



THE CEREMONIES HELD WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN AND THE INSTITUTE OF OTINOYIS (WOMEN TEACHERS WHO RUN A SCHOOL IN THEIR HOME)

(In the Example of Fergana valley)

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ABSTRACT

In this scientific article the religion of Islam and the role of Islamic traditions in the life of Uzbek women during the XX century and the traditionality and modernization processes, "public Islam" in the family traditions and their factors of modernization, the position of women in Islam religion and their role in the socio-political life of the society, the origin of the ceremonies held with the participation of women, its syncretism with the beliefs up to the Islam and the religion of Islam, the institute of "otinoyi" (a woman who reads mystic poetry at gatherings /a woman teacher who runs a school in her home) in the ceremonies held with the participation of otinoyis and its functions, activity and role in the religious-social life have taken place.

KEY WORDS: *Islam, Islam and woman, Islamic tradition, traditionality and the processes of modernization, ceremony, religious beliefs up to Islam, otinoyi, Bibiseshanba (patron saint of thread spinners for whom women perform a special ceremony on Tuesdays), Bibimushkulkushod.*

INTRODUCTION

From the XX century the changes of political and ideological systems and rapidness of cultural relationships all over the world, the changes of the thoughts about woman and society, woman and religion, woman and family and the religion of Islam in the life of women and its modernization* showed that studying this problem from the anthropologic aspect was very actual.

*Modernization – by the concept of modernization originated in the XVI century in Western Europe, firstly, the complex progressive changes in the society: the changes in the social, political, economical, cultural and religious-moral life are understood, secondly, the transformation into social system highly differentiated based on machine technologies from the society based of traditional hand labour, thirdly, the weak countries increase their industry in order to reach the developed countries are understood.

A woman takes an important place in Islam. It is suggested that women should be considered to be as a property which is valued and preserved, preserving her, respecting her, being in a careful relationship with her, caring her is one of the main instructions in Islam. The life of women living in Uzbekistan in the XX century was connected with different customs and ceremonies directly related to the religion of Islam, the main part of them were aimed to solve the problems in the family and social life. Particularly, the role of otinoyis was great in holding the ceremonies such as "Guli armugan", "Bibiseshanba", "Bibimushkulkushod", "Ashuro", "Mavlud" in Fergana valley. Therefore we tried to give analysing information about the local features of the special ceremonies held with the participation of women in Fergana valley and the functions of the otinoyis as leaders in these ceremonies and the changes happened under the influence of modern processes on the basis of ethnographic materials.



METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH

In the article ethnographic observation, individual interview, survey which are widely spread in ethnologic and anthropologic researches as well as comparative analysis methods were used in order to study different historical periods of time.

Every ceremony which is held with participation of women has their own certain features and characteristics. In this place, in performing these ceremonies the role of otinoyis and the institute of otinoyis is of great importance. That's why studying the activity of otinoyis is one of the actual problems.

MAIN PART. SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT THE INSTITUTE OF OTINOYIS (WOMEN TEACHERS).

The institute of otinoyis were particular only to Central Asia among the Muslim countries. Because of the historical condition, among the countries of the region after gaining the national independence the increase of religious self-consciousness, thirsty for Islamic knowledge completely emphasized the social necessity for the activity of otinoyis among the women. [2, p. 94].

The term "otinoyi" (a woman who reads mystic poetry at gatherings/ a woman teacher who runs a school at her home) is referred with different names in different territories of Uzbekistan, particularly, *otinoyi*, *otincha* (in Andijan), *bibi-mulla*, *bibi-otin*, *otin-bibi* (in Bukhara, Surkhandarya, Kashkadarya and Jizzakh), in Samarkand and its surroundings as *bikhalfa* [1, p. 345]. Among the population of Fergana valley otinoyi is referred as a woman who performs a religious ceremony mainly among the women and gives religious education to them and advices correctly. [3]. Moreover, otinoyi is considered by the local women to be the women who are model to others, good-behaved, educated, basically, able to read the religious sources correctly [4].

In the encyclopedic dictionaries related to Islam it is noted as "otin – is a women's teacher in old religious schools, a leader in the religious ceremonies among the women, a woman who lives for the profit from the ceremonies"[5, p. 144].

As the researcher Marianna Camp wrote, the activity of otinoyi is very important that she has taken the highest position in the religious hierarchy of Muslim women [6]. Furthermore, otinoyi is the only source and "position" which is allowed to get religious knowledge in the Muslim religious hierarchy and a performer of religious ceremonies[7, p. 108].

During the XX century in the time of the Soviet union in Turkistan a severe struggle against

otin (pl. *woman teacher (at home, of traditional subjects); woman who reads mystic poetry at gatherings; (coll.) any educated woman or woman teacher; epithet attached to names of educated or distinguished women*) and their activity, as well as old style of teaching and religious ceremonies [8, p.130].

At the end of the 30s of the XX century as a result of the complete change of the education system the activity of the old and jaded schools was completely finished [9, p.386] and the old Uzbek (Arabic) writing gradually began to be forgotten after the new reformation of the government about transforming into Cyrillic writing [9, P. 393]. This policy, of course affected on the education of otinoyis and the activity of educating the girls and as a result reading and writing in Arabic script, generally, religious education became hidden.

In addition, the knowledge of the otinoyis in this period of time got rather shallower than those of the beginning of the XIX century [10]. In the consequence, the groups approaching differently to the certain questions began to appear among the otinoyis too.

On the basis of the materials gathered during the ethnological investigations around Fergana valley the otinoyis can be divided into the following groups:

1) the otinoyis who secretly took an education in time of the Soviet system and are the performers of the ceremonies of Bibisheshanba and Bibimushkulkushod, and should be given fees for prayers or incantations;

2) the otinoyis who have deep Islamic knowledge in Arabic language and explain the Kuran, are against the ceremonies like Bibisheshanba and Bibimushkulkushod considering them as the ceremonies breaking the Islam religion and against sharia, as well as, those who are in the opinion that shouldn't take fees paid for prayers or incantations;

3) the otinoyis who can explain the Kuran and consider the mothers of Bibisheshanba and Bibimushkulkushod as the esteemed ones whose prayers are accepted and ask Allah to forgive the sins by them and hold the ceremonies and think they should be paid fees for prayers or incantations.

Actually, the activity of otinoyi theoretically was to give education and knowledge, whereas practically their activity was performing or conducting the ceremonies in which women take part in. in Fergana valley too otinoyis were the leaders of the ceremonies of Mavlud, Bibi Seshanba and Bibi Mushkulkushod, mainly.

In Fergana valley the activity of otinoyis nearly didn't differentiate in villages and cities. Popularity and reputation of the otinoyi among the population firstly depended on her knowledge,



religiousness and personal services and origin as well. Besides, sometimes the reputation of the otinoyis who got married and never had children and devoted themselves to the service of Allah was very high, later after their death their graves became popular among the women as the sacred shrines [11, p.136].

Some local otinoyis in the valley deal with treating women, they use Islamic magic and practice of shamanism in their activities. In some cases otinoyis differentiate from healers and shamans only by their ability of reading Arabic. For example, one of the popular otinoyis in Kokand city of Fergana valley is very famous among the population for her ability of treating the patients by “reading” and solving the family problems [12].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

At the beginning of the XX century the otinoyis of the great generation left their knowledge to the otins of the next generation as a heritage, in 1980-1990s there appeared a situation that any woman who could read Arabic without translation by finishing a two-year-course in madrasahs and at otinoyis’ homes and learned how to conduct one or two religious-family ceremonies, no matter of their origin could become an otin (a woman who reads mystic poetry at gatherings /a woman teacher who runs a school in her home). In general, it wouldn’t be an exaggeration to say that in the last quarter of the XX century the main function of the otinoyis was to solve the family problems.

The ceremonies, which are collectively held in the participation of women, can be conditionally divided into official Islamic (Mavlud, Ashuro) ceremonies and “Public Islam” ceremonies that’s, religious ceremonies (bibishesanba, bibimushkulkushod, guli armugan) related to family life and held in the participation of women.

One of the official Islamic ceremonies which is held in the participation of women is Mavlud (feast celebration of prophet Muhammad’s (SAV) birthday). This ceremony is a special religious ceremony dedicated to the birthday of the prophet Muhammad (SAV). The word “Mavlud” was originally taken from the Arabic, means “birth”, “birthday”, “a newly born baby”. In the valley Mavlud was considered to be a religious ceremony mainly related to the birthday and month of the Prophet. According to the fatvo (a legan sentence or opinion pronounced by a mufti) of 1984, the name of the book “Mavliidi nabaviy”, which was written in Turkic language, was not written correctly, it was wrongly phrased as “Mavludun nabiy”. It means “prophet’s child”. The original name of the book

should have been “Mavludun nabiy” that’s, “Prophet’s birthday” [14, p. 5].

At the end of the XIX century and the beginning of the XX century Langariy, the master (teacher) of Khilvatiy who was the contemporary of the poets such as Mukimiy, Furkat and Zavkiy, gave his apprentice a task to write such a book. This work was called “Mavludu-n nabiy”, or “Mavludi sharif turkiy” and published at lithography of Gulom Hasan Orifjonov in the years of 1908, 1911, 1912, 1916 [15, p. 4].

After the Independence this work began to be republished again. Khayrulla Kosim Elturk copied this work from the Arabic to the Cyrillic and published it in 1991 [15, p. 72].

The ceremony of Mavlud was not commonly celebrated during the 4 centuries after the death of our prophet. This ceremony was first held only by the imams of Shia in the XI century and they didn’t involve the public in it [17, p.3]. Mainly, Fotimiy Shias in Egypt celebrated this ceremony [18, p.]. in the ceremony there prepared sacrifices and great parties, and presents and gifts were given to the participants. [19, p. 216]. Later, at the beginning of the XIII century the ceremony of mavlud began to be held by the Sunni (orthodox Muslim) rulers too. It was first carried out by Muzaffariddin who was the ruler of Iraq at that time. He celebrated mavlud as a big public feast in 1207 [19, p. 216]. Shaykh Muhammad Zakiy Ibrakhim gave the following information about it in his work “Abjadiyatut tasavvufil islamiy”: «it was Malik Muzaffar (Togril) the king of Ibril in Iraq who firstly celebrated Mavlud an-nabiy. He did it by the permission of imam Abu Shoma and other (Muslim) scholars (theologians)». Such kind of information is met in the works of other scholars too. Particularly, al-Khofiz as-Sakhaviy too noted in his work “Legal sentences” that the ceremony of mavlud was firstly held by Abu Sa’id Kavkabri ibn Zaynuddin Ali ibn Baktakin (549-630/1153-1232) the governor of Ibril province of Iraq at the beginning of the VII century. Also, according to the information given by Khofiz Jaloliddin Suyuti (849-911/1445-1505) «It was Malik Muzaffariddin the head of Ibril who organized the ceremony of mavlud firstly» [20, p. 78].

Mavlud is one of the important elements of women’s religious practice, in the period of time until the Soviet mavlud was a special ceremony for the men and women who had chosen the way of Sufi. [21, p. 73]. Later everybody who wanted to finish the religious ceremony began to participate in it and the form of the ceremony got strict. Although the birthday of our Prophet (S.A.V.) was on the 12 th day of the month rabiul-avval, mavlud was held by the women during the whole month.



In the time of the Soviet, oppositions to conduct such ceremonies increased and the religious office of Muslims of Central Asia which was founded in 1943 and all the special decisions, additional legal sentences by muftis and instructions of the governments and parties on struggling against traditional ceremonies (telling by the ugly phrase of that time “leftovers of the past”), particularly, celebrating Mavlud, Iyd at homes (especially in otinoyis’ gatherings), reading local traditional religious texts: such as Bibi Mushkulkushod, Bibi Seshanba, Hatmi yozdahum at the nonofficial mosques was against sharia in the journal “Soviet East Muslims” created under it in 1947 [22, p.36]. But the gathered field materials confirm too that it couldn’t prevent from performing mavlud and other religious ceremonies.

THE ORDER OF HOLDING THE CEREMONY OF MAVLUD

In Fergana valley the ceremony of mavlud begins in the first part of the day. But in the last time holding the ceremony of mavlud after sundown has become a tradition. The reason why is that in the afternoon the participants have their study. About 20 women comprised of relatives and neighbours participate in the gathering. By the time mavlud begins they set the table and women have meals. The otin who reads mavlud sits together with the women too. Different fruits and bounties are served on the table, a special tray is put in front of the otinoyi. On it there is a package of tea, a saucer with candies, salt, candle, wild rue, and raisins, sweets and bread on it too. It is believed that during the ceremony its blessings will pass to all these things. Mavlud begins with reciting the Kur’an, supplications and praises to Allah. The otin wishes blessings to the family, recites the Kur’an and remembers the ancestors. Then mavludi sharif is read for about an hour or so. Mavludi sharif is a book above mentioned, it’s the most ceremonial part and culmination point is the story about the birth of the Prophet. When reciting “Our Prophet was born” everybody stands up and says “Marhabo” (Welcome).

Reciting continues, different scenes about the life of our Prophet are told in the text. His miracles and good works are paid special attention. During the recite otin “blows on” the food on the tray with the prayer beads at her hand. The tray is given back to the family owners. The housewife brings in another tray. On it there has been put the fee for otin’s service. The tray goes round the circle and every woman puts some money on it and then the tray is passed to the otin. Besides that the housewife gives a parcel of sweets and other things and she leaves the gathering. In some homes the otin is

limited not only with the book, but also gives the women some talks too.

After mavlud guesing continues again as usual. When the ceremony finishes and all the women goes back to their houses they are given a loaf of bread and some sweets on the tray. The women take them to their houses and family members hoping the blessings of the mavludi sharif (ceremony). They thank to the house owners for their charity and wish Allah should accept their good deeds.

It is mentioned in the opinions of the reporters [3] and in the scientific literatures that Mavlud is bigger and more important than Mushkulkushod and bibi Seshanba ceremonies with its position and commonness [24, p. 64]. Such customs and traditions are widespread everywhere and it wouldn’t be wrong to say that it is becoming a form of common communication of women. Because, mavlud enables to give women religious education as well as “finding spiritual relax too and moreover, it is becoming another way of communication, informing each other about the news and discussing daily problems too”[21, p. 80].

Another Islamic ceremony which is held with the participation of women is Ashuro. The term Ashuro was taken from the Arabic word “ashara” and means “a ten day”. [24, p. 50]. According to the legends, on the tenth day of the month muharram* (the first month of the Arabic lunar calendar) imam Khusayn the son of Ali died in the battle in Karbalo desert in Iraq. At this time every year Shias go into mourning for him for ten days, go out the streets and cry saying “King Khusayn, oh Khusayn” (in literatures “shakhsey-vakhsey”). Under the influence of Shias the Sunnis also make ashur meal. This ceremony is mainly held by the women [5, p. 48].

Among the people of centralAsia too because of the influence of Shias on Sufi islam way in the month of muharram every year in Fergana valley, Tashkent, Bukhara and Samarkand it was held commonly until 1929 [25, -pp.36-38]. Besides, in India, Indonesia and Dekan belonging to Shofi sect of Islam there is a cult of “Hasan and Khuseyn”.

In Iranian Shias the ceremony of Ashuro was banned in 1926, but it was widespread and holding in two months (muharram and safar) became tradition [26, p. 24], in Fergana valley we can see that this ceremony was not quite widespread. After 1929 holding this ceremony was legally banned and began to hold it secretly at homes. As the reporters mention, the ceremony of ashuro is held according to the advice of otinoyi when there is a funeral at home

*the month of Muharram” is an Arabic word, the first month of the Muslim lunar calendar.



or in case of moving in another home in the month of muharram. In Fergana valley the ceremony of Ashuro differing from Bukhara is held in the afternoon by the women under the leadership of otinoyi [27].

Certain orders are followed in the ceremony of Ashuro and the women may not participate in the ceremony for some reasons, for example if they are ill or have a baby [28]. In Bukhara the ceremony of Ashuro begins in the morning and lasts until the evening. The ceremony is held with praises, eulogies of the Prophet and his generations (particularly, poetic calls for Imam Husayn) the Bukharians sing in a poetic way in Persian and the Samarkandians do in the Ozor language. In the ceremony the surahs of Kur'an, Imam Husayn's tragic fate were read to the participants from the religious books by mullas and otinoyis (oymullas).

Also, those whose wishes, made in this ceremony, came true later brought some money and other things they could afford.

In Fergana valley men never participate at all in the ceremony of Ashuro and women gather and read the Turkic version of the book of Ashuro. And in this ceremony a special ceremonial meal is not cooked and an optional meal cooked by the housewife is called "Ashurlik oshi" (the meal of Ashuro) and is served for the participants of the ceremony. At the end of the ceremony Kur'an is recited and the ceremony is finished [3].

It was noted by the reporters that weeping in the ceremony of Ashuro had been only in the 70s of the XX century and nowadays it has been lost [3]. The main purpose of participating in this ceremony is to go to the heaven and expiate of one's sin. In general, it wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that the ceremony of Ashuro held in Fergana valley is a particular "Charity" ceremony. Because, that this ceremony is not widespread, and not compulsory, is only held intentionally to solve a certain family need or problem positively according to the advice of otinoyi proves our idea.

One of the ceremonies held with the participation of women is Bibiseshanba, mainly, it is held under the leadership of otinoyis. This ceremony is widespread among the most Turkic nations, it is valued in Turkistan region as Bibi Seyshanba, in Turkish of Turkey as Peyshanbe – qori (one who memorized the Kur'an) or Parshamba pari, in Iran as houri and Bibi Nur, Afghans valued it as bibi Pisinda, Bibi Charkhi, and Uyghurs as Seshamba Bibi [29, p. 10].

The ceremony of Bibiseshanba is celebrated on Tuesdays in Fergana valley and a party is given in honour of it. As the Russian ethnologist O. Gorshunova noted, Bibi seshanba, Seshanba mother is a saint (mother) that women pray for in Islam

religion, the religious women pray for Bibi seshanba. Its name is connected with the name of a legendary woman [30, pp. 42-45]. Some authors say that "Bibi mushkulkushod" and "Bibiseshanba" personages are connected with Sufism, especially with the name of Muhammad Bakhouddin Nakshband [31, p. 14].

According to a famous ethnographer O.A. Sukhareva's opinion, "Islam mythology" about Bibiseshanba and Bibimushkulkushod is based on the religious beliefs up to Islam, the cult of these two women was Islamized and raised to the degree of saint. Also, Bibiseshanba is considered to be the patron of family happiness, thread spinning and knitting [31, p. 173].

The ceremony of "Bibiseshanba" is mainly held in order to celebrate the marriage of the girls and provide them with happy life [3].

There are distinctive ethnocultural features of "Bibiseshanba" ceremony in Fergana valley. Particularly, in the valley in the Bibiseshanba ceremony mainly from the food such as umoch oshi*, seven chalpak (deep fried flat cake), two candles, seven loaves of bread, a small loaf of bread, seven chavati (flat, layered fried bread without oil) first and second* meals are prepared. The reporters explain the reason why the number of the special meals in the ceremony is seven or three (In Kokand three chavati is prepared) that they were three sisters [3]. As a ceremonial food umoch oshi* is mainly made on Tuesdays and Wednesdays and only women take part in preparing it.

In Andijan region before cooking the ceremonial food on Tuesday the woman who intended to hold the ceremony of "Bibi seshanba" gathers a bowl of flour from the seven houses each in the neighbourhood (not passing through the entrance of the house asked) hiding her face with white shawl. According to the data taken from the investigations, hiding their faces of the women is connected with the girl in the story shouldn't be recognized by anybody. In our opinion, the main reason for not passing through the entrance of the house is that the nations of the east considered the threshold (entrance) of the house to be valued from the ancient times and the products such as flour, milk, salt which are given from the house are the symbols of the subsistence of the house, it was greatly paid attention that this

* when the dough is elevated through the elevator, it goes through like wheat, then it is boiled in milk, a little salt is added. It is called umoch oshi.

* the second meal is optional. It depends on the endeavour of the house keeper.

* in Kipchaks living in Yangikurgan district of Namangan region it is called "atala" (porridge-like food made from flour).



subsistence must not go into another house so that it was given on the entrance.

In Fergana valley they don't ask for flour from the neighbours and they put flour on four dishes in the four corners of their house, and make dough putting it into water, in Bukhara umoch (porridge-like food made from flour) is made by adding basil water [33, p. 25]. Adding basil water, in our opinion, is to add a lovely smell to the meal, it is believed to be the smell of the heaven and perhaps it may be to get more rewards in heaven.

As the reporters noted, using mainly flour in preparing the food for the ceremony is explained that angles prefer dough meals more and by this more rewards will go to the spirits.

One of the main symbols of Bibi Seshanba ceremony is supra (a leather mat used for making dough upon). Supra is a special mat used for elevating flour, making dough, flattening and rolling the dough that there are a number of superstitions related to it in the ceremony of bibi seshanba.

During the ceremony the supra is opened in the participation of the participants or together with 3-4 women making a wish three times*. Only widows and girls sit around the supra together with otinoyi and then special meals of the ceremony are brought in.

The number of the women participating in the ceremony is not limited in Fergana valley, but there must be 3 or 5 widows. The main part of the ceremony begins after the first meal.

As it is mentioned in some religious sources that this ceremony does not exist in Islam, asking for support from the spirit of sehanba mother and asking for one's needs is against Allah [34, p. 5]. Furthermore, in Kur'an, hadiths and other legal sentences of the scholars of Islam preparation of the meals for the ceremony in different superstitious ways, wasting, sacrificing for the spirit of any saint or his grave and cooking a meal are noted as against Islam and canonically unclean (not halal). Also, in the journal *Al-Isloh* such kind of ceremonies are mentioned that they are not proven by sharia [35, -pp. 393-395]. But in our opinion, the reason for this ceremony is keeping its living must be its connection with Sufism and the varieties of the otinoyis' opinions about this ceremony. Moreover, after the independence the restoration of the national-religious

*in the first time it is opened wishing "May it be success to our work, be lucky, May it give my happiness". In the second time wishing Bibi seshanba mother would support, open my ways, and in the next time wishing Bibi seshanba mother would take all the difficulties and give easiness.

traditions and the strong spiritual need for them are causing these ceremonies to be widely held.

Another ceremony which is held with the participation of women is Bibi mushkulkushod. "Bibimushkulkushod" was held mainly on Wednesdays in Uzbek families before an important event, different weddings, when a baby was born, when the family had any sort of trouble or someone became ill in order to overcome soon [31, p. 14].

The real name of Bibi Mushkulkushod mother is Bibi Musallamkhon, among the people she is called Bibi Chorshanba too. The ceremony of Bibi mushkulkushod is not held on Wednesdays everywhere in Fergana valley. For example, it proves our ideas that in Buvayda district and Kokand city of Fergana valley this ceremony is held on Tuesdays[27].

It is more popular among the women and the its agitators are called "bib khalfa"[36, p. 59] and Bibi Mushkulkushod is the saint who relieves the difficulties.

It can be said that during the XX century the order and feature of holding the ceremony of "Mushkulkushod" nearly did not change. For example, in Fergana valley from 1975-85 to 1990s old otinoyis were invited to homes and they read. The ceremony lasted for about 1,5-2 hours. The guests took from the food on the table to their homes too. But since the end of the 90s taking the things necessary for mushkulkushod to otinoyis' homes has become a wide tradition. It is obvious that the ceremony of Mushkulkushod is being held with less expense. [3].

For this ceremony mainly 2 loaves of bread, some raisins, salt, 2 candles, umoch oshi, chalpak (deep fried flat cake) were needed and an otinoyi was invited.

Mushkulkushod was held in the second half of the day after Bibisheshanba ceremony which was held on Tuesdays in Buralik village of Oltiariq district, Buvimozor village of Buvayda district and Kokand city of Fergana valley. As the reporters mentioned, because the second half of Tuesday is Wednesday "Bibi sheshanba" ceremony is held together with "Mushkulkushod" ceremony [27]. The number of the invited guests to the ceremony was 10-15, and even it reached to 30 people.

This ceremony is held on Wednesdays in Andijan region. According to the information given by the local otinoyis, it is not necessary to bring salt, wild rue, candle, bread, raisins, cotton and a little sum of money and to cook chalpak six times to the houses of otinoyis. Otinoyi reads the story taking ablutions and prays asking for the relief of the difficulties of the woman who brings the things. After that in the seventh time that woman invites 5-6 other women



together with the otinoyi to hold the ceremony before the wedding. Together with the necessary things for the ceremony the housekeeper prepares one or two meals. And otin sits with a plain colorful shawl round her head and a white shawl under it, that's why she can be distinguished easily from other guests. The things brought by the participant women are put on the table too. By the time all the guests arrive a cup of tea is drunk and after they greet each other the first meal is served. After that, the stories of Mushkulkushod are read. Before they certainly lighted a candle before reading the story, after the independence, it is being observed that a candle is not lighted and the otinoyis is trying not to read the story. We took such information that if there are any elderly women among the women participating in the ceremony, otinoyis are made to tell the story by being told "Why don't you tell the story that our grandmothers have been telling". So, the housekeeper or the elderly women are made to light the candle as it was done by the ancestors, having finished the story the otinoyis are switching the candle off when reading the Kur'an. According to our observations, lately, most otinoyis go to hold the ceremony thinking that they are going to a charity given for the sake of Allah [27].

According to the tradition, the participants also voiceless repeat the salavat that otinoyi recites and wrap the stick of the raisins into the cotton. When the reading begins the participants put some money in the middle wishing "May my difficulties be relieved and soved". The otinoyi takes everybody's wrapped cotton and prays asking for the relief of the difficulties of all the participants. Then each woman eats 7 raisins with chalpak (deep fried flat cake) telling good wishes.

Otinoyi tells the housekeeper to throw the cotton into the water of mill or flowing water reading the surah "Ikhlās" from deep heart and asking Allah for her wishes. The reason for throwing into water is that in the story too it was given as into the water of mill, in other words, water is one of the pure elements, after the profession of faith is said it should be thrown into pure water, of course. Some reports informed that because it is sweet, the fish in the water eat it and pray.

The length of the ceremony is two hours in general. After the reading finishes the second meal is served, the participant women take some raisins, chalpak and bread to their houses too. The housekeep gives the otinoyi a piece of cloth she intended and the other women sometimes a shawl (if moved in a new house) or a towel. Everybody can eat the food of Mushkulkushod ceremony.

A ceremonial holiday which is held with the participation of women is "Guli armugan". One of

the holidays of flowers included in the spring holidays and not met in other places of the republic [39, -pp.57-62] "Guli armugan"* is held at the shrine of Dusti Hudo pirim* in the village of Burbalik in Oltiark district of Fergana valley and according to the early or late arrival of the spring and the opening of the flower* it is held in a ceremonial way at the end of march and the beginning of April every year.

There are different local legends and stories about Armugan flower*, because of using it for solving different problems it honoured. Moreover, in the sources related to the religion of Islam there is no information about honouring any sort of flower, the reason for honouring this flower by the population may be because it was brought from Arabia.

That the participation of women only in the ceremony of armugan guli, according to the reporters' opinion, is firstly the comparison of the flower to a woman and the opening of this flower was firstly seen by a women is shown as the reason[3].

3-4 days before the armugan flower opens the organizers of the ceremony announce the people of the village about the beginning of the ceremony and gather some money or food for the ceremony from the people optionally.

A sheep is bought from the account of the fund gathered for the ceremony and sacrificed, and a special dishes are made from the gathered products. The food of the ceremony, is often eaten not for supplying the biological need of man, but as a food protecting from disasters, demons and jinns or as a ceremonial sacrifice.

In the ceremony the surahs "Fatiha", "Taborak", "Yasin" are read by the otinoyis. The participant women repeat the words (salavat)

*Guli armugan" is the name of the flower in Tajik, it is called "arguvan guli" in Uzbek.

*The mosque of Dusti Hudo, an architectural monument in Fergana was built under the leadership of the master Yokub by the order of the local eshan Alikhan at the beginning of the XX century. It is situated in the northern part of Khalfa tillo complex. The mosque is magnificently decorated with national decorations.

*the wild type of armugan flower growing in the Kurama and Ugom mountains opens at the beginning of April, in Russian Federation it opens in May.

* the place of "Guli armugan" ceremony is connected with the sacred gravesite of Dusti Hudo pirim, this flower was brought from Arabia by this man. Field notes. Fergana valley. Oltiariq district. Burbalik village. Khabibullaeva Ugilkhan. A woman in charge of setting tables and greeting the guests at banquets. 2008.



“Assalatu vassalamu alayka ya khabibullah” 5-6 times together with the otinoyi and bow with their hand on the chest.

After that Kur’an is recited, the good deeds are dedicated to the spirit of the ancestors passed away, and pray for the flower to bring plenteousness and seeing the blossom of the flower in the next years again. At the end of the ceremony lasting for 40 minutes the “blowed on” wild rue, tea, salt and water are returned back to the owners and the shawls, cloths and money brought by the participants are shared by the otinoyis. Then the second meal, plow is served to the participants of the ceremony by the women.

The ceremony of “Guli armugan” reached to us in mixture (syncretic) or in harmony with Islamic thoughts and the thoughts formed on the basis of magic belief (magic power) of Anakhita the ancient cult of farmer woman according to its genesis. Studying this ceremony gives new materials concerning the description of the religious thoughts of the people of Central Asia and also gives an opportunity of defining their harmony with Islamic thoughts as well.

CONCLUSION

It should be mentioned concluding from the above that because the most of the ceremonies held with the participation of women are aimed for solving family and related problems, they have very important place in the life of Uzbek women. We tried to classify the ceremonies held with the participation of women according to their role in women’s life and analyze them on the basis of this classification. It has been defined that there are a number of changes happened in the ceremonies like “Guli armugan”, “bibiseshanba”, “Bibimushkulkushod”, “Ashuro” and “Mavlud” which are held with the participation of women and in the activities of the otinoyis in the religious ceremonies concerning the solution of family problems during the XX century. In addition, it has been clear that while studying the food preparing in the ceremonies the traditional food (meals) are of not only a great significance, but also they have a function of “gender taboo”. Also, we can interpret that the ceremonies held with the participation of women are the product of the actions appeared by connecting the religion with the customs, ceremonies and superstitions which were historically comprised as the practical part of the ancient beliefs and the religion of Islam.

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