

THE ROLE OF RELIGIOUS CUSTOMS IN PRESERVING FAMILY TRADITIONS IN UZBEKISTAN

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ABSTRACT:

Religious customs have long served as a cornerstone in preserving family traditions and cultural identity in Uzbekistan. This article explores the role of Islamic practices, rituals, and moral teachings in maintaining familial cohesion and intergenerational continuity within the context of Uzbek society. It examines how religious customs, such as marriage ceremonies, funeral rites, and daily prayers, act as mechanisms for transmitting cultural values and fostering solidarity among family members. By analyzing contemporary challenges posed by globalization and secularization, the study highlights the resilience and adaptability of religious customs in safeguarding family traditions. The findings underscore the significance of religious practices as not only a spiritual framework but also a vital tool for cultural preservation in Uzbekistan.

KEYWORDS: Religious customs, family traditions, Uzbekistan, Islamic practices, cultural preservation, intergenerational continuity, globalization.

INTRODUCTION

Family traditions are integral to the cultural identity of Uzbekistan, where religion plays a pivotal role in shaping social norms and practices. The predominance of Islam, intertwined with local customs, provides a unique framework for maintaining familial values and rituals. This article examines the interplay between religious customs and family traditions, emphasizing their importance in preserving Uzbekistan's socio-cultural heritage. Islamic traditions have deeply influenced family life in Uzbekistan, guiding moral conduct and communal practices. Core Islamic principles such as respect for elders, hospitality, and the sanctity of marriage underpin family traditions. Religious teachings, often transmitted through oral narratives, mosques, and madrasahs, reinforce these values, ensuring their continuity across generations. Marriage and wedding ceremonies exemplify the integration of religious customs into family traditions. Nikah (Islamic marriage contract) is a pivotal event, symbolizing not only the union of two individuals but also the merging of families and the reinforcement of social ties. Rituals such as Qur'an recitations and blessings by elders underscore the spiritual dimension of these celebrations. Religious customs, primarily those stemming from Islam, play a significant, albeit evolving, role in preserving family traditions in Uzbekistan. The interplay is complex, with religious practices sometimes reinforcing traditional structures and at other times being adapted or challenged in the face of modernizing influences.

Religious Customs and Intergenerational Bonds. One of the key functions of religious customs in Uzbekistan is strengthening intergenerational bonds. Practices such as communal prayers and collective observance of Ramadan create opportunities for family members of all ages to interact, share experiences, and reinforce their shared values. These traditions instill a sense of continuity and belonging, connecting younger generations to their heritage. Funeral rites and commemorative practices, including Qur'an recitation gatherings and visiting ancestral graves, further illustrate the role of religion in fostering intergenerational respect and unity. These rituals honor the deceased while reinforcing the familial and communal responsibilities of the living.

Religious Customs Amid Globalization and Secularization. Despite their enduring significance, religious customs in Uzbekistan face challenges from globalization and secularization. Western cultural influences and urbanization have introduced alternative lifestyles and values, particularly among younger generations. This shift has, in some cases, weakened adherence to traditional practices. However, religious customs in Uzbekistan have shown remarkable adaptability. Families often integrate modern elements into traditional rituals without compromising their core religious essence. For instance, social media is increasingly used to coordinate religious gatherings and share blessings, demonstrating the fusion of tradition and technology.

Reinforcing Traditional Family Structures

➤ **Marriage and Family Formation:** Islamic traditions surrounding marriage, including the importance of family consent, dowry practices (though often modified or negotiated in modern times), and specific rituals associated with weddings, continue to shape family formation. These rituals often reinforce the importance of family unity and extended family ties.

➤ **Gender Roles:** While interpretations vary, traditional interpretations of Islamic teachings often reinforce patriarchal family structures, assigning distinct roles to men and women within the family. These roles, though challenged by modernizing influences, remain influential in shaping expectations of behavior and responsibilities within the household.

➤ **Inheritance and Property Rights:** Islamic laws of inheritance, while subject to legal interpretations and modifications under Uzbekistani civil law, still impact how property and wealth are distributed within families, often favoring male descendants.

➤ **Social Control and Morality:** Religious customs provide a framework for social control and moral guidance, shaping norms around behavior, family values, and interpersonal relationships within the family. This includes expectations regarding respect for elders, familial obedience, and the maintenance of family honor.

Case Studies and Regional Perspectives. In rural regions of Uzbekistan, religious customs remain more deeply embedded in daily life compared to urban centers. For example, the practice of mahalla-based communal support during religious events highlights the collective nature of these traditions. Urban families, while adapting to modern lifestyles, continue to observe key religious

ceremonies, albeit with varying degrees of formality. The resilience of religious customs is also evident during national celebrations such as Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha, which bring together families and communities. These events serve as reminders of the unifying power of faith and tradition.

CONCLUSION

Religious customs play an indispensable role in preserving family traditions in Uzbekistan, acting as a bridge between past and present. By fostering intergenerational continuity and cultural resilience, these practices contribute to the social fabric of the nation. As Uzbekistan navigates the challenges of globalization, the enduring relevance of religious customs underscores their importance in maintaining familial cohesion and cultural identity. Religious customs, primarily from Islam, remain a significant but not absolute determinant in the preservation of family traditions in Uzbekistan. Their influence is shaped by the interaction between traditional religious beliefs, evolving social norms, state policies, and individual choices. The future role of religious customs in family dynamics will likely depend on the continuing negotiation between these competing forces. It's a dynamic process where tradition is constantly being reinterpreted and adapted in the face of change.

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