

Prohibitions and prescriptions preventing a person from having a large birthmark

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***Abstract.** In this report, we will touch upon one of the very interesting and little-studied topics: prohibitions and prescriptions in traditional culture associated with the appearance of a large birthmark in a person. Earlier we touched upon the topic of prohibitions and prescriptions in the traditional culture of the Slavs [Zaporozhets 2011 a), 2018]. The presented report continues this topic in a narrower direction - the reasons for the appearance of a large birthmark in a person in the concept of a people. The stories were recorded in Moscow, from people who came to the capital. In total, nine records are considered about a large birthmark, about various reasons for its appearance. What unites the stories is that, in the concept of the people, the appearance of a large birthmark in a person is associated with some kind of great stress.*

Keywords: *beliefs, omens, prohibitions, big birthmark*

Stories about the appearance of a large birthmark in a person were recorded by the author in Moscow from 1995 to 2017 from guests of the capital, or people who came to Moscow for any reason and stayed in it. Previously, this topic was dealt with by the folklorist Sedakova I. A. [SA 2009]. I must say that, like many other incomprehensible phenomena, the appearance of a large birthmark in a person is regarded by the people as a punishment for some kind of sin, for violating some kind of prohibition or not observing some rule. From the stories of the informants it can be seen that a large birthmark often appears in a person as a consequence of the stress suffered by the person himself or his mother during pregnancy. Despite the negative attitude towards a person with a large birthmark (rejection in society, a limited circle of friends, etc.), as a bearer of a "symbolic" bodily injury, which, according to the

people, should also have a difficult fate, in the people are firmly convinced that with their benevolence, friendliness and other positive qualities, a person can get the opportunity not only to get rid of a big birthmark, but also to deserve a prosperous fate. So let's take a look at the stories.

1. This, you know ... was still in my youth. Guys are also guessing on Fate, not only girls (Laughs). Well, maybe not so often ..., or they simply don't admit, they are embarrassed that they seem to be engaged in a girl's occupation. It is believed that girls are more into divination, but guys are not. And also, as they say here ... They wonder - who will marry whom? Who will have what kind of wife? ... (Laughs) And we also had. The guys and I decided - about five people, to tell fortunes. On New Year's Eve. Yes. We got together, lit the candles, put the mirror ... Look in the mirror - who will appear there for you. But you need to have time for this mirror and then "hide". (How? - auth.) Put face down on the table, quickly. Otherwise, the "unclean" will hit you in the face. (Yes? - auth.) Yes. After all, this is the "unclean spirit" (which is "horned") in the form of a girl in the mirror. And he will hit and there will be a stain. (What? Tell me! - auth.). Yes, that's how it was with us! (Really? - auth.) Yes. So we sat down to fortune tell ... Well, this must be serious ... And we - like youth usually do, we brag in front of each other! We laugh! And only one: "Yes, this is nonsense! But I don't believe it! ..." And then in turn: one was sitting and sitting - he saw something, well, immediately out of fright, maybe he lowered the mirror. Another also ... And the one who laughed more, began to look, and saw something there and was confused, did not have time to close the mirror, and he slapped him in the face! (Who? - auth.) The "unclean" one from the mirror. Yes. He screamed and jumped up, ran away from the room! Well, all of us here, I must say, got scared, turned on the light, gave up fortune telling... But, most importantly, that guy had red on his cheek, like someone really hit. (Oh! - auth.) But that's not all. The next day, in the morning, he began to wash, go to work or wherever he was going, and looked - a not very large black mole in the form of a palm had formed on his cheek (i.e., in the form of a palm and five fingers - auth.). Can you imagine? (Really? - auth.) Well, we all saw it. And I saw. And what did he not do! And some ointments, and anointed with creams - it does not work! And even went to see the healer. And she said: "There was nothing to laugh." Yes. He says: "If we have already sat down to fortune tell, then we must calmly, seriously. And if you don't believe, then you shouldn't have to

fortune tell." Like this. And he never removed this stain. Then I don't know how his fate developed, he left later ... By the way, by the way, all of us then who - where moved, no one stayed in the village. Like this. (Were you fortune telling? - auth.) But my turn, thank God, did not come. (Laughs). Well, fate turned out well. We live together with my wife ... (FSN).

2. (Do you know any omens about birthmarks? - auth.) Ah! This happens. Well, maybe someone else, but we had it, my mother told me. This, like during the war, almost killed the men of the milestones, but what about the girls? Who has a fate ?! And on Christmastide, before Christmas, they decided to fortune tell. Yes. So they went to the bathhouse at twelve o'clock in the morning, put the table there, covered it with a new tablecloth (so that it would not be washed), put a mirror on the table, candles on the sides of the mirror and began to look in turn. Well, who saw or did not see what - everyone has different things ... But as soon as you see someone - quickly put the mirror on the table "face down"! Yes. And there was one girl, she was not even just a fighting girl, but some kind of daring or what? (I knew her, this aunt, later, later). She kept crawling everywhere, interfering with everyone ... And then she sat down to fortune tell, too, to look, and, apparently, did not have time to close the mirror or whatever? AND! They covered with a towel so as not to break the can. After all, a mirror, if you put it on the table abruptly, can be broken by accident. Well, I don't know for sure, but they covered it with a towel. And she, maybe, was nervous, or something, did not gently tug on this towel, and it did not cover the mirror, slipped off. And the "unclean" he hit on the cheek! (Really ?! - auth.) Yes. And then a large birthmark formed on her cheek. All over the cheek. And so it remained. Blue-black is. And in the form of a palm, just like five fingers were imprinted. (You mean it ?! - auth.) Yes. I saw it myself. They say that fortune telling is a sin. You can't. It is not for nothing that fate is hidden from people for some reason. God knows everything. And we, ordinary people, are not supposed to know everything (SAF).

3. (Earlier, on New Year's Eve, did you perform fortune telling somehow? - auth.) If fortune tell, then you need to take it seriously. Do not joke, do not laugh. Otherwise, you can get it, you know how! (And what could be? - auth.) Here we had it. We were still guys, we decided to fortune tell. Well, I wonder how and what. Gathered at one. He had a studio, a gym, and one wall was all mirrored. Here we put the chairs hardly! The lights were turned off, and the candles were put on the sides of the mirror ... maybe even where the candles were, I don't remember already ... Well,

we are sitting. And one there is everything: "Yes, you are doing nonsense! Who will seem to you there ?!" And stuff like that. He's already tired of everyone. They say to him: "Well, don't fortune tell! Don't bother us! " No, he also sat down and the main thing, can you imagine, here we are sitting, looking in front of us, and he began again: "Yes, this is all nonsense!" And he speaks, but his reflection in the mirror does not move and sits and looks at him with such a bad look! And such a noise! We are scared! We jumped out of this room, the studio, we stand, we shake. Well, then we calmed down somehow, went in on the sly, turned on the light, and we had to extinguish the candles so that there was no fire. Well, they seemed to have calmed down, but that guy immediately ran home and we did not pay attention to what was holding on to the cheek. Well holding on - well, okay. We were annoyed that the fortune-telling failed, and we were very frightened. But then it turned out that that guy had a big black-and-blue birthmark of some kind on his cheek. (In the form of a palm? - auth.) I don't know, I don't remember, it's just a blur. But then it remained, it did not disappear from him (GAS).

4. (Do you know anything about the appearance of moles, or some omens? - auth.) And this, they say, the mother was frightened of something when she was pregnant. (Yes? - auth.) Yes. A pregnant woman must be protected. Especially from fright. After all, there may be a miscarriage from fright. Here at our school one girl studied, she had a large birthmark on her cheek. Almost full cheek. It is said that when her mother was pregnant, she was afraid of a fire. Somewhere in another village there was a strong fire, the bell rang in the middle of the night - that it was necessary to be saved, and everyone jumped out of their houses and saw ... The spectacle, of course, was terrible, although in another village. There people were saved, some in what clothes, grabbed ... - jumped out, had time, and so - everything burned down. And she also jumped out, and saw and was frightened that she even screamed. Well, she's not on purpose - it just happened. And she had this little girl with a birthmark on her face. Well, of course, like children: some avoided her, some - how ... And so the girl was good, and kind, and curvy. Well, I tried to cover it with cream and powder, of course, but it doesn't matter ... And she was worried, of course. And the guys like - were also not very friendly with her. And then, I don't remember if he came from where ..., one German, a guy, fell in love with her and they got married. And then, he arranged it, she went somewhere, maybe to Germany, they did her face surgery, and that's it. The face became good. Well, you can barely see that the skin is a little more

pinkish than the rest of the face, but it has become so beautiful in general. And she herself is pretty, black, thick hair, sable eyebrows, and tall, curvy - this is a real Russian, as they say, a woman. And he - well, a German and a German is, what to take from him? Thin, fair-haired, but like a person too: hard-working and kind, and it is clear that he loved her very much. And she lived with him - like a lady. Here. And they say that if there is such a big birthmark, then it is not happy. Well, of course, try to improve your life with such a face. Well, this woman and her husband are German, they were both kind, hard-working, not arrogant, and everyone treated them with kindness and they lived their lives well (NMI).

5. (... A pregnant woman should be protected... - auth.) Yes! Totally. We had one guy in the village, so he had a "fire" on his face. It's such a big birthmark. It is like crimson. On the floor of the face. This is said by his mother, when she was pregnant, she was frightened of the fire. Lightning struck the haystack, and when she saw it, she was very frightened. Here. And on his face this "fire" came out, it turned out to be a stain (GMK) [Zaporozhets 2011b].

6. (Do you know anything about the appearance of moles? - auth.) It is forbidden for a pregnant woman to look at the fire. Yes. So I looked when I was pregnant, and my son has a birthmark on his face. It's interesting to look at the fire, it kind of bewitches, you sit and look at a candle, for example, but you can't. It is harmful for a child. (Why? - auth.) Well, I don't know, somehow it doesn't work well (ANS).

7. You see, I have a big mole on my hand? (The girl showed a birthmark on her hand, about two centimeters in diameter), (Yes, I see. So what? - auth.) Now, this is when my mother was pregnant, when I was still in her stomach, she was frightened of something and grabbed her stomach. (And then what? - auth.) And now, if you grab your stomach when you are frightened, then in the place that falls under the arm of the mother, the child will then have a big mole. He is in the stomach, a child, and what place does he have: his back or head or hand at this time will fall under the arm of the mother, when she grabbed the stomach, when she was frightened - there will be a mole. (Yes? - auth.) Yes. That's what they say here. After all, when a person is afraid of something, then: "Ah!" - and grabs the chest or stomach, or the head! You can't grab your stomach, because there is a child, and he will feel bad (NC).

8. (*The conversation took place during a session on visceral therapy (abdominal straightening)*). Can you see a birthmark on my belly? (Yes - auth.) We

say that when my mother was pregnant, she ate a cherry and wiped her hands on aprons, on herself. (Yes? - auth.) Yes. Wiped her hands on my stomach, on my apron, and therefore the child's birthmark appeared, as if a cherry had stained it. (Laughs). Yes, our cherries were not ripe at that time. That's what they say (NN).

9. Here is my patronymic "Halbaich". Everyone calls it "Khalbaich". Because my grandmother gave the name to my father "Halbai". And it is no coincidence. When he was born, he had a birthmark. Mole. And his mother, my grandmother, knew that there is such a thing - like a whole science, they predicted Fate by birthmarks: whether a person would be happy or not. And, apparently, she was somehow very worried that her son might not be happy. Moles are very ambiguous.... Well, now, she turned to a healer who knew a lot of all this. And she advised my grandmother to give my father the name "Halbai", which in Russian means "happy birthmark". Here. This is probably to neutralize some kind of negative. And my father was really very lucky. He was always lucky in everything. And I, as Halbaich, are also very lucky. I got out of such situations alive, which is incomprehensible to the mind, including returning from Afghanistan, unlike all my colleagues - the kingdom of heaven to them (K).

So, we've covered nine stories. Eight of them are about the reasons (according to the popular opinion of the people) of the appearance of a birthmark in a person. In the first story, there is clearly a prohibition on a frivolous, mocking attitude to fortune-telling, for which the guy was punished in the form of a large birthmark; in the second story, the appearance of a large birthmark is associated with a violation of the Christian tradition - the prohibition of fortune-telling; in the third (although the narrator does not comment on what is happening), it is clear from the narrative that the guy received the punishment for ridiculing the fortune-telling process, and even during the fortune-telling itself; in the fourth story, it is said about the violation of the prohibition - to protect a pregnant woman from fear, in this case - fear in the event of a fire; in the fifth, it is said about the prescription to protect a pregnant woman from negative situations in general, and in particular from fire; in the sixth - about the prohibition of a pregnant woman to look at the fire; in the seventh - about the prohibition of a pregnant woman to grab her belly during fright; in the eighth case, the prohibition of a pregnant woman to touch her belly with her hands (wipe her hands on

her belly) is indirectly described. The ninth story tells about the neutralization of the negative omen associated with a mole.

1. From all of the above, we see that three stories (№ 1 - 3) relate to the theme of the prohibition associated with fortune-telling: two with the prohibition to behave frivolously during fortune-telling, express disbelief, laugh at the process itself, etc., and one prohibition - associated with the Christian faith. In the popular environment, the concepts of "curiosity" and "curiosity" are clearly distinguished. It is usually explained this way: curiosity is a sin. "It's not in vain that they say: " They ripped off the nose of a curious Barbara in the market! " Because curiosity is a sin, it's not in your own business, as they say, to poke your nose! When a person wants to know something good, he has an interest in learning, for example (curiosity - auth.) - this is completely different. These are the children who study at school - they have an interest in learning (curiosity - auth.). It is something that a person is interested in: how flowers bloom, how the sun rises ... This child wants to know - how nature exists. It's good. But: how did the neighbor's husband get drunk? Or does the daughter-in-law know how to cook food - this is mainly gossip, to poke her nose into someone else's family. Yes, even to discuss. What do you care - how what family lives? This is a sin. And knowing the future is also a sin. God can change bad for good if you believe and pray. Here we must not believe fortune-tellers, but God, then everything will be fine in life". (SAF).

2. Four stories (№ 4 - 8) relate to the description of the carrier of the large birthmark indirectly, through his mother, who underwent stress during pregnancy.

a) Cases of contemplation of fire (fear of fire or simple contemplation of it). Probably, here a negative factor is the observation of the oxidation process of a burning object and its transition to an inanimate state [Zaporozhets 2020]. A child, even while in the womb, who has come to this world to live, receives information about death (the process of burning). And, of course, this negatively affects his psychological and physiological state, and in the future - on his health and fate. Therefore, in folk culture, there are various prohibitions associated with fire. (Perhaps, in this case, the genetic memory is also included, storing information about global catastrophes that occurred on Earth, accompanied by fires covering vast territories, when all living things died around).

b) Also, not the last place is taken by the prohibition on touching a pregnant woman to her belly during fright or any other stress, since at this moment the woman

is in a state of great agitation ("she even screamed"). Touching the stomach at this moment is regarded as an energy blow that falls on the child involuntarily, not only through the visual factor, through the mother, but also physically through the hands of the mother.

c) Another important point (№ 8) is the smoothing out of the involuntary damage caused to the child by the mother. The author believes that this kind of protection is also very important, since it prevents the likelihood of aggression from the child to the mother in the form of resentment. That is why it is said that "my mother ate a cherry and wiped her hands on aprons". That is, the blame is as if transferred to the berry - cherry. Thus, both the child receives an answer to the question that has arisen, and the mother is protected from guilt before him.

3. The final story (№ 9) tells us about the measures taken to protect against a possibly negative omen associated with a small mole. In the folk environment, there are many beliefs associated with moles. For example, it was believed that a black mole is not a happy sign, but a red one is, on the contrary, happy. Moles on the right side of a man meant a good fate for a person, and on the left - not a good one. In women, the opposite is true: moles on the left side of the body were considered a good sign, and on the right - a bad sign. Etc. ... By birthmarks, healers determined the fate of a person: how he would live, to which clan (by profession) he would belong, etc. ... In the XVIII century, it was very fashionable for women of the noble class to attach artificial "flies" to their faces, as a sign of a special affection for a woman by the goddess of love and beauty - Venus. There is an assumption that tattoo designs appeared precisely because of the application of "artificial moles" to the body, as a sign of belonging to a clan, when a person was initiated into a particular clan (warriors, priests, etc. ...). In song folklore, you can find the symbol of a mole as a sign of a positive quality. For example, in the Russian folk song "As for the river, but for Daria", it is described how a mother, taken away by the Tatars in captivity, in the mistress, by her birthmark, recognized her daughter, stolen many years ago.

Another thing - a large birthmark. It was definitely considered a bad omen. Moreover, it was believed that a person with such a spot is marked by the devil. In the 15th century in Europe, a woman with such a "mark" could even be led to the fire. Probably, a woman with a large birthmark was considered a witch because its appearance was associated with fortune-telling and other "witchcraft" manipulations, which women resorted to through a vessel (enchantment) with water (since the

peasants did not have mirrors). Hence came: "to spell", "to enchant", "enchantress", "sorceress" ... People with large birthmarks were called "Tagged Tank" or "Tagged Sasha". There is also a saying "God marks a rogue (or a witch)". But these "metas" often included six-fingered children, and humpbacked, etc. ...

Systematizing the expedition material, and becoming interested in the topic, the author came up with the question of the appearance of a large birthmark in a person, as a consequence of any stress. The stories constantly mention that the mother of a person during pregnancy or the person himself, before a large birthmark appeared, experienced some kind of stressful situation bordering on death. That is, the person has a fear of losing life (in utero or not). After all, any fear does not arise by accident. And just as fortune-telling can cause mystical horror, so a fire indicates a danger threatening life (no wonder one of the names of the big birthmark is "flame", "fire"). What can we read about a mole in the Soviet Encyclopedic Dictionary?

a) Birthmark, a defect in the development of the skin, excessive proliferation of certain cells. Distinguish between vascular (*angioma*), pigmented, warty birthmarks;

b) Angioma (from *angio* ongyo ... and *oma*), a benign tumor from blood (hemangioma) or lymphatic (lymphangioma) vessels;

c) Angio ... (from the Greek. angeion - vessel), part of complex words, meaning: related to vessels, vascular system (humans, animals, plants), for example, angiospasm. (SED 1989).

That is, it can be assumed that any mortal danger caused by a fire or any other crisis situation can cause vasospasm, rupture with subsequent proliferation, and, as a result, provoke their pathology. After all, why did the peak of stress feel physically like a "blow to the cheek"? And why did the "blows on the cheek" during the fortune-telling were given to the most restless participants? Because behind the deliberate mockery, there was a huge *fear* of the upcoming action, in which a person was ashamed to admit to his comrades, and went according to the principle: "If I think that this does not exist, then this really does not exist." Normal psychological defense. I must say that a person's subconscious, passing into an altered state in the process of contemplating a mirror surface, can give out various images, and not very harmonious ones, and not every person can withstand this. Perhaps at such a moment, a person has a sharp rush of blood to the head, and the vessels burst (both inside the head, which

can cause a stroke, and outside). In any case, the question of the appearance of a large birthmark remains open.

I would like to note that traditional medicine possessed many areas of assistance. These are bone-setting, which passed into classical medicine as "manual therapy", and abdominal correction, which became "visceral therapy", and herbalism - "phytotherapy", and apitherapy, and hirudotherapy There were many methods of providing psychological assistance and preventive measures. These measures for the prevention of skin disease include prohibitions and prescriptions, which we briefly discussed in our report. Why, in one case, there is a rupture of blood vessels inside the head, and in the other - outside? Are people with a large birthmark different in frequency of strokes from ordinary people? Etc.... Questions in this area are most likely still awaiting their disclosure. Studying the problems of vasospasm is a purely medical topic. In our report, we outlined only the psychological basis of the problem, information about which will be preserved in traditional folk culture, emphasized the importance of observing prohibitions and prescriptions as a protective form of behavior from possible negativity.

List of informants.

1. ANS – Anisimova Nadezhda Sergeevna, born in 1950. Originally from Siberia. Visiting Moscow. Working. Recorded by V.V. Zaporozhets in 2015 in Moscow.

2. GAS – Grachev Alexander Sergeevich, born in 1947. Originally from the Smolensk Oblast. In Moscow since 1970. Working. Recorded by V.V. Zaporozhets in Moscow in 1995.

3. GMK – Gaiduk Maria Kirillovna, born in 1978, originally from the Lviv Oblast, Skolsky district, the village of Zadelskoye. Recorded by V.V. Zaporozhets in Moscow in 2010.

4. NC – Neeme Christina, born in 1992, Syrian by birth, was born in Moscow. Recorded by V.V. Zaporozhets in Moscow in 1999.

5. NMI – Nikiforova Maria Ivanovna, born in 1949. originally from the Kursk Oblast. Visiting Moscow. Working. Recorded by V.V. Zaporozhets in Moscow, in 2009.

6. NN – Nikolay Nesterenko, born in 1965, originally from Ukraine. Recorded by V.V. Zaporozhets in Moscow in 2008.

7. SAF – Sazonova Antonina Fedorovna, born in 1935. Originally from the Stavropol Krai. In Moscow on work matters. Recorded by V.V. Zaporozhets in Moscow in 2013.

8. FSN – Fedorov Sergey Nikolaevich, born in 1947. Originally from the Saratov Oblast. In Moscow since the 1960s. Working. Recorded by V. V. Zaporozhets in Moscow in 2017.

9. K– Khalbaevich, born in 1955. Originally from Central Asia. "Alpha" employee. Recorded by V.V. Zaporozhets in Moscow in 2007.

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