

WEDDING CEREMONY

Nikoh toy (wedding ceremony) is a festivity, which is organized with the aim of announcing to the public about conclusion of marriage between groom and bride. "Nikoh" in Arabic means legalizing marriage with the sharia laws.

Wedding ceremony consists of three parts and includes the ceremonies, which are carried out before, during and after wedding. Sending of matchmakers and engagement represents the first part of this ceremony, registration of marriage and its solemn celebration— the second part, and carrying out such ceremonies as "yuzochdi" ("Opening of the face of the bride"), "kelinsalom" ("Bride's greeting"), "kuyovoshi" ("Groom's palov"), "quda chaqiriq" ("Invitation of matchmakers") –the third part.

There are two types of matchmakers among Uzbeks, i.e. "big matchmakers" and "small matchmakers".

Once "kichik sovchilar" ("small matchmakers")—mostly women, complete their "mission", "katta sovchilar" ("big matchmakers")—mostly, men take their turn to contemplate wedding expenses and in some places

the amount of *qalin*-money given to the bride's family. As a rule the bride's side expresses their consent by giving white fabrics. At the end of "*Fotiha toyi*" (the ceremony of engagement), based on mutual consent, the day of official wedding is fixed. Between *fotihatoyi* and wedding, matchmakers organize such ceremonies as "tovoq qaytarish"—the return of the large bowl, "korpa soldi" — laying blanket, "toq qiz", "qiz oshi (qiz majlisi)". *Nikoh* ceremony is conducted a day before or at the day of wedding in the bride's house (since recent times in the mosque near the bride's house). The groom with his close friend, uncle (or with another relative) comes to the indicated place. *Mullah* explains to the future groom responsibilities and rights of marriage and gets the girl's consent through her *yanga* (bride's representative). And only after that *mullah* reads "*Nikoh Khutbasi*" ("wedding prayer"). Before the groom takes his bride to his house, the following rituals and ceremonies are observed: "*kelinyashirar*", "*tosh talashar*"; "*it irillar*" "*chiroqaylantirar*"; "*kampir oldi*"; "*kampir tush kordi*"; "*soch siypatar*"; "*qol qisar*"; "*toshak*





toldirar" and some of them have been preserved until today. On the wedding day or slightly earlier, the bride's side (sometimes the groom's side too) conducts palov ceremony. The palov ceremony is conducted separately for men and women. On the wedding day, both sides are gathered with their relatives in the wedding ceremony. The relatives come with presents and *toyonas*-wedding gifts. One of the biggest ceremonies after the wedding is "kelinsalom" ("the bride's greetings"). The purpose of the ceremony is to introduce the groom's relatives to the bride. The ceremony is conducted differently in different regions.

KELIN SALOM

One of the biggest ceremonies after the wedding is “*Kelin Salom*” (bride’s greetings). The purpose of the ceremony is to introduce the groom’s relatives to the bride. The ceremony conducted differently in different regions.

For instance, in Tashkent region and Tashkent city on the day after the wedding, the women who accompanied the bride and the groom’s closest relatives are gathered. A special place is prepared near the gates of the house yard and the bride is brought to this place by her ‘*yanga’s*’ (the bride’s main accompaniers). The handkerchief (or small curtain) on the bride’s face is dropped by the youngest children with the help of a wooden stick made of a fertile tree. This ceremony is sometimes called “*yuz ochdi*”, or “*yuz ochar*”. In the past after opening of her face, the bride gave handkerchiefs (embroidered by

herself) and other presents to the children and relatives of the groom.

Once the bride greets all the relatives, there will be organized banquet for the guests. The ceremony was conducted the day after the wedding in the past; however, nowadays in some regions it is conducted at the night of the wedding. The main reason of this is not to bother the groom’s relatives one more day.

The process of greeting the new relatives by bowing (with the curtain on her face) lasted for a long time. Namely, every time when a new guest, whom the bride had not met yet, comes to the house, this custom is conducted immediately. When visiting relatives, or in any occasion in *makhalla* (people’s community) new brides repeated this custom.



