Their investigation creates a foundation for national consciousness, self-esteem, in short, formation of national self-consciousness of our children and young.

All above mentioned features which are connected with the physical perfection of our children and youth are reflected in a lot of other tales like: "*Yusuf and Sanubar*", "*Shepherd Malik*", "*Isgender Zulgerin*", "*The Blue Hill Turned Green and My Husband Used To Beat Me*", "*The Cat and The King*", "*The Black Vizier*", "*Beykesyn*", "*The King and The Shepherd*", "*Hazarastani Nightingale*", "*Three Princesses*", "*The Tale of Nushapary*", "*Bald Mamet*", "*Porter Ahmed*", "*The Tale of Garagash*", "*The King of the Temple*", "*Seyfalmulk*", "*Six Friends*", "*Bahram-King's Son*", "*Three Sisters*", "*Ajam, the son of Abraham*", "*Muhammed and Minavvar*".

To characterize moral and ethical features, as well as engrave reliability, loyalty, diligence, justice, kindness and other suchlike human qualities in the consciousness, cognitive and memory of today's generation, especially to achieve the defining of these qualities in their hearts are derived from the demand of the time. Just the only truth stands above all shown arguments. It is to be mighty and sublime on physical and mental terms. Our fearless, brave and valiant children are the heroes, who differ by their specific brave peculiarities as in tales. The main

road of the bravery and heroism passes through the physical perfection.

### **3. Conclusion**

One of the main factors which create the heroism is connected with the perfect body in the flesh, strong will, patience and physical perfection.

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