

THE CEREMONY OF LAYING A BABY TO CRADLE

Beshik toy (the ceremony, organized on the occasion of putting baby to cradle for the first time) in some places consists of one entire ceremony, whereas in other places it consists of two ceremonies. Usually the baby was laid to cradle on the odd days of its birth; seventh, ninth or eleventh days of its birth, desirably on Friday. For example in Tashkent *Beshik toy* is organized on the seventh or ninth day after baby's birth or on any other day with mutual consent of parents of the newly married couple. After the baby's 40th day of birth (*kint*), on the day, which is convenient for the family, there is a custom of organizing special feast (*beshiktoyi*).

The closest relatives from both (bride and groom) sides are invited to the ritual and elderly grandmothers taught to the young mother the order of laying a baby to cradle.

First of all under the leadership of *kayvoni-yayol* (knowledgeable women, the master of weddings and ceremonies) the baby is bathed. Before putting the baby to water, special sand is anointed to his body. The reason is pouring and maintaining disappearance of undesirable hairs. The next step is anointing *qatiq* (Uzbek yogurt without sugar) so that the baby's skin became soft and pale. Silver coins (silver clears the water from such pests as microbes) and golden objects are put to the basin in which the baby is bathed, so that the child will live an abundant life.

Once the baby has been bathed, he is clothed new attires and brought to in front

of the cradle. The baby is laid to the cradle (the head side pointed to the Qibla) and the *kayvoniayol* rotates 4 or 6 spoons around the cradle. Rotating even numbered spoons around the cradle is the symbol of abundance for the future children of this family.

Then, the cradle's curtains are closed and the *kayvoniayol* asks the mother of the baby to bite a couple of *patirs* (type of bread) or bread. The meaning of this ritual is wishing the mother sufficient milk to feed the baby and wishing the baby immensely abundant life. The bread, bitten by the mother is kept or given to the guests. *Kayvoni ayol* emits fume of incense and rotates it around the cradle. By doing so she clears the air in the room and protects the baby from negative vibes. The mother breastfeeds the baby and makes him sleep and the women around her sing lullaby for the baby.





SUNNAT TOY OR KHATNA

Sunnat toyi (circumcision ceremony) is the type of wedding ceremony held for the male child. The ceremony is conducted when a child is 3–5–9 years old, sometimes at even older ages. In different regions of Uzbekistan this ceremony is known under different names, such as “*sunnattoyi*”, “*chipron*”, “*chukron*”, “*khatnatoyi*”, “*qolnihalollassh (poklash)*”.

The history of sunnat toy goes back to the celebrations of adulthood and transition period of children into teenagers, in primitive tribes. At those times custom of circumcision of a child was emerged and it constituted as the means of adherence to hygiene rules in hot climatic zones, besides, it was the symbol of courage and bravery.

Khatna interlined with local customs and promoted to the level of wedding-holiday. Offering palov is considered to be the biggest ceremony in this festivity. As a rule after tea palov was offered to the guests, which was prepared specially for this ceremony. A feast was organized, poems were recited, and fragments of dostons were performed by bakhshis in inner rooms (women were inside).

On the wedding day the child’s grandmother from his mother’s side presents him specially decorated colt, together with different outfits. The “hero of the wedding” is mounted to the colt and walked in the village’s streets under karnay-surnay melodies. This walk is met by dancing in front of the gates of the wedding room. On the next day (after the festivity) kopkari (a goat hunting) and other types of contests were organized and their winners

were given prizes and awards. Children’s games (such as “*oltinqovoq*” — in Khorezm, “*quloqchozdi*” — in Fergana Valley, “*mast bola*” — in Tashkent, etc) were organized as well.

At the end of festivity a skillful barber circumcised a boy (in honor of whom actually it was organized). Nowadays, however, circumcision is done by surgeons. In the past a skilful barber held tight the tip of boy’s genital organ with a help of a special wooden pin called “*gharov*”, and then, cut off the required part. During circumcision, by wishing long life and abundance, flat bread was given to the boy, who bit one piece of it. By so doing people wanted to attract the boy’s attention away from the pain, emerging as a result of circumcision. After 2–3 days, the boy, who was circumcised, stood up from his bed. Then, with participation of woman neighbors and relatives a ritual of making the bed (*joy yigish*) was conducted.



