

SHORENA TAVBERIDZE

TABLA IN RETURN FOR SELF-SACRIFICE

According to the Rachian oral tradition, an old woman who sacrificed herself while assisting her fellow villagers in killing of their offender feudal lord, asked them to prepare *tabla* (food and drink) for her when setting *tabla* for their deceased family members after the lord's death. Similar requests are spread in other oral traditions as well.

According to the folk-beliefs on the next world, food for a soul of a deceased is just as necessary as for a living one. However, the only source of food for a deceased person was believed to be the *tabla* specifically blessed for them in this world. Sometimes, while alive, those without close relatives tried to prepare personally and have food and drink blessed in order to ensure food for the next world for themselves. However, those who had no one in this world to arrange blessed *tabla* for them would face hunger in the next world.

These must be the folk-beliefs underlying the will mentioned in folk traditions – the request for *tabla*, blessed food and drink in exchange for service and sacrifice.