



# RITUALS OF UZBEKS RELATED TO TRADITIONAL FARMING PRACTICES

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## ANNOTATION

*This article examines the role of agriculture in the Uzbek way of life, the history and importance of its formation, the traditions and rituals associated with agriculture on the basis of scientific literature, field research.*

**KEYWORDS:** *agriculture, Central Asia, Amudarya, agricultural cults, bird rights, "is" production, rituals, customs, traditions, goddess of fertility and Navruz.*

## INTRODUCTION

It is known that the inhabitants of the Khorezm oasis created local economic and cultural types in agriculture, adapting to natural conditions. The effects of the same natural conditions can be observed not only in agriculture, but also in the means of production, the structure of housing, the tools of labor, ethnic culture, and the types of crops. Local soil and natural-economic resources together contributed to the formation of the culture of daily life, and this process took place in a natural harmony, along with the emergence of national feelings.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

It is no coincidence that the saying "Farming in Khorezm is very difficult" is spread among the people. Because it is true that the labor required for the cultivation of agricultural products here is much higher than in other regions of the republic.

As a result of the weakness of farmers in the face of the vagaries of nature and the resulting fear of natural disasters and forces that tormented them, people sought measures to protect themselves and mitigate their negative effects, leading to a number of magical rituals related to farming. The customs and rituals associated with farming were formed on the basis of belief in the magical power of various

agrarian cults<sup>1</sup>. For this reason, many of the customs and rituals associated with farming are based on the deification of pre-Islamic natural phenomena, the worship of the gods of heaven and earth.

Researchers, historians, ethnographers and archaeologists have also achieved some scientific results in the field of ancient agriculture and related ceremonies, as well as agrarian cults<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Ashirov A. A. *Ancient beliefs and rituals of the Uzbek people ...* - B. 129

<sup>2</sup> Tolstov S.P. *In the footsteps of the ancient Khorezm civilization.* - M – L., 1948; *Along the ancient deltas of the Oks and Yaksart.* - M. : Eastern Literature, 1962; *Ancient Khorezm.* - M., 1949. Gulyamov Ya. G. *The history of irrigation of Khorezm from ancient times to the present day.* - Tashkent: Fan, 1957; Snesarev G.P. *Relics of pre-Muslim beliefs and rituals among the Uzbeks of Khorezm.* - M. : Science. 1969. - P. 142 ; *Under the sky of Khorezm.* - M., 1973; *Khorezm Legends as a Source on the History of Religious Cults in Central Asia.* - M. : Nauka, 1983

Muhammadjonov A. *Irrigation history of the Lower Zarafshan oasis.* - Tashkent, 1972

Antonova E.V. *Essays on the culture of ancient farmers of Western and Central Asia. Experience in reconstructing the perception of the world.* - M.,

Ashirov A.A. *Rituals inherited from the Avesto.* - Tashkent, 2001; *Ancient beliefs and rituals of the Uzbek people.* - Tashkent: Publishing House of the National Library of



There is so much interesting information about this that in the past, when a cow was slaughtered, it was customary to go to the slaughterhouse, take its blood, mix it with soil and pour it into the field. This ensured soil fertility in the eyes of the people. Undoubtedly, the roots of the respect of cattle as a belief in Khorezm ethnography are much deeper. Including, S. ; P. Tolstoy had convincingly proved that the bull was the totem of most Iranian tribes. In turn, it should be noted that farming is one of the oldest traditional Uzbek occupations<sup>3</sup>.

Over the centuries, unique farming traditions and rituals have been formed on the basis of experience and methods, delicate phenological observations. Religious-mythological views and rituals also played an important role in these traditions. In general, the customs and rituals associated with farming are one of the strange wonders of folk thinking. From ancient times, the Uzbek people not only followed them, but also created their own rules, prayers, sayings and signs.

Like other peoples of Central Asia, the traditional farming of the Uzbeks of the valley was based on the calendar of the peoples of the East. Spring field work, according to the local calendar, began when the new year - the transition from the sun's fish (hut) constellation to the constellation of sheep (bearer). According to the current lunar calendar, this covers the period from March 21 to April 21<sup>4</sup>. On the other hand, the first agricultural work began at the same time as the Navruz celebrations.

Navruz has played an important role in the activities of farmers. Because, as mentioned above, these are the days when poisoning, field and garden work began. Farmers, gardeners and herdsman survived the frosty days, eagerly awaited the warm days of spring and made serious preparations for large-scale farming. The plows and yokes were adjusted, the thrones were adjusted, the horses were cooled, the carts were repaired and put into operation. The bulls, the main labor force, were well cared for and plowed. That is why in the Middle Ages in Bukhara this agricultural holiday was called "Navruz kishavarzon" - "farmers' holiday"<sup>5</sup>. Hardworking

farmers planted their first seeds in the fields on this very day. Andijan Uzbeks are told to start spring plowing on Saturday<sup>6</sup>. Among Khorezm Uzbeks, plowing on Mondays and Wednesdays is a good practice for a good harvest. Other days of the week, this activity is prohibited as driving is considered inappropriate. The earth was driven north during the day and south at night.<sup>7</sup>

Among the Uzbek mangits in Khorezm, when the first crop was sown in the spring, the horns of oxen were anointed as "for the sake of man"<sup>8</sup>. Among the Uzbek mangits of Khorezm, when sowing the first crop in the spring, the horns of oxen were anointed "for the sake of man"<sup>9</sup>. According to the elders, this magic embodied the magical intention of a bull, whose horns were oiled and strong, to work tirelessly all year round.

Etnographer G.P. According to Snesarev, farmers living in the Khanka district of Khorezm region scatter a handful of wheat in the fields<sup>10</sup>. Because *jiida* symbolized prosperity and fertility. Farmers in Bukhara deliberately took back some of the grain they had brought for planting. It was believed that only if this was done, the farmer's livelihood would be blessed throughout the year<sup>11</sup>.

In general, the ceremonies called "Double production", "Horn oils", "Double oyster" were the first working day of the farmers at the beginning of the year, so they tried to greet it as cheerfully as possible.

The original manifestations of the archaic beliefs associated with the first twin ceremonies have largely been forgotten to this day. However, some archeological monuments and rock paintings allow us to talk about the historical basis of ancient religious and agrarian rituals.

Folklorist scientist M. Juraev also connects these plates with the ancient peasants' tradition of laying the first twigs in the ground in early spring, which can be a rare source for determining the historical and genetic basis of the "horn oils" preserved in the genres of Uzbek ceremonial folklore. He also noted that the "sun man" in this picture, which depicts the first double ceremony, represents a new and old year, each consisting of twelve months

*Uzbekistan named after Alisher Navoi, 2007; Isoqov Z. Fergana Valley is a traditional agricultural culture. - Tashkent: New edition, 2011*

<sup>3</sup> Tolstov S.P. *Ancient Khorezm ... - pp. 282-341; Remnants of totemism and dual organization among the Turkmens // PIDO. - 1935. - No. 9-10. - S. 3-41.*

<sup>4</sup> Kislyakov N.A. *Ancient methods of agricultural techniques and ceremonies associated with agriculture among the Tajiks of the Khingou river basin // SE. - 1947. - No. 1. - P. 21, Narzikulov A. Farmer's calendar. - T.: Mehnat, 1991. - B. 7-11.*

<sup>5</sup> See Narshakhi. *History of Bukhara. - T., 1966. - B. 24..*

<sup>6</sup> *Field records. Bulakbashi district of Andijan region, 2004.*

<sup>7</sup> Leonid Pavlovic Potapov *Materialien zur Kulturgeschichte der Uzbeken ... - P. 74.*

<sup>8</sup> Leonid Pavlovic Potapovs *Materialien zur Kulturgeschichte der Uzbeken ... - P. 32.*

<sup>9</sup> *Field records. Konibodom district of the Sughd region of the Republic of Tajikistan. 2004.*

<sup>10</sup> Snesarev G.P. *Relics of pre-Muslim beliefs and rituals among the Uzbeks of Khorezm... - C. 126*

<sup>11</sup> Jo'raev M. *In the system of Uzbek folk agrarian ceremonies "horn oils" ... - B. 86.*



(the number of rays radiating from the head of the "sun man" is also twelve)<sup>12</sup>.

According to the Avesta, whoever sows wheat sows Asha (truth). He makes the Mazda religion green again and again. He makes the religion of Mazda as powerful as it is supported by hundreds of praises, vows and tens of thousands of sacrifices. When the seeds are sown in the fields, the giants jump out of their places. When the wheat sprouts and sprouts, the giants begin to tremble with terror. When there is wheat flour, the giants moan. When the wheat falls into the threshing floor, the giants perish. In any house where the wheat grows, the giants cannot approach that house. Wherever the head of wheat grows in the house, the giants move away from that house. If there is a barn in any house, it is as if the heated iron giants are scratching their necks<sup>13</sup>. It seems that at the time of the emergence of the Avesta, the cultivation of grain, the cultivation of grain, in general, the culture of farming was sufficiently developed, and some of their appearance reached the twentieth century.

In addition, we observe that the people of the oasis still have a special respect for land, grain and bread in their views and rituals related to the traditional way of life in various customs and rituals. Of course, farming ceremonies are also held in other seasons.

When water comes to the canals in early spring, the Uzbeks of the Khorezm oasis perform a salt-throwing ceremony. According to informants, such an event will be held in the sense that "our agriculture will be abundant, our food will be more"<sup>14</sup>. Khorezm farmers, on the other hand, do not start farming when it is time to add salt to the canals. Before sowing, they slaughter a ram at the head of the field, cook shavla, and receive a white blessing from the elders, after which they start working<sup>15</sup>.

There is a perception among the Uzbeks of the Khorezm oasis that such blessings as wheat, apples, melons and figs came from heaven. Therefore, these grains and fruits have always been revered, especially among the people, sprinkling wheat on the ground was considered one of the best deeds, and accordingly, trampling the fields where wheat was planted was considered a sin.

The Avesta pays special attention to the planting of wheat, its sprouting or ripening, and the making of flour from wheat, so that in these processes the giants are completely destroyed, and

the religion of Mazda is considered to be extremely powerful<sup>16</sup>. Apparently, some of the agricultural rituals described in the Avesta have survived to the present day.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Uzbeks sometimes had a low level of crop development, low yields, and this situation was repeated 2-3 times in a row. Fields that did not grow or produce low yields were called "land bitten by a dog" (meaning "demon-possessed") and "cursed by God."<sup>17</sup>

Usually, the farmers held a ceremony called "Haqullo" after harvesting the harvest. In this case, the owner of the chash received a handful of wheat or barley from the crop grown from east to west - towards the qibla. It was considered a godsend (haqullo<sup>18</sup>) and given to orphans, low-income people, and the homeless. Also, according to another custom, the owner of the threshing floor sprinkled a handful of grain around the threshing floor as a fee for the birds. G.P. Snesarev writes that the purpose of this custom was to nourish and rejoice the spirits of ancestors who flew in the form of birds<sup>19</sup>. We do not completely reject this view, but point out that it is only after this custom has been fulfilled that the harvest is allowed to be taken by the owner and others. That is, the specific taboo on this product has been removed. So, at the heart of this ritual, along with nourishing the spirit of the ancestors, is the idea of removing the symbolic taboo imposed on the harvest. It was after the "haqullo" that local government officials (aksakals and mirabs) and village mullahs, as well as barbers, blacksmiths, butchers, tanners, and herdsmen, were imprisoned.

## CONCLUSION

In short, the Uzbek people have preserved many archaic appearances and magical practices in the rituals and customs associated with traditional farming practices. We have also observed that traces of the cult of nature, which die and resurrect in agricultural traditions, arrive, albeit in the form of a residual appearance, and are often carried out in a syncretic state with Islamic views. In general, the main purpose of farming customs and traditions based on ancient religious and mythological notions is to cultivate a bountiful harvest and harvest it without destroying it. Undoubtedly, the famous ethnographer G.P. According to Snesarev, "the cult of productivity has developed and become more

<sup>12</sup> Jo'raev M. In the system of Uzbek folk agrarian ceremonies "horn oils" ... - B. 87..

<sup>13</sup> Translation of Avesto / Askar Mahkam ... - B. 115.

<sup>14</sup> Field records. Mukhomon village of Hazarasp district of Khorezm region. 2020.

<sup>15</sup> Field records. Beshmergan village of Shovot district of Khorezm region and Dashyak village of Khiva district of Khorezm region. 2019..

<sup>16</sup> Translation of Avesto / Askar Mahkam ... - B. 115..

<sup>17</sup> Ashirov A. A. Ancient beliefs and ceremonies of the Uzbek people .... - B. 141.

<sup>18</sup> Shaniyazov K. On the ethnic history of the Uzbek people .. - P. 57..

<sup>19</sup> Snesarev G.P. Relics of pre-Muslim beliefs and rituals among the Uzbeks of Khorezm .. - p. 114.



complex in sync with the development of production and social relations. The ancient independent, universal form of religion, which later became an integral part of secular religions <sup>20</sup>, our field materials fully confirm.

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<sup>20</sup> *Snesarev G.P. Relics of pre-Muslim beliefs and rituals among the Uzbeks of Khorezm .. - p. 186-188.*