

## Traditional vs. Modern Wedding Ceremony in Urmia City of Iran

Shamsi Miri Ghaffarzadeh

Urmia University of Medical Sciences, P.O. Box 5714783734, Urmia, Iran

**Abstract:** Wedding is a tremendous place in Islamic culture and traditions is quoted frequently in this case. Wedding in Urmia is much to see and hear customs that are based on Turk culture. There is a tradition for each person before birth and after death that has shaped his life and put him in touch with people in his community. Some of these traditions are carried on a constant basis like many holidays and others are transient and in a stage of life like wedding celebration. In the past married have special features. Today many of the values in wedding has been changed and have made differences attitudes and values between the two generations. In this paper an attempt has been made to codify the original sources and books to compare the traditional and modern customs of wedding ceremony in Urmia City of Iran.

**Key words:** Traditions, modern, wedding, ceremony, Urmia

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### INTRODUCTION

Many of the customs, traditions and beliefs of the people is rooted in history. Substantial part of the desired component of people's beliefs and folk is that they represents a community's cultural history and a testament to the depth dependence of the beliefs. Most customs has valuable and interesting meanings. Each part of Iran has its own way about marriage. The purpose of this ritual is the ceremony that comes with marriage. Even in primitive societies, the marriage of a girl and boy has not been taken away from the community and without ceremony. Traditional marriage is a process that has many steps. The traditional marriage which has been customary in most places includes the following steps: dating, matchmaking, formal matchmaking permission from the girl's family, Bale boran, buying wedding dowry, giving trousseau, henna night, preserving of bathroom, wedding ceremony, taking the bride to groom's house, the day after wedding, Madarzan salam and Pagosha.

**Introducing:** Many years ago, mother and sister of the one who wants to marry went to a traveling woman salesperson and gave her a mission to find a suitable girl. Badger women were to work as sales of pinned textile goods went into the house and analyze the girls patiently, and obtained the necessary information. Then she sent it to the customer and made an acquaintance meeting discussions (Masse, 1938).

**Woo:** Many families preferred to go unannounced to woo to get more detailed information about the bride's family. In a surprising woo several females of groom relatives went to the house of the girl with candy filled bags or

handkerchief, then one of the women was knocking on the door and said: they show us a girl here. If the girl's parents were willing to accept woo would offer the guests in. The surprising woos entertainment welcome had not done. If for any reason girl's family unwilling to accept unannounced woo, they told the negative answer then. In past, marriage of the younger girl was not customary until older sister was home and the other girls in the house were held off due to not to be chosen instead of the bride. In old surprising woos a woman of groom's family had been asked for water or tea and expressed her and family desire to see the bride and then bride arrived with a tray of tea or bowl of water and was measured by the audience. First, the appearance was analyzed that didn't contain any make up. Then determine how to entertain, decorum, shame and whether she is nice or not, whether she knows the household? Dose she follow in the older and then the younger? Then excuse for goodbye love kiss to determine whether her mouth or armpit smells bad. Also check her hair to not to be bald. The brief meeting ended with the pleasantries and goodbye and the two families messages were exchanged through the matchmaker (Mohseni, 2000). If the girl's parents agreed to a marriage proposal, commands for jam to be eaten as a sign of satisfaction. A few days later, the women would gather at the boy's home and were set marriage contracts. In the mid-19th century, bride's father in affluent families asked for the sum of thirty Tomans from the groom for his daughter. If the preliminary talks would end up, wooer presented gifts. Here the bride and groom didn't see each other and when groom came to see her, never asked her about her acceptance and she would never dare to say no or to say: "I want to see a man whom going to live with me", if she dare to say, ignorant women surrounding her and began

screaming: it's very bad for a girl to say that, girl's parents will marry their daughter to whom they want". Sometimes the boy was able to see her face furtively from the roof of a neighbor. No boy was allowed to see his future wife face without mask. After the engagement the tip of girl's hair was cut and face was made up. From that day until the wedding boy should send holiday gifts holiday to girl like sheep on Eid. Sometimes a 14 year old boy was nominated to a 9 year old girl and sometimes as they were born and children stayed at their parents home until they reach the age of reason. In past, if a boy finishes his military service and then saw happy accepted the girl who was nominated for him and adults were responsible for it (Haj Mohammad).

**Formal permission of girls family for woo:** If girl's family agrees woo his father and several elders of the family went girl home and eat candy. The next day, mother, aunt, uncle or other close of groom went for Baleboron and were discussed on dowry, Shirbaha, wedding day and other issues. After several days, the groom's family sent gifts to the bride's house such as gold ring with a bowl of candy, sugar some clothes for her father, mother and the bride's wedding clothes like: a chador, shirt and skirt, a pair of shoes, two pairs of socks and underwear. Some of the fruits and sweets were also count as a major part of these gifts (Farhangi, 2004).

**Bale boron:** Bale boron was and is an important part of wedding ceremonies traditional in Iran. This conference was held by the girl family who was married for first time to discuss about certain material conditions and boy's family's non cash and cash obligations of marriage. Bale boron is held in the context of economic so it had fundamental importance for marriage and two families' relationship bale boron was held after wooing and before attending the wedding at auspicious time and day at the girl's father or her older home. The parliamentary group of male and female elderly relatives of the two families coming together and discuss about the amount of dowry, the marriage of toys, clothes and bridal jewelry, wedding and preliminary meetings expenses and number of guests and promises to be laid. If both parents agree, usually the written list of commitments made and signed by both parties seemed elders. Amount of dowry and wedding expenses and heavy style of their social and economic related to families, especially girl's family and clans that belong to (Giddens, 1993).

**Dowry:** Traditionally, the bride in marriage time received money or property from the groom in kind of non-cash (gifts). M. Mohseni about dowry writes that dowry is

the most important and most ancient tradition of marriage in Iran which has no place before Islam but is accepted after that (Azad, 2000).

**Wedding purchase:** After wooing and parties' agreement and bale boron, the parties agreed on definite time that would not create trouble for purchasing wedding supplies, purchased devices were the mirror and candlesticks; make up instruments, underwear, shoes and socks and wedding accessories. To purchase these vehicles one or two of the family of the bride and groom were chosen and the bride and groom did not participate in the wedding equipment purchase and representatives buy needs for their taste. Groom will take these purchases charge.

**Trousseau transference:** A few days before the wedding, and sometimes the day before the ceremony, trousseau transference was done. Many users along with some mule and timpanist bring the dowry groom's home to do this. Before reaching of the group, some went home earlier to clean groom house for new furniture. When the bride's dowry was placed in groom's house, brides' family members show the dowry to the groom and took the receipt which is called Siyahe. Giving a tip to the herbicides and timpanist was considered among the duties of the groom. Sometimes the dowry items were: pots, pans, scoop, rinse, pitcher hip, bed, pillow, backpack, curtains, Samovar, crystal, mirrors and the Quran is considered one of the most important dowry items.

**Hanabandan:** Hanabandan was carried out three or four days before ceremony, at night girls and young females were beginning to dance in association with musicians and audience. After getting tired, near the middle of the night, hands and feet are tied to Hana Close of the morning, Hanabndan ceremony was ended and a group with the bride's family went to the bathroom which previously had been grazed. Bridal first makeup was done in that night too.

**Grazed bath:** A bath was grazed for several hours by the family of the groom and the bride's invitees, after Hana bndan ceremony went there and washed their henna packaged hands, feet and head. Usually all women and girls who stayed in bride's home and had gone to the bathroom at night had breakfast in the home of the bride and came back their home near noon and went back to her home after changing clothes to continue wedding. All costs and expenses of grazed bathroom, Hnabndan, breakfast and wedding day snacks was passed by the groom's family.

**Wedding:** Bride's family usually performed the ceremony and to do this they were conducted a room, before the ceremony, a number of stylish women and blessed families had decorated the room of wedding and placed wedding toys with a certain finesse. Toys for wedding ceremonies usually included as: transportation and sweets, a loaf, a few tulips or Jar Golabdan, Khoncheh, harmal and water bowls. During the marriage, the bride sat in front of the mirror and facing the Qiblah and when the conclusion of the sermon was read Parties are considered necessary for bride to look her in the mirror to clear her future as the mirror. Also in reading the conclusion of the sermon, two lucky women and kept a white cloth, double-overhead-fated on bride's head and another lucky women began to grate the suger on her head (Mostofi, 2008). The custom was that the girl was silent when was asked about the marriage until it was questioned three times. Time between the weddings and the party didn't take more than two days and they believe that if this period be more and of the members of the families die then the time would be increased. After the wedding music was played for few hours and people were spent a few happy hours, then a few members of groom family came to bring the bride with a white horse and horseback the bride. When the convoy was reached to the groom's house, groom should welcome the bride and throw an apple to her. If the bride could get the apple in the air it was a sign that the bride would dominate the groom. Then an underage boy brought a shovel containing some bread and cheese and wore it around the bride's waist and was sent the bride with the bread and cheese to groom's home. On arrival of the bride to the groom's house, hazelnuts or walnut to put under bride's foot to eliminate any spell. After the arrival of the bride to the groom's house, the women came and families were started to happiness. They took money and confetti on the bride and groom's head and believed that if any single girl ate the confetti she would be married soon. The groom was present in the women party and it was believed that he was intimate to all women in that night (Goode, 1970).

**Patakhti and Madarzan Slam:** One of the parties that was carried out after the wedding ceremony was Patakhti which had been done the night and the first morning after the wedding. Generally close relatives of the bride and groom were invited and attended the ceremony and some musicians were also invited to perform for the guests and made them happy the groom was required to have a meeting with his mother in law and has to thank because of the purity of her daughter (Goode, 1970).

**Pagosha:** Forty days after the wedding ceremony a party was held at the home of the bride's mother and the bride,

groom and close relatives were involved. Organizing the party was to make both families more familiar and to the bride to come home again after a time (Goode, 1970). Marriages of Christians in rural extended families began in early fall because in this season farming ended and harvesting did. On the other hand, as the Christian prevented any celebration forty days before Noruz, the period eating meat was not possible. Therefore they didn't celebrate weddings from a day after 18 February celebration that was like Chaharshanbe Sori to the fall of the following fall Wedding was lasted about 7 day later and was trying to held weddings on Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays. The customs of the time, if the wedding took place on a sunny day, it was omen and knew .rain an ominous on wedding day the groom's family usually female relatives went to the other house and invited them to the wedding and to know the number of invitees gave a spoon to each family. However, there may also be invited collectively. However, musicians on the roof were invited all the villagers to the wedding. In addition, the groom would invite his single friends and among them was a choice that was responsible for managing the work of the groom at the wedding "coating groom's dress" ceremony was a ceremony in which the groom dresses would consecration by the priest. Then the groom was dressed by young men Usually the groom would have to wear his crown, a silk hat with a black and green, red and white cross which was engulfed in it.

At this time, any alley leading to the house of the bride, was closed by the bride's brothers and cousins and they had to open up, ask for their gift sometimes the bride's family had brought a strong young man of their relative to wrestle with a young of the groom family that the story usually ended with the groom's representative admitted defeat On the other hand, the parents and relatives of the groom went to the bride's house. The bride's family kissed the groom and had served him with a piece of sugar or an apple to sweet his mouth. Wedding blessing was prepared and carried by a dancing woman. The bride's family' were welcomed the guests in yard. After that, the elder men and women came together in another room. The bride's family was prepared the means by which men were told "what is" questions and parables and hard puzzles were designed to be respond by the groom's young family members and to win the game. The stepfather and brother of the bride invited to come and her brother tied her girdle. In fact, like others they wanted a boy to be their first child. Therefore, the bride's brother tied the symbolic number seven belts and said: "seven boys like me and one like you". Therefore, the stepfather's wife plug a crown on bride's head with seven pins which was symbolic function of the seven pins keep the bride from the evil eye and passion. After the

ceremony, all started to cry with sad songs because the bride left the house of his father. Two new brides of the family came and began to dance with music. Priests and brothers of the bride took the bride's and groom hands and when the bride and groom face each other, pastor read sermon, though more formal wedding sermon was read in church. On this day, four singles of the bride family stole 4 object containing jar lid, ladle, spoon and Gata which each of these objects had a nice symbol, jar lid symbol of the low-letter and confidence, ladle was the symbol of magnanimity and homemaker wife, spoon represented symbol of parents home and Gata (Armenian bread) as a symbol of blessing and long live that brought by bride to the groom house. At this time, the bride's family and the other guests didn't go to a church and remained there to break a cruse after the bride left to not to return to her father's home again in other words do not face the sadness of separation. Following the ceremony, the bride were carefully get on horseback and brought to the church and in church was guided to the altar as the place where the marriage was that along with her groom. Priests close their heads together and tied with the green and red silk rope. Then kept the cross on their head and bringing out the knives and locks because passionate eyes could not be worked more. After church, the bride and groom were home In front of the groom's house, young and old, dance to show their duty to join the bride happiness in new home.

Certain foods such as butter and honey would give to the bride that she ate by her finger and then pass a cross on the door to have joy, goodness and happiness in the home The bride must entered groom's home with her right foot and usually put a Lavash (kind of bread) on her shoulder to come home blessed. Here the bride and groom broke a ceramic pot to Finally, the bride and mother of the groom gifts where they could not hide out inclined On the wedding night, the bride and groom to stay awake because they believed that on this night, the beauty of the bride and groom to the bride and groom figures moved and violence are transmitted. So to prevent this tragedy, remained awake to welcome the sun and in the morning they both went. At the "Tajbrdary" was done the next day, the chaplain, father and close relatives were invited to come and pastor silk canopy over the groom was. Thus, the bride and groom after the couple were known in the family (ISA, 2009).

#### **HISTORY OF WEDDING TRADITIONS TO BE PREHISTORIC**

This practice, common in many cultures of the world. The wedding ring exchange, exchange dowry and

Shyrbha, gifts, flowers, dinner out on the wedding night, music, reading, praying and reading scriptures like Quran cultures of different nations in different forms and with different details are. In sum, the traditional marriage the family was satisfied with his choice to marry a guy with a girl, the boy was not allowed to marry and otherwise rejected families and marriages wife Kin selection as the traditional style was very popular (Sharifi, 1968).

#### **MODERN WEDDING CEREMONY**

In modern Wedding Ceremony choosing a spouse, contemporary, turns out in two ways: directly and through a mediator. Couples have traditionally been engaged through a mediator. However nowadays, young couples prefer to choose their partner directly. Workplace, school, art classes, etc., are common places where direct introduction takes place. At this stage, male secretly tries to know as much as he can, about the female to make sure of his right choice. He proposes directly, if she is considered right to him as his soul mate in all accounts without any mediator. Usually she receives an outstanding gift according to her taste from him, after a positive response. This gift is not materially as valuable as jewelry. After the initial agreement, they discuss the issue with their families to win their approval. During courtship, parents or elders of the male's family investigate about the girl's family. It includes: the neighborhood, especially the girl next-door neighbors; her work place, education, the workplace of her parents, her social behavior and reputation of her family. Official wooing starts as soon as possible in case of positive result of these investigations. The girl's family determines the Propose Day and ethnic and religious customs of each region are effective in the picking a date for this occasion. Serving guests with tea on propose day in popular tradition of Urmia City is a sign of the girl's family doubts, however if they are served by beverage, this means that the girl and her family approve the marriage.

#### **OCCASIONS BEFORE WEDDING**

In the past since people relied on God and trust in his will, "Bale-boran" occasion took place after the evening prayers. The subject to this ceremony was mainly related to "Mehr" (money which is given to the bride for accepting the marriage) and dowry. It has usually ended up happily and both families reach a general agreement. However, due to modern life style and luxury expectations of parties disagreement and failure in this ceremony has recently increased.

“Bale-boran” is commonly held a week or a month after the Proposal ceremony. The amount of dowry, approximate trousseau, determining the couple’s accommodation, permission to continue education or carrier of the bride, divorce right for the female, specifying a date for engagement ceremony, specifying a date for the religious rituals and wedding ceremony are being discussed during Bale-boran. The celebration lasts 5-6 h and ends by closing statement of bride’s family gratitude expression.

The bride and the groom go shopping for wedding before religious marriage ceremony. Most couples tend to it alone, without the presence of family members. In many families, “Henna ceremony” is held the night right before the wedding day. It begins after dinner, usually after 8 o’clock in the evening and the host is the girl’s family (Farhangi, 2004).

Unlike traditional weddings held at the bride’s house, it is usually held in halls and gardens around the city nowadays. Family and friends of the bride and groom along with their cars escort wedding car to their home after the wedding. This happy carnival cannot be quiet and without expressing joy and it is customary to be with hoot and whoops.

Majority of Iranian people are Muslims and they believe Holy Quran is the enduring miracle of God. Iranian read Quran in various events to show that the basis of their decisions is to follow the Holy Quran in their lives (162, 34). One of these important events is marriage. The religious ceremony of marriage is called “Aqd” in which a clergyman reads some verses of Holy Quran during this ceremony.

**Occasions after wedding:** “Pa-Takhti” is the first occasion after wedding which means to celebrate the first day of marriage. Guests of this occasion are close female relatives and friends of the couple. It is not customary for men to join this party.

Due to the faith in significant role of the mother in growth of children, there is a party called “Madar-Zan-Salam” on the third day after marriage. The husband as a gesture of tribute and thanks to his parents-in-law, especially mother-in-law, joins a lunch party along with his wife. There is an interesting tradition that son-in-law can cop something from his parents-in-law’s house in this party. That object belongs to him anymore and no one can blame him. The custom which is more like a joke, implies that picked the girl of the house and she is his wife anymore (Farhangi, 2004a, b).

**Marriage and technology:** The so-called “information age” has its own complexities. Ease of communication

caused the most traditional spaces to be replaced by cyberspaces. Internet has also influence the marriage. Online marriage has entered into the IT literature since the nineties. It refers to a kind of marriage that the couples find each other and date after exchanging information, text, audio and video with each other and ultimately, their consent form the basis of marriage.

Today, this extraordinary tool of communication has different effects on marriage. The most pivotal achievements of the technology are instant access to dating websites and communication regardless of geographic distance and time constraints.

A study compares the social and cultural transformations in three generations of the family. According to this study weddings have transformed from simple to more luxurious ceremonies over three generations. “Dowry” has changed from money to gold and gold coins. “Dowry” supply continues and its percentage has increased in the third generation. In this study, most families agree upon the implementation of customs related to wedding.

## CONCLUSION

In general, the results of this study show that over three generations, customs related to wedding including matchmaking, engagement, Bale-Boran, henna night party, before wedding shopping, wedding itself and Pa-Takhti has retained their functions and these customs have also been going through developments. This process of change includes increment of marriage age, the type of dowry, increased formality of wedding ceremonies, detailed dowry supply, changing attitudes in male and female relationships and the way they know each other before marriage.

By comparing the two periods it seems that the nature of wedding celebration experiences a premature development. Most of the families in choosing the value related to marriage have stuck somewhere in-between traditional and modern culture. It seems that modern lifestyle has gradually faded the traditional customs. However it has survived because of the people who have strong attachment to their history, heritage, cultural and religious beliefs and values.

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