



## SEMANTIC MEANINGS OF WEDDINGS AND CEREMONIES IN UZBEK AND RUSSIAN

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### ABSTRACT

*Modern linguistics is showing great interest in the problems of the relationship between language, consciousness and culture. To understand the cultural identity of the language, it is important, first of all, to analyze the main value events, which include the concept of "Wedding". This article has written about the traditions and meanings used in Russian and Uzbek weddings and ceremonies. This article contains posts about a number of ceremonies at weddings. Especially about the tradition of the traditions at Uzbek weddings and ceremonies, the centuries from the centuries*

**Introduction:** Marriages are very important to the Uzbek people, in similar how individuality and independence are important to Russian and westerners. While getting married is important, dating before marriage is highly looked down upon in the Uzbek culture. However, this doesn't stop many of the young generations from dating. Just like in Western cultures, I witnessed many of my middle school, high school and university students forming close bonds with the opposite sex and getting into relationships. However, these young couples do try to be more discreet about their love life probably for fear of getting into trouble with their parents or of others gossiping about their disapproved relationships. In the West, many parents are usually aware of their teenage child's boyfriends or girlfriends but this is a rare occasion for Uzbek families who restrict their children from dating. Girls usually face stronger restrictions and reprimands as opposed to boys. The double standard definitely exists in the Uzbek dating culture.

There are a lot of implicit and explicit rules girls and boys need to follow when in love relationships otherwise, they could get into a lot of trouble. For instance, virginity is a big deal for brides. A girl is expected to be a virgin when she gets married therefore many Uzbek girls do not engage in any form of sexual relationships before marriage. However, to my knowledge, there are plenty of girls who have had sex before marriage and are forced to get a secret hymen reconstruction, which is to prove they are virgins to their future husbands and their families. The newlyweds are expected to consummate the marriage on a white piece of cloth with blood. If this sounds appalling to you, you are not the only one, I find it abhorrent. This is such an outdated practice that needs to stop. I believe the people who encourage these practices need to be educated. Especially about how a hymen can be broken in other ways such as horse riding, cliff jumping, etc. Hopefully, this practice will eventually die out and Uzbek men will move



their focus to more important things instead of fixating on this one fact. I have heard of times when marriages have fallen apart because the girl did not bleed on her wedding night and I find this very upsetting. Virginitly should be between the woman and her husband alone, why involve the families?! It is important to mention that this practice is not carried out by everyone and that there are some who detest this outdated practice and refuse to take part in it. Originally, I was not planning on including this bit about Uzbek weddings but I do want to keep it real and give you my full experience so I decided to write about it. Anyways, onto more positive aspects...

I am sure you can get an idea how much family means to the average Uzbek. Weddings bring all family members together and this is what I love the most about them. I have extended family in Uzbekistan so it is nice to see family members I have not seen in years. I also get very excited to meet some who I have never met before! Everyone is festive and in a jolly mood so it is nice to feel the positive vibrations all around! Weddings are also usually quite grand. Many families save up for years to have the weddings of their dreams for their children. Especially if it is an only son then you can expect the family to go all out. I attended a fair amount of weddings in the villages as well and even though the family may not be that well off, they will still try to host the biggest wedding they can. They will try to borrow money from other family members or friends, or they will try to take out loans from the bank in order to make this happen. It is insane to see the measures these people will take and the distances they will go in order to have the wedding of their dreams. For some, this is probably absurd. I guess there are two different types of mindsets when it comes to situations like this: you spend a lot because a wedding is a once in a lifetime event or you feel it is unnecessary to spend all that

money because a wedding is a one- night event that will eventually be forgotten. In the years before, Uzbek weddings used to be held in the groom's home, however, customs have changed in modern day Uzbekistan. Home-weddings have diminished over the years, and more and more families are hosting weddings in special venues.

I am not too familiar with European and other parts of the world but in Uzbekistan, it is usually the responsibility of the groom and his family to pay for all the wedding- related fees. This includes the food, entertainment, photography/videography, wedding dress, etc. You get the picture, anything wedding-related is on the groom! You are probably thinking how lucky is the bride! Well, actually the bride has her share of expenses too. She is in charge of providing all the furnishing. The groom's side of the family provides a place for the newlyweds to live and it can either be an apartment or a couple of rooms from the family house. The latter is very common. Like many eastern cultures, it is very normal for the young married couple to be living with the parents and the family of the groom. The parents grow old in this home and the son and daughter in law are expected to take care of them until the parents pass away. So, the furnishing is on the bride's family which includes all the furniture such as a bed, nightstand, closet, air conditioning, etc. You get the picture! Literal empty spaces are given and the bride's family has to fill it all up and decorate it with everything from the curtains to the bed sheets to the toothbrushes. In wedding day Imam of a mosque says the newly married couple "Khutbai nikoh" (marriage prayer), after finishing this prayer they become a husband and wife before Allah (Lord of Highest). Imam explains the newly married couple rights and duties of husband and wife. Usually after executing nikoh newlyweds go to the registry office for registration of their civil marriage. In



the wedding day bridegroom puts on sarpo (garments and shoes, presented by the bride's party as a wedding gift), after that the bridegroom and his friends go to the bride's home to greet her parents and relatives. After the bridegroom and his friends return home the bride herself comes there. Before leaving her native home for bridegroom's home, the bride solemnizes the rite of parting with parents. She is accompanied with close friends. They sing traditional songs "Ulanlar" and "Yor-yor". The second part of the wedding ceremony is the farewell with parents and the home. Friends of the groom ship the bride's dowry and the bride say goodbye to her parents and leaves the house accompanied with her friends and relatives, who sing farewell songs. In the husband's house women welcome the bride, singing traditional wedding songs. In front of the door there is the white track, payandoz, by which the bride enters the house. She stops before the door and makes "ostona salom", the bow to the new house. Women strew her with flowers, sweets, money wishing her beautiful and rich life. After the evening part of the wedding the groom goes with the bride to their new room. The bride is met by yanga, her relative or close friend. She changes bride's clothes. After this the groom comes in the room and "pays a ransom" for the bride to yanga. After the evening part of the wedding the groom goes with the bride to their new room. The bride is met by yanga, her relative or close friend. She changes bride's clothes. After this the groom comes in the room and "pays a ransom" for the bride to yanga. In the room "yanga" (usually a woman who is intimate with the bride) welcome the bride, then the bride changes her clothes and expects her bridegroom coming, staying behind the "gushanga" (curtain). Not long after the bridegroom accompanied with his close friend "yanga" appears by the room's door and together with "yanga" goes to the curtain,

where his bride is waiting for him. For the purpose of coming in the bride's place he should symbolically buy out her from the "yanga", so they start haggling. Thereafter the bride and the bridegroom stay alone for the night. Early morning "Kelin salomi" (bride's greeting) rite is solemnized. By the beginning of the ceremony the bridegroom's parents, all near relatives, the bridegroom's friends and closest neighbors gather outside. All people in turn come up to the bride with wishes, presents and blessings. The bride is obliged to welcome them, low bowing from the waist and give present to every greeting person. Thereby the festive occasion finishes and family life begins.

While in some countries, a very real (and often expensive) dowry needs to be paid before a wedding. In Russia, the bride's ransom is more of a fun tradition.

The bride's parents "steal" her away and hide her before the ceremony until her partner completes a series of challenges set up by the bridesmaids that are designed to show the strength of his love and, ultimately, embarrass him.

If a task cannot be completed, a payment of either real cash, chocolates, or flowers must be made to the bridesmaids as compensation.

Other versions of the ransom quest include dressing up a male relative of the bride in wedding attire and refusing to hand over the real one until a payment has been made, or presenting the fiancé with a napkin covered in the lipstick prints of the bridal party. If the fiancé cannot identify the bride's print correctly, he is also up for a payment.

The ceremony...

Russian weddings can take many forms, but a marriage is only legally recognised once



you have made a trip to the registration office, the Zapis Aktov Grazhdanskogo Sostoyaniya.

Couples can choose to have a small civil marriage registration affair, where the couple literally sign papers in an office and head off to party, or they can accompany this with a civil ceremony, which lasts for 15 to 30 minutes, or go the whole hog and have the longer traditional ceremony as well.

Some couples choose to sneak in this formality before their wedding day to leave more time for the fun stuff.

### **Betrothal**

The betrothal is the first part of a traditional Russian Orthodox ceremony. This is where the couple stands at the entrance to the church and is blessed by the priest.

### **Crowning**

Because a wedding is considered one of the seven sacraments for Russian Orthodox followers, there is more importance in placing crowns onto the heads of the couple than there is in exchanging wedding rings. The crowning is the second part of the traditional ceremony and is where the couple stand on a piece of rose-coloured cloth and the priest places the crowns onto their heads. These can sometimes be held in place by relatives or friends.

The couple shares a cup of wine and follow the priest three times around the lectern to symbolise their journey into married life.

Traditionally, the crowns would be worn for eight days after the ceremony, but they are now taken off after the priest announces the union and says the benediction.

### **Smashing good time**

Once the couple is announced as newlyweds, their parents offer them a crystal

glass each. They then muster all of their strength to shatter them into as many shards as possible, as each piece signifies a year of happy marriage.

### **Balloon?**

It is also traditional for the bride to release a balloon with her maiden name written on it, as she begins her new life with her new name.

### **Witnesses**

It was once a legal requirement for Russian weddings to include two witnesses at the official registration of the marriage. While this is no longer necessary, couples will still choose two witnesses for their wedding day, who will get to wear a special sash to identify their position. These witnesses are often what we would call the maid of honour and the best man.

### **Let the games begin**

There is lots of eating, drinking, and being merry. And because traditionally, Russian couples marry earlier (before they are 24 years old), there are a lot of fun games that are played during the reception. These include pitting the newlyweds against one another to see who can put nappies onto or dress a doll the fastest, allowing guests to vote for the gender of their first baby by placing money onto either a pink or blue plate, and having a fake couple show up, sending the guests into a flurry to find the real couple, who will be hiding somewhere.

### **You stay, you pay**

If you are a guest at a Russian wedding reception, you will need to be prepared to pay for the privilege of a glass, plate, and cutlery to be able to fully enjoy the food and drink on offer. The reason guests have to pay for these





items is to help the newlyweds to get an extra boost to their coffers as they start their new lives together.

### **Cleaning the floor**

As guests arrive at the reception, they drop money (either real or fake) onto the floor and it is the bride's responsibility to clean it all up.

### **Gorko!**

Wedding toasts are often wrapped up with a shout of "Gorko!" which means bitter. This is a signal for the newlyweds to kiss. Tradition says the sweetness of their kiss will enhance the 'bitter' drinks. Guests will also count aloud how many seconds the kiss lasts for, and this is said to show the strength of their love for one another. Just so that the newlyweds aren't having all the fun, the guests then have to finish off their drinks straight away.

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