

DONAN

(From "Seven zogora stories")



- You love animals, you are like your grandfather. When talking about a village, of course, you will say camel or mare. Why? Being busy with them is interesting, as they love you too, know you, and understand what you say. Only they can not talk. When I was young, I used to have Donan. He was my friend, we grew up together, and I welcomed a newborn guest with my mother. Being born, he stared at me, his thin legs were shaking. His legs` ankle was spotted, and on his forehead there was a white spot. His eyes were as big and beautiful as deer`s. my grandfather said that he was mine. I took care of him when he was growing up. He would not eat anything if someone gave instead, also he urged me to go to the water. We used to go to the middle ditch together; he did not want to drink water from that ditch. Then we went to Toshloq. He used to drink from Toshloq. I washed him for a long time.

One day, my grandfather washed him with savories. The aroma spread, and our house was full of the smell of savory. I was going to do the same, so I picked savories and brought them. Like my grandfather, I washed him with spring water. Only I was riding him. He loved running; therefore, riders told me to wear him kozmunchoq. Then I did so. During kopkari, I rode him, I followed horsemen. He was running so happily that if I let go of his reins, there was no doubt that he would be able to catch up. In the season of the reaper, we also went to the reaper together, and we brought the reapers out buttermilk. We had a stream known as Matansoy where the spike grew. I took out goja, and let him graze. I fell asleep in the shadow of piles of alfafa. When I woke up, sun was about to set. Donan was standing in the same place instead of grazing. I got up in surprise, as he wanted to say something, he raised his head and grunted. He kicked the ground with his hind legs, but he did not move his front legs. I ran towards him and looked at his feet, then I was like frozen. Since a black cypress snake was wrapped around his front left leg, his right leg was standing on it`s head. I went and removed the bitten snake. Only then he moved his right leg. While grazing, he saw that snake. He knew that it was coming towards me, so he crushed his head.

- Here is friend, my dear, here is comrade!

One day they took away that friend of mine. I still feel sad as long as I remember that day. It is good to remember such a friend. Since morning, rumor had spread that a guest from another village was coming to our house. Everyone was preparing for that. He was like a dear guest, especially since my father personally watched all the preparations. The soup was being cooked in one pot, qazi in one pot, bread was being baked in one oven, and somsa in another. In short, it was like a wedding. Then Fayzi dasturkhonchi appeared saying “Hey guys, do you need Fayzi dasturkhonchi”. He lifted the whole yard with his voice.

-Hey, Bashor daughter-in-law, I know this guest, he is a popular, rich man, no matter how dear his guest is, keep your husband out of his sight said looking at my mother. At first, I did not understand what he said, but that rich man made me cry. Then I knew that he was a person with bad eyes, namely if he looks at something, it will be damaged. My poor mother took everything inside. Fayzi dasturkhonchi laughed and said: “If there is something you hate, take it outside”. We had a strait sheep and they tied it up in the backyard, two balls and singing partridge as well. My father asked if you are not ashamed. However, he remembered the unusual tradition of our village. As soon as guest arrived, he started praising what he saw, and when he left, he was given away regardless of what it was. That is why, my father felt

embarrassed, he wished there was something better, but he could not find it. Fayzi dasturkhonchi`s funny words were still in my ears. My mother laughed and said: “I don’t like your dog that much, tie it to a closer area”. My grandma smiled gently. But, Fayzi dasturkhonchi liked this idea. He went and tied it first. I don’t know, why? but my father didn’t say anything.

Guest arrived.

He came in and said suddenly: “People in Turbat, you are as people describe, barakallah, barakallah, I have never seen like this one before”. He directly looked at the stable. When I looked too, my Donan was standing, kicking the ground. Who tied the horse? When? Why? My father and I were shocked. Guest went towards him and gently rubbed his masseter. My Donan was kicking the ground like saying “Don’t touch me, stay away”. My father invited the guest, who could not take his eyes off Donan inside. I ran and took him out to the garden. However, I could not save him in this way. When I got up early morning, there was no Donan, so I ran to my mother. “Don't be sad, my son, this is our tradition, which careless person tied him there or did you tie yourself?”- she said. But I didn't tie him there, he was in clover-field. For whom bringing him home is that necessary? There was still time to bring him. At that time, my brother, whom he kicked, appeared yes, he hated Donan from his youth. He hated that Donan walked with me and he only gave me rides. He tied him, he did it on purpose. I cried so much, I cried like that, my mother and father couldn't console me, I cried all day and night. The next day, I went to the Chorpolat people said that the guest came from Chorpolat, they said that it was a one-day journey. I said: "I will go anyway, I will steal him". Even he walked on the street just like people. He never walked from the middle, he walked from the right, like people, he even entered the house by himself. He even came into the house by himself, when I let go of his reins. He also chose the food; he did not eat everything. He also drank water selectively, drinking only spring water. It was my first visit to Chorpolat. As people said, I did not spend a day to get there, I left in the early morning and arrived at noon. However, I could not find either the guest or my Donan. If he was there, he would have found me or I would. Unfortunately, he was not. In the evening I came back home. They had been looking for me. First, they begged, even though they cried together, then they rebuked, but still, they could not comfort me. Nothing floated my boat, and my father, who did this without thinking of the consequences, felt guilty. Nonetheless, it was too late and also not possible to get back. I did not eat anything since I did not have an appetite, and then I was turned into a

stick-thin person in three days. My mother was scared, and so was I. I was thick, and there was no doctor left who did not see me. Lastly, the village elder issued a fatwa to get the horse back, but my dad said that he could not do that. Coming home, he cried telling everything and said: "My son, have mercy on your mother and yourself! Take care of yourself!". I cried at nights. I could not close my eyes, even when I did, I only saw Donan. One day he appeared to me that, like me, he had extreme weight loss. He kept coming to me and crying on my pillow. Loads of tears were falling from his eyes. His legs were shaking, unable to stand. I tried hard to wake up, nevertheless I could not. My father and mother were all by my side, even my brother who hated him, begged me "look, he came and he is crying on your head". He did neither drink nor eat anything like me, he only thought of me, he was skinny. The guest took pity and brought him to us...

Brief explanation

This story is the first work of Turob Tola, the Honored artist of Uzbekistan, and the national poet of Uzbekistan. A 12-year-old boy, Toshtemir, begins the story by asking his grandfather to take him to Turbat village. The narrator is Bakhshilla Makhsum. On the way, he very interestingly tells his grandson what he had seen and experienced during the course of his life. This story is devoted to highlighting the strong bond, and friendship, between human beings and animals.

Glossary:

- Zogora- a type of bread which is made from corn flour.
- Turbat- the name of the village where Bakhshilla lived.
- Donan- the name of the horse.
- Dasturkhonchi- a person who takes responsibility of table works, its decoration at wedding, ceremonies and other events.
- Chorpolat- the name of another village where the guest comes from.
- Qazi- a kind of food that is made from horse meat.
- Somsa- one of Uzbek`s national cuisines.
- Barakallah- a word that is used to express thanks, typically to another person.

- Kopkari- this is one of the ancient, public, national games of people of Central Asia. Mainly, it is held on the occasion of victory and harvest holidays, weddings and feasts.
- Kozmunchoq- a kind of jewelry that is made of black or blue glass with white spots on the surface. It is mainly worn on children (strung on a thread, on clothes, neck, hand) with the belief that they will protect against the "evil eye". It was also a tradition for women to wear it.
- Goja- a liquid meal made from white oats or wheat.

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