



THE SPIRITUAL AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF UZBEK CEREMONIES

(A Case Study of Bibiseshanba and Bibimushkulkushod)

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Abstract

This article examines the organization and transformation of the "Bibiseshanba" and "Bibimushkulkushod" ceremonies, which aim to resolve family issues. The study analyzes changes in their execution, particularly in the Andijan region.

Keywords: Ceremony, tradition, Bibiseshanba, Bibimushkulkushod.

Introduction

It is well known that ceremonies constitute a significant part of Uzbek traditions. Passed down from generation to generation, they help preserve national identity, reflect the centuries-old lifestyle of the people, and foster social unity and solidarity. Ceremonies can be classified into formal Islamic rituals and folk Islamic traditions, which include ceremonies such as Bibiseshanba and Bibimushkulkushod.

Research Methods. This study employs historical analysis, holistic examination, observation, and individual interviews.

Research Findings. In Uzbek and Tajik folklore, Bibiseshanba is regarded as a spiritual protector of family happiness, spinning, and sewing crafts.



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Some sources describe Bibiseshanba as a spiritual figure who protects women from various diseases, family conflicts, and the evil eye. Women invoke her blessings and sometimes conduct rituals on Tuesdays.

In the Andijan region, the primary goal of the Bibiseshanba ceremony is to ensure the marriage and well-being of young women.

In the Bulqoboshi district of Andijan, before the Bibiseshanba ceremony, homes are cleaned and organized, followed by the preparation of special dishes. Traditional foods such as umoch oshi and chalpak (fried flatbread) are cooked.

According to Ro'zixon Ibragimova, a resident of Guliston neighborhood in Bulqoboshi district, the number of women participating in the Bibiseshanba ceremony is not limited. However, it is preferable to have an odd number (three or five) of widows present, as their prayers are believed to be particularly powerful, bringing blessings to the event. Their presence completes the ceremony, especially in distributing chalpak and reciting prayers. Additionally, widows receive special attention and care, as their participation is considered highly virtuous.

The main part of the ceremony includes Quran recitations, prayers, and chants led by an otinoyi (a religious woman).

At the end of the ceremony, food is distributed among participants, and sometimes they are given portions to take home.

Certain religious sources claim that this ceremony is not part of Islam and that seeking help from "Tuesday's spirit" is considered an act of shirk (associating partners with God). Consequently, in recent years, the practice has declined in urban and district centers, continuing mainly in remote areas under the name "ehson" (charitable feast).

Bibimushkulkushod. Bibimushkulkushod is an ancient ritual believed to help people overcome difficulties, infertility, and hardships. It is performed on Wednesdays for those seeking healing and relief.

According to the legend of Bibimushkulkushod, an old man once lost his sickle while gathering firewood. Searching for it, he encountered a cave where Bibimushkulkushod lived. She advised him to host a feast in her honor every Wednesday. After doing so, he found his sickle and experienced good fortune.



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However, when he neglected the ritual one week, misfortunes returned. After resuming the practice, his life improved again.

The ceremony requires two shirmon non (special flatbreads), raisins, salt, two candles, umoch oshi, and an odd number of chalpak. An otinoyi is also invited to lead the event.

Field research indicates that in recent years, residents of Buloqboshi district have been performing this ritual after seeking spiritual healing (dam soldirish). Quranic recitations, especially Surah Yasin, are an essential part of the ceremony. In some cases, a sheep is sacrificed as part of the charitable offering (ehson).

Conclusion

From the above findings, it is evident that Uzbek traditions and ceremonies remain an integral part of national culture, passed down through generations. These rituals combine ancient religious beliefs with Islamic practices, forming a historically rooted set of traditions that continue to shape cultural and spiritual life in Uzbekistan.

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