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Animals in Russian and English proverbs and sayings

Proverbs and sayings are a historical mirror of any society, and images are borrowed from the animal world in them. English people like animals and think: "A man who loves animals can't be a bad man." Pet dogs, cats, horses, ducks and other friends of man have a much better life in Britain than anywhere else. An Englishman doesn't force their pets to guard something and doesn't use them in science experiments.

A dog, a horse and a cat are mentioned more frequently among domestic animals in both languages. Cats along with dogs are the most popular domesticated animals. They have been associated with humans for thousands of years, and it is no wonder that a lot of proverbs and sayings have appeared in English and Russian through time. Horses symbolize hard work, and it is often said of workaholics that they are plowing like a horse. In ancient Britain, horses were the main force and their function is above all. Britain is surrounded by islands. Thus, English proverbs and sayings have close contact with sea and fishing, for example: Make not the sauce till you have caught the fish. In the Russian language the most frequently used animals are a bear, a mouse and a wolf. The main characters in Russian folk tales are the wolf, the fox, the hare and the bear. The hare is characterized in a different way, for example, that the hare is not cowardly, but careful: Заяц не трус, он себя бережёт. The fox is associated with cunning, the ability to get out of difficult situations: A fox is not taken twice in the same snare.; When the fox preaches, take care of your geese.; Старую лису дважды не проведёшь. In real life, a bear is a dangerous predator, but in the Russian folk tales, he is usually represented as a clumsy goodhearted creature: С медведем дружись, а за ружье держись.; Бежал от волка, а попал медведю в зубы. A mouse is associated with poverty, for example: Были бы крошки, будут и мышки.; Беден, как церковная мышь.; Бесплатный сыр бывает только в мышеловке.

The image of a dog is associated with a hidden danger in proverbs and sayings in both languages, for example: Beware of a silent dog and still water; Dumb dogs are dangerous. - Не буди спящего пса: пес спит, а ты мимо; Не ступай собака на волчий след: оглянется – съест.[5] In Russian proverbs and sayings a dog is associated with stupidity: Для продажной псины - кол из осины.; Ус соминый, да разум псиный. In English proverbs and sayings this image is usually associated with positive character traits: A good dog deserves a good bone.; A dog that trots about finds a bone. The image of cat was a symbol of witchcraft and evil in both countries and it is partly reflected in English and Russian proverbs and sayings.[6] In English and Russian proverbs and sayings this animal is characterized by mischief: Send not the cat for lard; The cat shuts her eyes while it steals cream; Чует кошка, чье мясо съела.; Не все коту масленица, будет и великий пост. The image is contrasted with the images of mice and dogs in the proverbs and sayings of the two languages under consideration: When the cat's away, the mice will play; Agree like cats and dogs; The cat will shed mouse tears; Live like a cat with a dog. This image is also associated with sham: Cats hide their claws; The cat sleeps and sees mice.

A significant number of Russian and English proverbs and sayings is also connected with the image of a horse, for example, proverbs and sayings which match in the meaning and form: Look not a gift horse in the mouth. A gift horse is not looked in the teeth.; A horse stumbles that has four legs. A horse with 4 legs and he stumbles; Don't change horses in midstream. Horses don't change at the ferry.[5] In both languages the horse is correlated with food: While the grass grows, the horse starves; Ретивому коню корм тот же, а работы вдвое. More heavy, back-breaking work of a horse is reflected in Russian proverbs and sayings: Коня положили, да зайца уходили; Был конь, да изъездился. There are less of English proverbs and sayings about the plight of the horse and they are

not so categorical: Never spur a willing horse.[3] Actions that can be performed by a horse are very similar in proverbs and sayings of the two languages. You can ride on a horse, it is possible to change it, lead it. In English proverbs it can be spurred and saddled, in Russian - to sit on it. Proverbs and sayings with the "pig" component " are less common, but the image of this animal in Russian and English languages are actually the same. The pig is usually associated with careless, ignorant and unworthy person: Cast pearls before swine. Метать бисер перед свиньями; Посадишь свинью за стол, она и ноги на стол. However, in Russian proverbs and sayings this image is associated with stupidity and arrogance: У богатого гумна и свинья умна; Свинья только рыло просунет, и вся пролезет. In English proverbs and saying the image of this pet can be used to transfer the impossibility of any action, for example, When pigs fly; or unusual happening, for example, Pigs might fly if they had wings.[4] There are a bit of proverbs and sayings with the image of a sheep. As a rule, in both languages the sheep is associated with corruption, laziness and sense of herding: A lazy sheep thinks its wool heavy; If one sheep leaps over the ditch, all the rest will follow; Одна паршивая овца все стадо портит; Без пастуха овцы не стадо. There is the opposition of the sheep and the wolf in both traditions, and the image of a pet is associated with vulnerability: A lone sheep is in danger of the wolf; Не ставь неприятеля овцой, ставь его волком.[1]

Both in English and in Russian, a significant place is occupied by proverbs that mention pets. Not all animals are used equally often. Proverbs with pets such as a cat and a dog, as well as a horse and a sheep are mostly mentioned. Among wild animals, the most commonly used are a wolf, a fox and a hare. And in Russian proverbs wild beasts of the forest are mentioned more often than in English. Perhaps, this is due to the fact that hunting used to play a very important role in the life of Russian people. Therefore, the images of these animals in Russian are much more diverse than in English. Thus, the study of proverbs and sayings of another language allows you to better understand the culture and the way of thinking of another nation, as well as to enrich your vocabulary of a foreign language.

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