

“What Do They Say in Mosques? Islamic Discourse on Limiting Ritual Expenses”

Adham ASHIROV¹

Abstract

This article examines the changes in religious policy, Islamic beliefs, religious life, national values, and family rituals in Uzbekistan during the years of independence. Particularly, it analyzes a series of fatwas, guidelines, and theses on Friday prayer topics published by the Office of Muslims of Uzbekistan in recent years. The author substantiates the amalgamation of religious and national perspectives in Uzbek family rituals, encompassing childbirth, marriage, and mourning ceremonies, drawing on ethnographic materials. Furthermore, it delves into the views of Islamic scholars and imams concerning the reduction of specific expenses and extravagances in these rituals, citing examples from Friday prayers and various social networks. Through anthropological observations of modern Uzbek society, including Muslims' public activities, Friday prayers, neighborhoods, and community events, as well as through various TV talk shows and radio broadcasts, the article explores "Aqiqa" ceremonies, circumcision weddings, marriages, and mourning rituals conducted by Uzbek imams in matters of family and marriage. The author highlights the discussions of "Amru Ma'ruf" topics during ceremonies, widely debated on mosque websites, imams' pages, and social media platforms (Telegram, Facebook, Instagram). The article underscores the impact of Islamic scholars' and imams' ongoing efforts, noting changes in the balance of expenses in the ceremonial life of the Uzbek people, particularly evident in marriage ceremonies. Moreover, it analyzes changes and transformative processes in Uzbek family rituals from the perspective of ritual economy.

Keywords: Islam, Religion, Ritual, Custom, Tradition, Wedding, Marriage, Aqeeqah, Friday Prayer, Imam, Location, Religious Policy, Economy, Expenses, Extravagance.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the topic of weddings has been widely discussed in Uzbekistan. Why is the topic of weddings widely discussed among the public? What is the reason for the serious criticism of the expenses in ceremonies by various social strata, including state leaders and public activists? These criticisms prompt questions about whether Uzbeks live only for having lavish weddings and how long people continue to prioritize ceremonies over other aspects of life. Notably, this issue has been a subject of widespread debate for the past century, reflecting its deep-rooted historical significance.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Jadids (Muslim modernist reformers) urged people to preserve national traditions and elevate the spiritual and educational levels, seriously opposing the hypocritical and ostentatious conduct of lavish weddings, expensive mourning and wedding ceremonies. Abdulhamid Cholpon, one of the leaders of the Turkestan Jadids, criticized the emergence of extravagance at weddings in his article published in the "Sadoyi Fergana" newspaper. Cholpon lamented the recent trend, stating, "...Earlier, it was good, but in the last days and years, it has been going backwards day by day... At that time, there were not such wasteful weddings..." [Cho'lon, 1914]

During the Soviet period, new wedding ceremonies such as the "red wedding," "komsomol wedding," and "international marriage" became part of the lives of Uzbek people who adhered to communist ideology. Despite the widespread adoption of traditions influenced by Soviet ideals, national and religious customs were preserved, forming a symbiosis of ritual life. Specifically, traditions such as conducting circumcision weddings for male children, formalizing marriages through the Nikah ceremony, and burying the deceased with funeral prayers continued.

In the 1990s, after the independence of Uzbekistan, similar to the Soviet Republics following the collapse of the USSR, the sense of national and religious identity increased in the country. Liberated from ideological

¹ Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan

captivity, the country endeavored to restore its historical past, identity, and national and religious values. In this process, new customs and ceremonies emerged, which were economically expensive. Consequently, ceremonies became a significant drain on family budgets, with people over the years making it a habit to save money and valuable items for their children's weddings, aiming to fulfill their 'dreams'. Simultaneously, despite the extravagance, the practice of gaining recognition among the public by hosting costly ceremonies in alignment with their 'dreams' and 'Uzbekism' has also gained popularity among certain segments of the population.

In general, during the Soviet period and the years of independence, a number of decisions, decrees, orders, and instructions related to weddings and family ceremonies were announced in Uzbekistan. On September 14, 2019, a joint decision of the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis (parliament) of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Senate of the Oliy Majlis, titled "On further improvement of the system of organizing weddings, family celebrations, parades, and ceremonies" was adopted. This decision established commissions for regulating weddings, family celebrations, parades, and ceremonies in Uzbekistan, including the Supreme Council of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, regional, district, and city Councils of People's Deputies, as well as mahalla (community) gatherings [<https://lex.uz/uz/docs/5153833>]. So, despite the adoption of various decisions aimed at reducing ceremony expenses and the formation of commissions, the expenses incurred for wedding ceremonies in the country did not decrease; on the contrary, they increased year by year. Consequently, this situation remains the subject of public objection and is widely discussed among the populace. This research aims to scientifically analyze some aspects of the above problem, focusing on the views of Islamic scholars and imams regarding the expenses of weddings and other family ceremonies, and the debates on this topic in the religious sphere.

The historiography of the topic spans the last hundred years, during which weddings and family celebrations have garnered significant interest among numerous researchers. Scientific inquiries were conducted during the Soviet period, focusing on various ethnic groups such as Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, Turkmen, Tajiks, and Karakalpaks in Central Asia [Kislyakov, 1967: 239–244; Kislyakov, 1968:291–300; Lobacheva, 1971; Sukhareva, 1978: 192–200; Arginbaev, 1974: 69–76; Arginbaev, 1993; Djumagulov, 1960; Abramzon, 1968:280–286; Abramzon,1971; Vasileva, 1954: 172–188; Djikiev, 1963:152–153; Sukhareva, 1928.72–79; Kislyakov, 1959; Ishankulov X, 1972; Sufiev U, 1991; Bekmurotova A, 1967.].

Particularly, during this era numerous monographs, articles were published and scientific studies were conducted focused on the family-marriage rituals of different ethnic groups residing in various regions of Uzbekistan, including the Khorezm oasis, Zarafshan and Fergana Valley. These studies primarily concentrated on the wedding ceremonies of people across different regions of Central Asia and their unique regional characteristics [Lobacheva, 1960: 43–45; Lobacheva, 1985: 43; Sukhareva, 1940: 173–176; Kubakov, 1972: 119–127; Sukhareva, Bikzhanova, 1955; Bikzhanova, 1959; Abdullaev, 1991].

During the Soviet period, studies conducted on marriage wedding ceremonies often emphasized the promotion of customs specific to that era. In particular, N.P. Lobacheva's monograph "Формирование новой обрядности узбеков" (Formation of new rituals of Uzbeks), published in 1975, aimed to shed light on ethnocultural processes related to various traditions in Uzbek culture. However, it promoted "new marriage weddings" such as the "red wedding," "Komsomol wedding," and "international wedding" with special emphasis, while condemning rituals associated with traditional national marriage weddings as "old fashioned leftovers" [Lobacheva, 1975.45–68]. Similar viewpoints were also endorsed in the works of U. Otamirzaeva, T. Toshboeva, and M. Savurov, as well as in the collection "New Life – New Traditions," published based on materials from the Seminar Council of the Uzbekistan [Otamirzaeva U. 1988; Tashbaeva T. X., Savurov M. D, 1989].

In the book titled "Uzbek Weddings" by the Uzbek ethnographer H. Ismailov, rituals such as matchmaking, betrothal celebrations, and customs after the wedding are studied in relation to the traditions and customs of national weddings. Some aspects of the marriage wedding ceremony are described in the pamphlet "Uzbek Udumlari" (Uzbek Customs) by the literary critic Mahmud Sattar [Sattor, 1993:106–116.]. In the work "Ўзбек халқи этнографияси" (Ethnography of the Uzbek People) by the ethnographer I. Jabborov, ethnogenesis, ethnic history, material and spiritual culture, family life, and way of life of Uzbeks are described. Additionally,

economic relations in marriage, bridal gifting (mahr), and weddings are researched based on ethnographic materials [Jabborov, 1994.]. In the candidate's dissertation by S. Soatova, the forms of marriage, matchmaking, betrothal celebration ceremonies, customs, as well as the ceremonial expenses incurred after the wedding, were studied [Soatova, 1999].

Moreover, the family-marriage ceremonies of the Uzbek people, the different aspects of the dowry given for girls, and the rationality of ritual expenses in the region's peoples are analyzed by the Sergey Abashin [Abashin S. N., 1999: 158–164; Abashin S. N. 1999:1–2]. Additionally, this anthropologist scholar made many interesting points about the economy of these ceremonies. However, the author did not aim to discuss the economy of ceremonies in the religious space. In a series of studies by the Japanese researcher Seiko Wazaki, the issues of family, marriage, and divorce among Uzbeks were analyzed based on ethnographic materials [Wazaki; 2019; 83-107].

Overall, the analysis of the current literature related to marriage and family reveals that the religious space, particularly the debates among local scholars and imams regarding the conduct of family rituals and the reduction of expenses within them, has not been studied as a distinct object of research.

Research Methodology

The methods such as observation, interviews, anthropological analysis, and data analysis, which are widely used in anthropological research, were employed in this study. The ethnographic materials used in the research were collected from the mosques "Islam Ota" in Yakkasaroy district and "Moyi Mubarak" in Shaikhontohur district of Tashkent city between 2022 and 2023. In addition, the telegram channel "Fatvo.uz" of the Fatwa Center of the Muslim Office of Uzbekistan was studied as a research object in this research. The questions and answers exchanged on this channel in recent years, along with the materials published on social networks, were analyzed sociologically and comparatively.

Ritual and Tradition Definition and Description

Ritual is an event that occurs in response to the demand and need of the spiritual aspect of human life. Any ritual is created and sustained by embodying the main features that indicate the level of socio-economic, political, and cultural development of a particular community at a certain stage of historical development. In other words, a ritual is a life event with symbolic actions that are generally accepted. K. Bell defines ritual “as a definitive component of the various processes that are deemed to constitute religion, or society, or culture [Bell, 2009.16].

Uzbek Rituals Are Divided into Three Major Categories

Family rituals.

Calendar ceremonies related to the seasons.

Religious ceremonies.

In the classification of rituals, family rituals hold significant importance. Birth, marriage, and mourning ceremonies constitute various traditions and customs associated with important milestones in life. For this reason, as in many other nations, special attention is paid to family rituals in Uzbek society. Such ceremonies are distinctive as they often incur greater expenses for the family and can lead to economic difficulties. Additionally, these ceremonies are closely tied to the family name and are typically celebrated collectively, with the participation of relatives and neighbors.

“After Secularity” and Uzbek family rituals.

It is known that in 2016, there was a change in the state administration in Uzbekistan, and Shavkat Mirziyoyev came to power as the President. After that, significant changes were made in the political, economic, and cultural spheres of the country, as well as in religious life. Following the quarter-century rule of Islam Karimov, the role of Islam in society and ritual life increased due to religious freedom. Since 2017, the "black" list of religious people has been abolished in Uzbekistan, and minors have been allowed to visit mosques and participate in

Islamic ceremonies. Over the last five years, 385 mosques were completely rebuilt, and 487 mosques were repaired. Additionally, three religious educational institutions—Mir Arab High Madrasah in Bukhara, High School of Hadith Science in Samarkand, and Imam Termizi Madrasah in Surkhandarya—were established. The Office of Muslims of Uzbekistan launched online programs for teaching Islam on a large scale [<https://religions.uz>]. In cities and large villages of the country, there has been a significant increase in the mass attendance of young people at Friday, Ramadan Taraweeh, Eid al-Fitr, and Eid al-Adha prayers. Additionally, family rituals based on Islamic values and traditions such as "aqeeqah" and "Islamic marriage" have become increasingly popular.

During the rule of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, the strategy of not only domestic but also foreign policy of Uzbekistan changed. The current government has established friendly political, economic, and cultural relations not only with neighboring countries, but also with a number of Muslim countries (such as Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia), and these changes have also brought significant changes in religious life. Particularly, from 2018, the number of quotas for Hajj pilgrimage from Uzbekistan was increased, restrictions on Umrah pilgrimage were removed, and the prices for such events were reduced. Furthermore, starting from July 2023, private companies and firms were allowed to organize Umrah trips.

In recent years, the phenomenon of Islam has increased among the population of Uzbekistan. Therefore, questions have arisen such as "Is religion becoming the most attractive tool for Uzbek society?" or "Is this just a transition?" and "Despite the fact that the country is a secular state, are certain sections of the population, especially the youth, becoming religiously radicalized due to Islamic propaganda?" Additionally, "How is the sense of identity changing under the influence of Islam?" Before seeking answers to the above questions, it should be noted that the dressing culture of the population of Uzbekistan has also changed significantly. People of different ages are becoming accustomed to wearing national clothes not only for ceremonies, but also in everyday life. Especially among Uzbek women, there is a trend of wearing dresses of new designs made of national fabrics such as adras, satin, silk, and bekasam. Simultaneously, it has become popular among young men to grow beards and among women to wear hijab and burqa, which are not characteristic of Uzbek culture.

Undoubtedly, this situation has sparked debate not only among intellectuals but also among Islamic scholars. In particular, on September 8, 2023, the chairman of the Office of Muslims of Uzbekistan, Mufti Nuriddin Khaliqnazarov, delivered a lecture during the Friday sermon at the "Tepa" mosque in Tashkent city on the theme "Going Deep into Religion is a Great Sin!" and addressed the culture of dressing:

"Muslims are required to maintain moderation and know their limits. Our sect does not mandate women to cover their faces or wear specific clothing. There are no instructions in our sect requiring women to wear black, cover their faces, envelop themselves in black, or wear gloves on their hands. In our sect, a woman's face, hands, and feet are not considered private parts that must be covered, and no specific attire is mandated for them. Only covering the private parts is required. Nothing else [<https://kun.uz/32241012?ysclid=lmd4bh669z640537074>].

It is worth noting that in his speech, the mufti was the first among the scholars of Uzbekistan to evaluate the issue of awareness of national and religious identity from the point of view of nationality: "When Islam came, our ancestors accepted Islam; they did not accept becoming Arabs. The nation was saved" [Telegram: Contact @muslimuzportal] he said. Here, two cases are very important. The first is that the mufti of Uzbekistan seriously criticized the clothes worn by some women as Islamic dress and men's beards. The second is that the religious leader considers national identity as paramount in awareness of religious and national identity. The Mufti paid special attention to awareness of national identity, recognizing that the concepts of "Islam and nation" are separate. It is interesting that the Friday lectures given in all mosques in Uzbekistan were devoted to the culture of dressing, and almost all imams emphasized that the dress code and nationality should be paid attention to. They tried to justify their opinion that the practice of covering women's faces is not in the Hanafi sect by referencing the 31st verse in Surah "Nur" of the Qur'an, which says, "Tell the women to cover their breasts with their headscarves." Also, recently, the scholar of the Fatwa Center of the Office of Muslims of Uzbekistan, Muhammad Ayyubkhan Homidov, made a special speech about the culture of dressing and criticized the practice of growing long beards and covering women's faces. According to him, growing beards is not the main

measure in religion; one should also pay attention to modesty (moderation) in one's appearance [Qur'oni Karim, 2018;528]. Thus, the Office of Muslims of Uzbekistan has announced a number of fatwas, instructions, and Friday theses on the regulation of not only the culture of dressing but also family ceremonies. Accordingly, in August 2018, the Office of Muslims of Uzbekistan issued instructions in the form of Friday lectures that imams should give lectures on the topic “Thoughts about our weddings” [muslim.uz. 17. 08. 2018].

It is known that extravagance is strictly condemned and forbidden in Islam. In particular, it is written in the Holy Qur'an that Allah does not like his wasteful servants because the blessings given by Allah must be spent on good deeds. [Qur'oni Karim,2018;83] The scholars criticized the pomp, extravagance, and pride in wedding ceremonies as our “national faults”. Here arises the question, “why national faults?” There are a number of reasons, and it is probably a mistake to regard them as national faults. The reason for this is probably that the institution of “Uzbekism” and “custom” is highly regarded in society, competition between neighbors and different social strata, parents taking on a lot of responsibility for their children, and the arrogance and ignorance of some people.

In 2019, the proposal and comments on the reduction of expenditure for weddings and ceremonies were stated in the fatwa of the Office of Muslims of Uzbekistan. In particular, “The Imams in Uzbekistan were instructed by the office to carry out extensive propaganda work with reasonable arguments and life examples about the material and moral harms of such as extravagance, ambition, arrogance, and hypocrisy at weddings, festivals, and ceremonies, as well as the benefits of thriftiness and moderation in Friday lectures and various events”. The fatwa emphasizes that the rituals of the Uzbek people related to weddings and various events such as “kelin navkari”, “chorlar”, “ota ko‘rdi”, “sep yoydi”, “quda chaqirdi”, “kuyov chaqirdi”, “kelin chaqirdi”, “tog‘ora yuborish”, “yuz ochdi”, “safar qaytarma”, “supra ochdi”, “ko‘rpa yigdi”, “qiz bazmi”, “salomnoma”, “hoji oshi”, “oqlik oldi”, “pakhta berdi”, “kelin kurdi”, “khina quyish”, “shukronalik”, “paygambar oshi” and “ashurlik” do not exist in Islam. Additionally, it was noted in the fatwa that these ceremonies have become a source of hardship, excessive expense, and extravagance for the people.

This research argues that while the rituals mentioned in the fatwa are not explicitly outlined in Shariah law, they have nonetheless evolved into a tradition for Uzbeks, regarded as a cherished national value. However, some of them have been condensed or have faded out of ritual life today. In recent years, imams throughout Uzbekistan have been active in community life, especially in neighborhoods, media space, and social networks. In their speeches, they criticize the cost of marriage and mourning ceremonies in addition to providing solutions to various religious issues. Anthropological observations have revealed that Uzbek imams discuss the issue of family and marriage in the following gatherings:

Friday prayer;

In the neighborhoods and at various community events;

various talk shows and radio broadcasts on television;

Aqeeqah ceremony;

circumcision wedding;

amri maruf lectures at marriage and mourning ceremonies.

websites of mosques and imams or social networks (Telegram, Facebook, Instagram).

Given the impossibility of analyzing all of these gatherings within a single article, this research predominantly focuses on Friday lectures and discussions conducted on social networks.

Interpretation of Ritual Costs in Friday Lectures

As in other Muslim communities of Central Asia, mosques in Uzbekistan are divided into jameh (juma) and local mosques. According to official data, there are currently (September 2023) 2,126 mosques in Uzbekistan, of which 2,084 are jameh mosques and 42 are registered as local mosques (prayer houses) [https://xabar.uz].

The total number of mosques in Tashkent is 134, of which 129 are jameh mosques and 5 are local mosques (prayer houses). Friday prayer is performed by men as a group on Friday afternoon. When Muhammad (PBUH) was in Qubo, Friday prayer was obligatory. As noted in Islamic sources, the first Friday prayer was held in the neighborhood of Banu Salim ibn Awf in Naq'ul Khazimot, one mile (1.6 km) from Madinah. According to Surah 62 of the Qur'an, the time of prayer is mainly after noon, and a total of 10 rakats of prayer are performed.

In Uzbekistan, it has been a tradition to perform Friday prayers in jameh mosques for many centuries. During the Soviet period, there was a restriction on the performance of Friday prayer, and it was mainly conducted only in some jameh mosques in big cities. After the independence of Uzbekistan in 1991, it was allowed to perform Friday prayer in large villages, district centers, and mosques in cities. However, during the coronavirus pandemic, more precisely, from March 16, 2020, Friday prayers were not held for 24 weeks, and since September 4, 2020, Friday prayers and lectures have been continuously held in Uzbekistan [<https://xabar.uz>].

According to the order of this prayer, every Friday, 30 minutes before the prayer, the imam gives a lecture to the community. The purpose of Friday lectures is to encourage the Muslim community to do good deeds. Lectures are devoted to various topics - from issues of sharia in Islam to family, socio-economic life, culture, education, and good manners. It is noteworthy that the lectures are organized centrally, and the theme is distributed to mosques as a thesis by the Office of Muslims of Uzbekistan a day before.

Based on the analysis of lectures given at the Friday prayers in the mosques of Uzbekistan from September 2022 to 2023, it is revealed that if the lectures given in this period are structurally analyzed, it is revealed that there were speeches on the issues of Islamic manners, culture, family, and marriage, as well as religious issues related to the wide propagation of Islam and the life of prophets. For example, in previous years, lectures such as "Zakat is a financial prayer" (08.04.2022), "Attitude towards women in Islam" (04.03.2022), "Youth is the spring of life" (18.03.2022), and "Etiquette in Islam" (28.07.2023) were given.

Since Uzbekistan is a secular country, the state is separated from religion, and religion from the state in the legislation of the country. Therefore, political processes and events are hardly discussed in Friday lectures. However, in some cases, it was witnessed that political and social processes important for the life of the country were discussed. For example, in the Friday lecture on the topic "Gratitude and the Value of Blessings" on July 6, 2023, Muslims were invited to actively participate in the Presidential elections on July 9. Thus, in Friday lectures, speeches are made on topics important for society.

In previous years, there were Friday lectures as part of family ceremonies on the topics of "May the marriage bond not be broken!" (December 12. 2020), "Family strength – the well-being of society" (January 7. 2022), "Focusing on child education, young people's attention to knowledge" (July 4. 2021), and "Family divorces are the decline of society" (June 2022). In these lectures, imams initially criticized the Soviet era and praised the wide opportunities created during the years of independence.

On January 7, 2022, at the beginning of the Friday lecture on the topic of "Family divorces are the decline of society" at Islom Ota Mosque in the Yashnabad district of Tashkent city, information was given about the necessity of marriage in Islam. Based on religious sources, the imam stated that every adult Muslim boy and girl can become a couple and live as a family through marriage. According to the leader of the Jameh Mosque, the man should take the expenses for the marriage ceremony and the next family budget on his responsibility. In particular, a Muslim husband must provide his wife with allowance, dowry, food, clothing, and housing. Moreover, they emphasized that most of the expenditure on marriage and other family ceremonies were not related to Islam and are criticized as national faults.

Islamic scholars in Uzbekistan justified the opinion that the man of the family is responsible for all expenses and, as the head of the family, all responsibility rests with him, as proven by verse 34 of Surah "Nisa" in the Holy Qur'an: "Men are the guardians of wives (as the head of the family). The reason is that Allah has made some of them (men) superior to some (women) and they spend (men on their families) from their wealth. In the Friday lectures, the imams mainly rely on the following sources:

Quran and Hadiths. The necessity of marriage for Muslims is based on the Surahs "Nisa" and "Rum" of the Holy Qur'an. In Islam, it is emphasized that marriage is a blessing and the Sunnah of the Prophet, and the

one who does not get married while he has the opportunity is not from us. These reflections entail a distinct encouragement to young people to embark on starting a family.

Religious Literature. It is popular among Uzbek imams to refer to the works of Hanafi scholars who lived in different periods of time in their Friday lectures on the issue of family and marriage. In particular, they quote from the book "Bakhtli Oila" (Happy Family) by Sheikh Muhammad Sadiq Muhammad Yusuf (1952-2015).

Statistical Materials. Friday lectures often include official statistical materials, particularly information on marriages and divorces in recent years. For example, during the 4 months of 2022, 16,216 divorces were recorded in Uzbekistan, 1,982 of which correspond to Tashkent city. It was emphasized that in 2021, 305,082 marriages were registered in Uzbekistan, while 39,207 families were broken, and this number corresponded to 13% of all the newly established families. In addition, it was indicated as evidence that divorces were often caused by different expenses.

According to Muslim leaders, it is not necessary to burden the girl's family with taxes in marriage; weddings should be conducted in an Islamic manner without extravagance. In Islam, the purpose of a wedding is, first of all, to make the marriage known to the people, not to be heard throughout the town. However, in Uzbek society, it is customary for the girl's family to spend a lot of money on the wedding ceremony, particularly to furnish the rooms given to them with furniture, carpets, curtains, and other equipment, and to provide special clothes for the groom's relatives, which are not mandated by Islam. Additionally, in the Friday lectures, it was emphasized that wearing different clothes (outer and inner) provided by the parents of their wives and using different furniture provided by their parents-in-law do not contribute to their manliness.

On January 7, 2022, during the Friday lectures at the "Moyi Mubarak" and "Ukkosha" mosques located in the Shaikhontohur district of Tashkent city, it was noted that nowadays a significant number of divorces among new families stem from materialism. Some people are not hosting wedding parties for the sake of marriage but are marrying for the sake of the ceremony itself. According to the mosque's imam, the concept of marriage is now intertwined with images of wedding halls, cars, various arrangements for the bride and groom, photo sessions in gardens and mountains, and videos. Currently, families may have a physical presence, but lack spiritual connection. Thus, there have been many reports on the expenses of family ceremonies in the Friday lectures in the last five years, and it can be observed that there have been changes in family ceremonies, especially weddings, and the expenses of the girl's family have decreased somewhat in recent years. According to observations, thanks to the lectures given by imams, in the following years, bedroom and home furniture and household appliances for young families are mainly provided by the groom's family themselves, and dowry at weddings has reduced. In addition, thanks to Friday lectures and the acquisition of Islamic knowledge by young people, the customs of having an "Aqeeqah wedding" and giving dowry to the bride after marriage are becoming popular. However, it should be noted here that today, giving expensive jewelry, a car, and a house to the future bride as a dowry, and having an "Aqeeqah wedding" with excessive expenses can also be observed.

The materials from the official channel Fatvo.uz of the Office of Muslims of Uzbekistan were used as a secondary source in the analysis of religious scholars' views on expenses for family ceremonies in Uzbekistan. It is known that the Office of Muslims of Uzbekistan has established a special website www.old.muslim.uz and the Fatvo.uz channel on social networks such as Telegram and Facebook in order to maintain close contact with the people on family issues. The Fatvo.uz telegram channel was created on January 19, 2019, for conducting online discussions of questions related to religion and life. Currently (September 18, 2023), the channel has 118,952 regular subscribers. A total of 3,019 questions were asked through the channel from 2019 to September 18, 2023, of which 355 were related to family issues, and 77 were related to weddings.

For example, regarding wedding expenses, Question 658: "I want to have a wedding according to the Sunnah, but I want it to be very simple. How should a wedding according to the Sunnah be?" the response was as follows:

"In most societies, even in non-Muslim nations, the husband hosts the wedding party. If it is suggested that 'the bride should hold the wedding ceremony,' they will certainly be astonished. Especially, 'Osh (Festive Plov) will be provided by the bride's family.' The groom's family, depending on their status, will bring up to two

hundred and fifty people, sometimes even more, to the wedding ceremony organized by the bride's family. If the bride's family doesn't welcome them properly, they will face difficulties," they don't believe it at all. "Yes, not following Sharia's instructions will eventually lead to actions that will not align with human nature."

Also, in the answer to the question stated above, as proof, it was stated that "Muhammad (PBUH) performed the marriage ceremony himself based on the circumstances of that time and instructed all men to perform marriage ceremonies."

Additionally, the question "Why is it assigned to a man to perform a wedding ceremony?" was addressed. "Firstly, a man is assigned to perform a wedding because he is the man. Indeed, the new family will be under his responsibility. The head of this family will be a man. A wedding performed by his wife is not an honor for a man, but a disgrace. Secondly, it is an honor for the groom and his family that a girl is born into her parents' home, grows up, leaves them, and her other family members, and joins a new family alone. With this, the reputation of the groom and his family in society increases, and this is due to the bride. That's why the groom's family hosts a wedding in honor of the bride." [Muhammad Sodiq Muhammad Yusuf,2023].

It can be inferred from the analysis of the questions and answers provided on the telegram channel Fatvo.uz that presently, the official Fatwa Center of the Office of Muslims of Uzbekistan is endeavoring to reduce the extravagance associated with weddings and ceremonies, aiming to lower the expenses incurred during such events. Furthermore, it is evident that people are aware of the norms and are consistently adhering to Islamic principles, with a primary focus on reducing costs, where the groom's family bears the expenses for the wedding.

With the widespread coverage of religious matters on social networks and the active engagement of young individuals, the practice of celebrating weddings and family ceremonies in accordance with Islamic customs and regulations is gaining popularity. Consequently, numerous questions and answers on this telegram channel pertain to family matters, marriage ceremonies, aqeeqah, circumcision ceremonies, and funeral rites, along with the associated expenses. The majority of channel members who actively participate on a regular basis are young people, who consider the information provided by the channel to be authoritative and worthy of adherence. Consequently, it can be observed that certain modifications have been implemented in wedding procedures within Uzbek society as a result of extensive promotion via social networks. However, concurrently, there is also a notable increase in the interest among young people in conducting Islamic weddings.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the Uzbek society, deeply rooted in tradition for centuries, has always integrated Islamic religion and rituals into its daily and ceremonial life. Recent years have seen significant transformations in these aspects, attributed to the government's liberal policies towards Islam and religious values, alongside broader political, economic, cultural, and religious reforms. With Uzbekistan's increasing engagement with the global community, coupled with enhanced religious education and media freedom, the societal landscape has evolved significantly.

One notable change has been the reduction in expenses for ceremonies, with a shift in balance between the bride and groom's families. This transformation is partly a result of active advocacy by Uzbek Muslim leaders, who have promoted frugality and streamlining of family ceremonies in their Friday lectures and across various media platforms. Consequently, certain traditional practices associated with wedding ceremonies, such as the financial burden on the bride's family, have diminished or been eliminated.

While some customs have waned in relevance, others rooted in Islamic tradition, like dowry for the bride and the "Aqeeqah" wedding for newborns, have gained popularity in certain social circles. Importantly, there has been a significant shift in attitudes towards family formation, marriage, and familial responsibilities. Today, greater emphasis is placed on youth education and career development before entering into marriage, reflecting a broader societal focus on nurturing the nation's future and the upbringing of its youth.

REFERENCES

- Abashin, S.N. (1999). Contrary to "common sense"? On the issue of "rationality/irrationality" of ritual expenses in Central Asia. *Bulletin of Eurasia*, (1-2), 6-7. (in Russian)

“What Do They Say in Mosques? Islamic Discourse on Limiting Ritual Expenses”

- Abashin, S.N. (1999). Kalym and mahr in Central Asia: peahen or ritual? About “boundaries” in social relations. Man and law. A book about the summer school in legal anthropology. Strategy, 158-264. (in Russian)
- Abdullaev, U.S. (1991). Traditional and new, general and special in the modern wedding rituals of the peoples of the Fergana Valley. Uzbekistan: pages of history, 21-34. (in Russian)
- Bell, C. (2006). Ritual theory, ritual practice. Sociology of Religion, 54(3), 321.
- Bikzhanova, M.A. (1959). Family on collective farms in Uzbekistan. Based on materials from collective farms in the Namangan region. The Science. (in Russian)
- Cholpon. (1914). Crops and farming in our homeland Turkestan. Sound of Ferghana. (in Uzbek)
- Ismoilov, H. (1992). Uzbek Weddings. Uzbekistan, 96-162.(in Uzbek)
- Kislyakov, N.A. (1967). Some marriage ceremonies among the peoples of Central Asia and problems of maternal gender. MKAEN, (7), 239-244.
- Kubakov, K. (1972). On the history of the development of the Uzbek family. Ethnographic study of the life and culture of Uzbeks. 119-127. (in Russian)
- Lobacheva, N.P. (1960). Wedding ceremony of Khorezm Uzbeks. Wedding ritual as a historical and ethnographic source (using the example of Khorezm Uzbeks. Soviet ethnography, (34), 43-45. (in Russian)
- Lobacheva, N.P. (1971). Various ritual complexes in the wedding ceremony of the peoples of Central Asia and Kazakhstan. The Science. (in Russian)
- Lobacheva, N.P. (1975). Formation of new rituals of Uzbeks. The Science. 45-68. (in Russian)
- Lobacheva, N.P. (1985). Khiva wedding. Ethnography of Tajikistan. Ethnographic review. 43. (in Russian)
- Makhsudov, D. (n.a). Makhsudov D. Building mutual trust and respect among religious organizations: the experience of Uzbekistan. (in Uzbek)
- Otamirzaeva, U. (1998). New traditions. The Science. (in Russian)
- Polyakov, S. P. (1980). Traditionalism in modern Central Asian society. (in Russian)
- Sattar, M. (1993). Uzbek traditions. The Science. 106-116. (in Uzbek)
- Sheikh Muhammad Sadiq Muhammad Yusuf. (2022). A happy family. Translator Jakhongir Dadazhanov. Hilol-nashr. 608. (in Uzbek)
- Soatova, S. (1999). Marriage ceremonies of Zarafshan Valley Uzbeks. End of XIX - beginning of XX century. Dissertation written for the degree of Candidate of Sciences in History. (in Uzbek)
- Sukhareva, O. A. (1976). Quarterly community of the late feudal city of Bukhara in connection with the history of quarters. 32. (in Russian)
- Sukhareva, O.A and Bikzhanova M.A. (1955). Past and present of the village of Aykyran. The Science. (in Russian)
- Sukhareva, O.A. (1940). Wedding ceremonies of Tajiks in Samarkand and some other regions of Central Asia. Soviet ethnography (3), 173-176. (in Russian)
- Tashbaeva, T.Kh and Savurov, M.D. (1973). New and traditional in the life of a rural Uzbek family. The Science.(in Russian)
- Wazaki, S. (2019). Marriage and Divorce among Muslims in the Former Soviet Union: The Case of Uzbekistan. Islamic Gender Studies 1 Marriage and Divorce. 83-107. (in Japanese)
- Adham ASHIROV: Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Tashkent, Uzbekistan
Corresponding Author’s Email: sirdarya2015@gmail.com adhashirov@yandex.ru.