

# Azerbaijani Oghuz-Turk and North American Indians' Rocks That Teach Human: Comparative Study

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## Abstract

Azerbaijan Oghuz-Turk and North American Indian have very different cultures, and their vastly dissimilar geographical distances prevented them from meeting. However, during a comparative examination, it is worth noting that in both cultures, people are considered as stones, and rocks as sacred and loving beings. Both societies had a strong interest in sacred rocks leading to the development of intricate beliefs that were used to forecast people's lives and fortunes. Not only do Native Americans and Oghuz-Turk identify rocks with the divine or with never-ending journeys. Rocks stand for obstacles to be conquered and new insights to be discovered in people's daily lives. Oghuz-Turk might travel to important sites marked by hills, mountains, and forests to offer prayers to the Tengri and Native Americans to the Great Spirit. Oghuz-Turk and Native Americans believe that the earth is employed as a holy shrine and for the interment of the dead. Rocks are frequently used as symbols for the challenges a character must face to fulfill their journey in myths, fables, and other stories. Understanding rocks is related to understanding oneself. This is undoubtedly accurate. The locals were familiar with the names of the rocks where all of the events took place as well as the legends.

## Keywords

Rituals, Engravings, Comparing, Sacred Marks, Sacred Rocks and Stones

## 1. Introduction

As manifestations of the basic powers of the earth, rocks stand for steadiness,

toughness, and resiliency. They also serve as enduring symbols of the cyclical nature of life and the never-ending dance of creation and destruction.

The ancient and modern people of North America Indian and Azerbaijan Oguz-Turk believed that power was attracted to rocky areas, which is why rocks are highly valued in both cultures. The receptive energies are directed upward and outward by their enormous elevated stones that pierce the earth. Rocks are enduring geographical features that have ritual and spiritual significance (Vəliyev, 1987). They are also naturally occurring meeting spots that are frequently identified by name. Early humans thought that gods and spirits might be found within rocks. This is where the custom of placing rocks on graves or making tombstones, which were originally thought to hold the spirit of the departed, loved one, came from. The ancient sculptors also aimed to “free the spirit” from the stone.

Customs and beliefs surround particular rocks in Azerbaijan and North American peoples’ folklore. Because of their unique structures and qualities, rocks were long before heavenly religions were in the mythological memories of the people. As a necessary system of thought, myth preserves itself in religion (Acalov, 2008). They were considered the home of divine and holy energies and protective spirits. Stones were thought to have souls and powers, much like everything else in nature. It was thought that the stones could rain, heal, slake hunger, ward off illness, protect against witchcraft, and ward off other perilous situations. The concepts of success, abundance, happiness, peace, health, and protection from evil—all of which the human race aspires to throughout life, are concealed under the beliefs. The holy rocks and stones are exactly an item or location considered sacred in the human mind when it is thought to possess the capacity to evoke in people the ideas and emotions they identify with the spiritual aspects of existence. Sacred rocks, according to the Oghuz-Turk and Indians, allow people to maintain a stronger connection with a variety of spiritual worlds that are the source of creativity, meaning, health, and personal power.

Both peoples have traditionally used stones and rocks as offerings of holy connection and cleansing, much like many other cultures throughout the world do. True power, according to conventional wisdom, is an expression of spiritual attunement. Both peoples thought that sacred rocks have the power to uplift and inspire individuals, as well as assist them to connect with spiritual realms more deeply.

Using rocks, the Oghuz-Turk people portrayed the Great Helper, but Native Americans the sun, moon, rivers, and other natural aspects. Rock stones were used in some rituals to both call and block spirits. “For many of the Native people living here, manifestations of the supernatural could be expressed by one word: Manitou. Manitou itself was seen to rest in rocks and boulders, sometimes referred to as ‘spirit’ or ‘image’ stones.” (Herman, 2014)

This research work is the result of a search, which led to a discovery of a possible common condition of human minds that could have been responsible for the occurrence of repetitions of themes in the myths of the world’s diverse cultures. Such

a common condition in humans may be a result of evolved ways of using the mind. These ways could include satisfying the need to create meaning from naturally occurring events, i.e. recognizing the transcendent within the material. The ways that humans have expressed meaning are different for each culture, but it seems clear that commonalities are underlying the diversity. That these commonalities often seem to reveal “Eternal Truths” is intriguing, not only because of the mystery surrounding their inception but also because according to Bottoms, “No matter how the human mind ‘plays’ with them, other human minds recognize them” (Bottoms, 2002).

The folktales and mythologies of both countries give researchers insight into the belief systems of these peoples and their magnificent civilizations. In myths, legends, and folktales, divine grace is expressed through mystical names, and people’s desire to understand the secrets of their surroundings is reflected. Rituals were seen as a way to obtain nourishment and were carried out to conquer adversity, suffering, and sadness. At these ceremonies, a variety of symbols was employed. Prayers, ceremonies, and food offerings made at each stage of the unique ceremony gave people hope for a better life. “Human attachments to places, as various and diverse as the places to which they attach, remain, in their way, an enigma” (Keith, 1999).

The community’s thought is divided into two streams: “working-class culture”, which encompasses the ideas, works of art, customs, lore, and folkways of the vast majority of people, and “thinking class culture”, which is the vocabulary, thought, and art of the aristocrats, priests, and other members of the privileged and ruling classes.

Some places are said to possess a voice with a sound like thunder or crashing waters. The exact residence of these beings varies but commonly it is significant as a site of immense energy; this may be a general location in the sky, to the west, or in the mountains. The Indian culture heroes and tricksters went for inspiration, or to which they returned after their work was done or it may be a particular mountain or body of water at the very source of life itself. The many forms of the rocks were meant to represent different things. It was believed that the forms allowed spirits—who were regarded as good—to move freely. Building a stronger bond between the world and its inhabitants requires gathering information and analyzing it to paint a clearer picture of the situation.

Furthermore, Native Americans employed Hag Stones in cleromancy, a ritual in which they threw objects such as stones, runes, dice, and crystals while pondering a particular subject.

In particular, diamonds with holes represent development and rebirth in mythology. Women who were sterile, childless, or afflicted with different illnesses sought solace in the holes in the rocks. There is an opening in the cave that is large enough for a guy to push his way through. This is known locally as Delikli dash (Perforated stone) or Chilahana (people educate their souls for forty days). It is said that no matter how thin a person is, they cannot escape this pit if they have

committed many sins. The belief states that: “When this stone is hung in the house, both the house and the people are protected from evil eyes” and that “A person who finds a stone with a hole and hangs it around his neck is protected from bad eyes” (Nəbiyev, 1986).

During the drought, the Oghuz Turks would pierce seven stones taken from sacred rocks in the middle and arrange them on a rope, and the eldest daughter of any family would lower it into the water and tie the end of the rope to one of the trees on the shore. At that time, people would sing in chorus: “My stone head, my wet head. I’m wet.” Then they would put the stone in the water, and meanwhile, the main sorcerer would sing: “My stone is in the water, god stone, and grandfather stone. My rain will come, not go away” (Nəbiyev, 1986).

People who worship stones as hearths consider it a sin to move them: “The mother stone is always giving birth. When you take him from his place and take him to another place, he comes back at night and is among his cubs” (Mürşüдова, 2018).

One of the great things about rocks is that they remain in the exact location where They were made and where the events they depict were witnessed. They don’t move or have their narratives alter throughout time. Although they have just produced explanations and utilized them as props for their contemporary cultural demands, modern people pretend to understand their meanings. “They don’t migrate or change their story with time. Modern People claim to know their meanings but have only created explanations and used them as props for their current cultural needs” (Petry, 2021).

## 2. Aim of the Study

Researchers can learn more about the cultural and spiritual significance of these sites by contrasting the sacred rocks of these two regions from this investigation. This knowledge can help to maintain indigenous customs and beliefs, which are frequently associated with hallowed terrain.

Comparatively studying the sacred rocks of Azerbaijan and North American cultures has several aims: including cultural understanding and preservation, cross-cultural dialogue, and contribution to religious studies.

The following inquiries are the focus of this study:

- 1) How does nature figure into spiritual practices? How do various civilizations elevate the natural world?
- 2) How do various cultures view and engage with the natural world’s sacred aspects?

## 3. Theoretical Perspectives

### 3.1. A Synopsis of Sacred Rocks’ History

Some notable Azerbaijan and North American researchers have studied sacred rocks and have looked into themes related to Indian and Oghuz-Turk people’s sacred rock beliefs. More than almost any rocks were undoubtedly acknowledged

as Manitou's incarnations. "Even rocks[s] played their medicine role by transferring unique abilities... or [they] might speak to man by word or action to transmit a message from above," according to (Mails, 1985). Boulders were the most frequently mentioned "medium" in the early French, Dutch, and English narratives where Manitou was supposed to live. The Native Americans claimed, "When the boulders were smashed, they revealed live blood and flesh" (Parkman, 1983). According to some accounts, "the rocks were thought to contain the spirit of a former chief or another individual" (Spence, 1994); "these rocks were connected to a particular location, such as a river mouth" (Oliver, 1903). According to legend, "the Chippewa (Ojibwa) cultural hero Nanabush placed a single, unaltered stone on his brother's tomb; stones have the capacity to be living, sentient, or brimming with spirit" (Barnouw, 1977).

According to Herman, "Through the eyes of the indigenous people of North America, the physical landscape was an inseparable part of a spirit-filled landscape" (Herman, 2014).

Comparatively speaking, however, the traditions of holy stones and rocks among the inhabitants of North America and Azerbaijan have received less attention. Taking into account the continued scholarly and popular interest in the idea of drawing parallels between the sacred stone and rock motifs found in the folklore of Oghuz-Turk of Azerbaijan and Natives of North America, by emphasizing the parallels in the plot and content of these examples, a comparative analysis of their historical and social viewpoints is also necessary to determine the national and human values contained in the folklore of both peoples.

According to Hüseyinov M. M. & Ismayilov Q. S. "The oldest cultural resources created and developed in Azerbaijan can be found in pictographic inscriptions on the images of Kalbajar, Gobustan, Gamigaya" (Hüseyinov & Ismayilov, 1967).

Since ancient times, people have understood the significance of stones as a testing factor. "The fertility function of the stone is associated with its sanctity. In truth, sanctity has something to do with the stone's status as a testing item. Simultaneously, the testing of fortune in the stone becomes apparent in the metaphorization of the stone" (Bayat, 2006).

### **3.2. Azerbaijan Oghuz-Turk and North American Indians' Living Spirits on the Rocks**

Numerous tales from North America and Azerbaijan highlight the close spiritual connections between the Creator, humans, and the entire natural world. They also stress how important it is for humanity to preserve the natural world. The world needs humans to preserve its equilibrium and keep it from collapsing.

Since the beginning of time, stone has accompanied humanity. Various stones were chiseled to become the earliest idols of worship, used as swords, and made into the first tools. Stone has an unearthly aspect to it; its constant appearance gives the impression of longevity. A stone remains the same while the rest of the world changes and grows. It makes sense that many people have associated parts

of the divine with stones and rocks.

Azerbaijan and Native American rock art includes two styles of creation: pictographs, which are drawings or paintings made on rocks, and petroglyphs, which are when the images have been carved into the rock. Rocks and stones were used to invite spirits ceremonies and block uninvited spirits and were designed into different shapes to represent different uses. The shapes allowed free movement of spirits, which were believed to be benevolent (Ferguson & Lotenberg, 1995).

Some stories reflect the sacredness of rocks and our particular way of seeing them and understanding their mysteries. These can be classified as mythology. The Azerbaijan and American landscape, its mountains, valleys, and rocks were already filled with sacred spirits and heroes from the first times of the world's creation. Mountains and rocks are sacred and their grandparents in the Oghuz-Turk people's culture.

There are legends and myths about rock Gods and spirits in Azerbaijan and North American folklore.

According to the "Seven Brothers" legend, rock pictures are connected to pre-historic spirits or gods. It is thought that some rocks and mountains were sacred to the early settlers, carrying spiritual energy or being inhabited by guardian spirits. To win the spirits' favour, rituals, rites, and offerings were occasionally performed at these sites. The seven brothers turn into seven rocks to protect the country from the enemy and prevent their coming (Əbdülhəmidov, 2009).

The intimacy between the supernatural and the common Lakota person was a defining feature of the Indian legends. The Lakota people's heroes are here everyday folks. A little pebble grows into Stone Boy, a hero who uses strength and cunning to defeat the paranormal in order to help his uncles and console his mother. "The Lakota people have warriors like Stone Boy who fought beside them against all adversaries" (Vivian, 1974).

The ancient stone spirit of Lakota and Dakota mythology is called Inyan according to the legend of "Inyan". He is sometimes referred to as "Grandfather" Tunkashila or Tunka. Inyan is frequently associated with justice, the land, and customs. Inyan is not typically personified in Sioux mythology, and there are just a few documented Dakota Sioux legends that claim Inyan is the father of the trickster Ikto'mi. Additionally, there are some rumours that Iya is an evil rock god and Inyan is a nice one. This is unquestionably untrue. Like all sacred nature spirits in Lakota and Dakota mythology, Inyan and Iya have the same name meaning "Rock"-Brides and grooms who are running from their foes are said to disappear after praying to God on a mountain. The concept is that their brides are the stones laid side by side. There are other stories about the "bride-girl" that are generally compatible with one another; however, one of the stories describes a slow turning to stone. In the depiction, girls and brides pray to avoid passing away and turning into stones because of their prayers (Leeming & Page, 1999).

According to the legend "Bride Rock", brides fleeing from enemies to the mountains pray to God to turn them into rock. According to belief, God accepted

her prayer and turned her to stone. Now there are a lot of stones lined up side by side in that place are the brides.

The wise old grandmother of Glooskap, the hero of Mi'kmaq tradition, is called Nukumi. simply means "Grandmother" according to the legend of Nukumi (Nogami). Some legends claim that Nukumi nurtured the hero after his mother died giving birth, but most stories tell of her creation from a rock by Nishkam, who took Glooskap in as her grandson to guide him (Leeming & Page, 1999).

Cherokee folklore describes a monster named Stoneclad. The specifics of Stoneclad vary from story to story; some describe a single Stoneclad, while others describe a whole race of them. Some have Stoneclad as a giant with stone skin, akin to the Stonecoats of the northern Iroquois tribes; others see him as a human witch who transformed into an invincible monster. He is impervious to fire, cold, and weaponry in every situation because of his armour, which resembles rocks. (Schwerin, Sturtevant, & Alfonso, 1985).

The Iroquois-speaking tribes have a mythical rock monster named Stone Coat. There is just one Stone Coat in certain tribal traditions, although there are several Stone Coat races. Stone Coats are described as being roughly twice as tall as humans and having rock-hard scales covering their bodies that deflect all common weaponry. They hunt and consume people, and they are connected to cold and ice. According to certain traditions (Leeming & Page, 1999).

#### 4. Results/Discussion

Indians' relationship with the world is rooted in a profound respect for the rocks and their features. Humans are not above creation, but a part of it, and people must forge a respectful, balanced relationship around them. "Great Spirit attached to the sky with four pieces of rawhide tied to the four sacred mountains that lie in the four sacred directions" (Leeming & Page, 1999). The names of these places, "accompanied by their stories, continue to accumulate, each one marking the site of some sad or tragic event from which valuable lessons can be readily drawn and taken fast to heart" (Leeming & Page, 1999).

According to the belief in Oghuz-Turkic mythology, Prophet Noah taught Joseph the prayer for rain, and he wrote that prayer on a Yada stone hung it around his neck (Şeşen, 1988). Turk and Red Jasper was a common stone used by the American Indians for various ceremonial purposes. was a stone used by Azerbaijan Turk and Red Jasper was a common stone used by the American Indians for various ceremonial purposes. Both were once used as an offering during rainmaking rituals and were thought to offer the wearer guidance when dowsing for water.

The tradition of sacred "medicine rocks" existed in Azerbaijan and Indian's culture and they believe it to be alive, and make presents to it (Leeming & Page, 1999).

"Down on the Milk River, east of the Sweet Grass Hills is another medicine rock. It is shaped something like a man's body and looks like a person sitting on top of the bluff. Whenever the Blackfeet pass this rock, they make presents to it." When the passers-by gave an article of clothing, they would sometimes put it on

the rock and then say, “When you look at it, it seems more like a person.” By this act, the transformation of the inanimate into the animate was complete, something the Indians so highly valued and regarded as sacred or an object of worship (Her-  
man, 2014: p. 1).

Several Indian fellow citizens visit their Medicine rocks to inquire about their chances for the upcoming year. The Mandans regard this medicinal stone as their great oracle, and they implicitly trust whatever it says. A deputation visits the sacred place, which has a thick, smooth-surfaced stone with a circumference of twenty feet, every spring and occasionally in the summer. After arriving at the location, the deputies complete the smoking process, taking turns sniffing the pipe before presenting it to the stone; and the fates of the country were read in the morning from the white marks on the stone, which the people who made them could easily interpret. A stone of a similar kind, possessing the same attributes and power over the country, is owned by the Miniatures.

The desire to be constantly remembered and commemorated by building monuments immediately brought with it the existence of stone monuments of various sizes related to the past of every nation. There are many stories related to stones in Turkish culture. The blessing of the country will run away from the face of a khaga who is deceived by foreigners and gives them the holy stone. Some heroes are born with a nine-pointed stone in their hands. One of the worst punishments in fairy tales is to turn into a stone, so people see that stone and learn from it. Stones falling from the sky have several external characteristics. The belief that it is possible to get pregnant by sleeping on a rock is also related to this matter.

Anazasi depicts astral human figures, sacred turtles, bison, and people with zoomorphic signs. The left, right, and opposite sides are sacred to humans, and the upper, left, and right directions are sacred to animals in Indian paintings. Creation of people “have left their mark on the landscape in the form of thousands of boulder alignments, pictographs painted onto rock surfaces, and petroglyphs pecked into rock-such as these rows of figures made by the North American Anasazi (above) which can still be seen today on the Navajo Reservation” (Zimmerman, 2003). Gobustan-made paintings and pictographs crafted and painted on rocks and stones in Azerbaijan are the ancient representatives of the people who left their traces on the rocks of Gobustan (40-20,000 years BC) Sagona, 2017 and Gamigaya (8-7 millennia BC) by the Azerbaijanis. Rocks with unusual shapes, colours, or positions were especially revered. Rocks usually depict sacred experiences-such as human-like beings (left, right, and opposite), or stylized renditions of the everyday, such as animals (above, left, right). Many of these sites are still used by native people to express their spiritual connections to the Earth.

Gobustan has outstanding universal value for the quality and density of its rock art engravings, for the substantial evidence the collection of rock art images presents for hunting, fauna, flora and lifestyles in pre-historic times and for the cultural continuity between prehistoric and mediaeval times that the site reflects. According to the Azerbaijani archaeologist-ethnographer Jafarzadeh “There are

pictorial inscriptions in some of the rock paintings. These inscriptions can be discovered on historical caravan and migration routes. These photos are today extremely valuable from a historical, geographical, and scientific standpoint while researching the ancient Azerbaijani climate, the people's way of life economically and their artistic creations" (Cəfərzadə, 1973).

Gobustan rock art cultural landscape covers three areas of a plateau of rocky boulders rising out of the semi-desert of central Azerbaijan, with an outstanding collection of more than 6000 rock engravings bearing testimony to 40,000 years of rock art during the wet period that followed the last ice age, from the upper palaeolithic to the middle ages. The site, which covers an area of 537 ha, is part of the larger protected Gobustan reservation. The Gobustan Mountains, namely the regions of Buyukdash (Big Rock), Kichikdash (Small Rock), Cingirdag, Shongardag, and Shikhgaya, have yielded remnants of prehistoric and modern human habitation. Large stone rocks were stacked up in the area, which was the site of a stone quarry at the time. Unusual drawings caught one of the workers' attention throughout these works. The pictures got more pronounced when the surrounding area cleared. Numerous artworks were also found in the nearby caves. The discovery was reported to scientists, and quarry operations were halted. The first archaeological study of the Gobustan petroglyphs was conducted in 1939 by archaeologist Ishaq Jafarzadeh. Since then, more than 7000 paintings on more than 1000 rocks, ancient towns, caves, 40 burial mounds, and more than 100,000 material cultural objects have been found thanks to the efforts of I. Jafarzadeh, J. Rustamov, F. Muradova, and other archaeologists. Mesolithic artefacts date back even further in time. Nonetheless, it is thought that life existed here in the past, which supports the idea that Gobustan is one of the birthplaces of civilization.

The Gobustan petroglyphs date to two distinct eras: the middle Ages and the XV–X millennia BC (or XV–X millennium, according to certain sources). They are highly regarded in comparison to other rock collections worldwide since they span such a vast historical era. The diversity of the topics, styles, arrangements, and execution techniques of the paintings, as well as the way they are layered from ancient times to more recent decades, demonstrate the stages of evolution of Gobustan's petroglyphs. These artworks frequently deal with topics that are relevant to people's lives. Photographs showing horseback and foot hunting, combat, scenes of group work, and harvest were found. Paintings of individual and group ceremonial dances that resemble the contemporary Azerbaijani folk dance known as "Yalli" have been conserved. Presumably, Gobustan experienced a tropical environment and a diverse range of flora and wildlife when some of these paintings were created. "Drawings of animals that have lived in this area for the past 10,000 years, including lions, horses, gazelles, deer, wild goats, birds, fish, and reptiles, may be seen" (Cəfərzadə, 1973).

One distinctive feature of Gobustan is the separation of human outlines into male and female silhouettes. Life-size silhouette drawings of individuals are thought to be older, dating to the Early Neolithic era when the eldest child was

regarded as the mother. The shapes of the thighs and breasts identify women's outlines. Here, the woman is intended to represent the progeny, the follower of kindness and wealth.

In the paintings, men are shown as tall, lean, muscular, and wearing belts around their waists while they hunt with a bow and arrow. The majority of men were portrayed with leg armour, while some women had tattoos on them. It is noteworthy to note that while similar images of people have not been documented in Europe or the CIS, they are typical of tropical regions and Oceania. Apart from human silhouettes, there are also remarkable life-size outline drawings of wild bulls; some of them measure 240 centimetres in length and roughly 140 centimetres in height. From the VII - IV millennia BC, when hunting was a major part of people's lives, came large and slightly reduced contour drawings of wild bulls and little pictures of individuals holding arrows. Solar symbols need to be interpreted with caution. The Gobustan petroglyphs also attest to the widespread practice of sun worship among the Bronze Age tribes residing in Azerbaijan. Here, solar symbols are depicted as crossed lines or circles with rays. Solar mythology also includes images from the second millennium BC of boats with a bright sun disk on the prow and rowers. This demonstrates how skilled sailors the ancient residents were. We can draw comparisons between this picture and similar ones found in Sweden, Egypt, and Russia (Urals). The painting depicts the sun on the side of the boat.

The most revered peak in Nakhchivan area is "Ashabi-Kahf". This cave and the stories around it are connected to sanctity. The legend makes it abundantly evident that the holy sleepers dozed off close to the cave's entrance rather than within. They pleaded with God to let them vanish here as soon as they woke up and found out about the occurrence. As a result, they vanished at "Yeddi Kimsena", (Seven People) which is located on the left side of the cave's entrance. It is not mentioned in the tale that they ascended from that location to the present-day mosques at "Damjikhana" (Drop dome) and "Jennat Bagh" (Paradise Garden). God so granted them what he desired on the mountain. The rocks are arranged to resemble a mushroom on the mountainside, to the right of the "Ashabi-Kahf" entrance. Put otherwise, it functions as a conduit for prayers to reach God. The "Damjikhana" (Drop dome) and the mosque are situated in an area that is rather spherical and cylindrical as you ascend.

"Paradise Garden" is the highest point, and it is cylindrical. Before, it was challenging to leave this place. Those with strong wishes, those who desired to transcend time, would come here, pray, construct a house, and erect a symbolic nanny. The small route leading eastward to the summit of the mountain is the most widely recognized location for prayers. There is a single mountain ash tree and stones that function as a transmitter at the top of the route. It's interesting to note that "Ashabi-Kahf" is surrounded by several mountains that are similarly revered. Related to Noah's deluge are Hacha dag (also known as Ilanli dag), Nahajir/Nuhajir, and Goynuk piri - Goynuk dag. Since ancient times, round temples have been

discovered. Discovered above the volcanic stones, cylindrical places of faith were found after examining the identical plots in Gamigaya. The surrounding rocks are extremely slick and challenging to navigate, which is why it has not changed over thousands of years. Here, the stone fragments are stacked up in a full circle, unlike elsewhere where they are dispersed throughout. Similar sites of worship and tradition were located in the "Button well" (also known as the "Button oven") in the Almamnad piri area, which is close to Jamaldin hamlet in the Julfa region. The sacred peak known as "Ashabi-Kahf" is being visited, and special arrangements are being prepared. It is believed that a person can ride the holy mountain to a specific location. After that, you must ascend on foot. Women and girls couldn't enter the "Paradise Garden" in "Ashabi-Kahf" until recently. Women and girls are not permitted in the main place of worship. In other words, an organic prohibition was enforced. They cooked supper using the killed sacrificial meat after worship. As far as is known, Gamigaya, which is revered in Nakhchivan, has many animal representations. In various areas of the shrine, pilgrims stack small stones on top of one another in addition to piling stones on the sides of the roads. The cylinder-shaped stone remnants of the "Garden of Paradise" and "Jennat Babi" are likewise present. Visitors to "Ashabi-Kahf" pray that the sacred fire may shield them from harm and illness. When discussing the protecting qualities of mountains, Abdulkadir İnan writes based on a Turkish tale that the Chinese considered robbing the Turks of their source of strength because they were terrified of the Turks and the Kutlu Mountain. In exchange for the son of the Turkish khagan receiving his daughter Kiyeliyen, the Chinese king demanded Mount Kutlu. In addition to the Chinese breaking this rock and transporting it to their hometown, Yuluntekin accepted this offer. The Turks then heard voices saying "Move-move" all the time coming from stones, mountains, untamed animals, and nursing infants. All of the water evaporated quickly, and the foliage became yellow (Seferli, 2016).

There are sacred caves in most of the mountainous zones in Azerbaijan. Among the people, "cave", "kaha", "zaga" etc. known by the names "Pir Banovsha" (Guba region), "Diri Baba" (Shamakhi), "White Kaha", "Black Kaha" (Gubadli), etc. there are well-known sanctuaries-caves. The visit includes a particular spot for beliefs about the stone. Stones are piled up along the road, placed at "Gitmir's grave," thrown at the enemy, adhered to "Yeddi Kimsena," thrown at Duldul's footprints, visited the Black Stone, and intentions are made at "Damcikhana" and "Jennat Bagh", put on it. Lastly, there is a belief that some people intend to take a small stone from here and bring it; once the intention is accepted. There are several legends about the Black Stone here. In one of the legends, it is said that there is a single black stone in Ocaghtepe (Fire Hill) pier. "Ashabi-Kahf" also has some small stones in it. They are sisters. On Thursday, the black stone in "Ashabi-Kahf" comes back after seeing his older sister in Ocaghtep. When someone pays a visit, they adhere to a promise to the black stone, burn candles around it, and do other rituals. Folklore regarding the holiness of the black stone abounds. Regarding a misbehaving child, sayings like "A black stone is better than you" and "I gave birth

of a black rock instead of you” are common. There is a common misconception that black stones have special qualities. These stones are said to be able to proliferate and grow. It is reported that some stones can produce up to 40 points. Many people think that the stone can transport a person’s soul. Throwing a stone at an enemy is regarded in “Ashabi-Kahf” as putting him in bodily danger. This notion was common in all of Azerbaijan. In the past, people in Azerbaijan would toss a black stone at an unwelcome visitor in an attempt to keep him away. That guy will not come back when a stone is thrown. In certain Nakhchivan communities, the spot where the deceased was buried was covered with a stone once he was removed from the home. The stone is tossed into the yard following the burial of the deceased. Throwing stones into cemeteries is another custom (Seferli, 2016).

Gamigaya (Ship-rock) where according to a local legend during a flood myth Noah’s Ark was pulled into and turned into a stone in due course. There have been found about 1500 punched-out and carved rock images of deer, goats, bulls, dogs, snakes, birds, fantastic beings, and also people, carriages and various symbols. Chaotically drawn images of dancing people can be also met among the images. Gamigaya’s paintings differ from each other in the simplicity and complexity of their compositions, as well as in their plots. Animal drawings are depicted individually, in groups, and conjunction with astral symbols (Halilov, 2018). Among these images, the scene of the struggle of animals is especially noteworthy. Bull drawings are in a realistic style, with long and curved horns. There are also images of a cart with a bull. Sacred Gamigaya rock is called “winged rock”. According to legend, it was once a giant bird, and when the enemy attacked, the bird took them on its wings, took them to safety and saved them from death. Then the bird returned to the desert and turned to stone (Əliyev, 1993).

There is a legend about the Beshbarmak rock in Azerbaijan, and this rock belongs to Holyman Khizir Nabi. He was the saviour of mankind. Later, he becomes invisible, and his five-fingered hand is forever stoned in that area. Fingers symbolically represent the safety of people. Today Beshbarmak rock is famous in the region and people respect it as the guardian angel of the people.

The native Americans priests said, “All religions are the stones we bury on the way back to God.” They think that all Indians should dance non-stop everywhere. The coming of spring is a sign of the coming back of the Great Spirit. Great Spirit will bring back all the animals with his coming. All the dead Indians will return and live again one day. It is said that Spider-Woman resides in Spider Rock’s cave in Arizona. She is the revered deity that once using her supernatural powers protected the Navajo people. Her husband created a loom for her out of elements of the cosmos, and with this loom, Spider-Woman taught the people to weave. Navajo children still believe that Spider-Woman is kept informed by talking to god about those who misbehave and that if they continue to be naughty they will be carried away to Spider Rock and eaten by her (Petry, 2021).

Khachagaya (Split Rock), a natural monument, is considered a miracle. According to the legend, Khachagaya is known for its red water drops, which locals

interpret as the blood of young lovers who turned into rocks. This is the most common legend about the name. It is the place where people go to pray to God. It is possible to climb to the top of the rock and enter the crevice from there using special iron stairs of 400 steps. Not everyone can enter the Khachagaya. The prayer of a person who can pass through rocks is accepted. Water always drips from between the rock walls, summer and winter. They believe that the rock that starts crying from the blow of the sword is a tear. Completing this pilgrimage takes a lot of effort and the people who visit it feel a sense of physical and spiritual relief. Religion, which is the most powerful tool in human psychology, has been governed by words that limit human activity, control feelings, emotions and desires, and create and perpetuate halal and haram concepts. These words are created in the form of stories and govern society and the community within a certain framework of behaviour (Isayeva, 2016).

Folk spirits have been and remain a powerful force in the lives of Azerbaijanis and Indians, and this belief regulates almost everything. The ancient priests were considered the highest class in the country and even ruled over the rulers. Only priests could communicate with God, organize worship and ceremonies, and were educated people who governed the laws of society. Ordinary people were not allowed to enter the temples.

## 5. Conclusion

Azerbaijan and North America are home to numerous sacred rocks and stones, each with its unique significance. Stones with natural impressions resembling religious symbols are often regarded as divine manifestations and are revered as objects of worship.

The conclusion of a discussion on sacred rocks typically revolves around their enduring significance across cultures and their role as symbols of spirituality, heritage, and identity. Sacred rocks, often revered as places of worship, meditation, or pilgrimage, hold a deep connection to the natural world, embodying the intersection between the physical and spiritual.

They remind us of the importance of respecting and preserving natural sites, not only for their cultural and religious significance but also for their ecological and historical value. The reverence for sacred rocks can also inspire a broader appreciation for the environment, encouraging sustainable practices and a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of all life.

Oghuz-Turk and Indians sacred stones and symbols are not merely relics of the past but living representations of the region's deep spiritual and cultural heritage. They serve as reminders of the profound connection between the people of both nations and their spiritual traditions. These symbols continue to inspire awe, reverence, and a sense of oneness with the universe, making both peoples' lands where the mystical and the natural seamlessly intertwine, inviting travelers and seekers to explore their profound spiritual depths.

- Both peoples' folklore sacred rocks serve as powerful reminders of the ancient

and ongoing relationship between humanity and the earth, highlighting the importance of maintaining these connections in our modern world.

- Sacred rocks are the symbols of wisdom and compassion.
- Sacred rocks are protectors and guardians and carvings are the messages from the ancients.
- Sacred rocks are portals to the spiritual world, prayers, carrying blessings on the wind.

## Conflicts of Interest

No conflict of interest.

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