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## THE MOTIVE OF THE SYMBOLIC «DEATH» AND «RESURRECTION» OF THE BRIDE IN THE KAZAKH BETASHAR WEDDING RITUAL: TRADITION AND MODERNITY

**Abstract:** The ritual of «opening the face» of the bride is practiced by many Turkic people in ethnographic modernity, which is similar even in a purely phonetic name: Kazakh «betashar», Kyrgyz «bet Achar», Tatar «bit Achar» and many others. «Betashar» is translated from Kazakh as «opening the face».

Today, this ritual is interpreted by almost all Turkic people as a public presentation of the bride, and for her as a meeting with the family and numerous relatives of the groom. But, its obvious visible function hides a much deeper meaning than it seems at first glance.

Conventionally, the betashar ritual can be divided into three interrelated stages: the preparation of the bride's wedding dress, the rituals held in the father's house and the very public process of opening the face in the groom's house. Their characterization, analysis and classification in historical retrospect will reveal not only the peculiarities of the Kazakh ritual «betashar» and its regional differences, but also historical and cultural ties between related peoples.

Hence, in the course of the study, comparative, structural-functional, and semiotic approaches were used. Their combination will provide a textured manifestation of the semantic construct of the betashar ritual as a common Turkic heritage, the significance of which is only increasing in the era of globalization. The article uses the materials of field research on the modern practice of the betashar ritual collected in different regions of Kazakhstan in 2010-2019.

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**Key words:** betashar wedding ritual, tradition, modernity, saukele, motif of symbolic «death» and «resurrection», Kazakhs, parallels and analogies, Turkic heritage.

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### Қазақтың беташар, үйлену рәсіміндегі қалыңдықтың «өлімі» мен «тірілуінің» символдық мотиві: дәстүр және қазіргі заман

**Аннотация:** Қалыңдықтың «бетін ашу» рәсімі көптеген түркі халықтарында этнографиялық қазіргі заманда қолданылады, таза фонетикалық атаумен ұқсас, яғни: қазақтарда «беташар», қырғыздарда «бет ачар», татарларда «бит ачар» және басқалары.

Бүгінде бұл рәсім барлық түркі халықтарында қалыңдықтың көпшілік алдында ұсынылуы ретінде, ал келін үшін күйеу жігіттің отбасымен және көптеген туыстарымен танысу ретінде түсіндіріледі. Бірақ, оның айқын көрінетін функциясы әлдеқайда терең мағынаны жасырады.

Шартты түрде беташар рәсімін өзара байланысты: қалыңдықтың үйлену тойына киімін дайындау, әкесінің үйде өткізілетін рәсімдер және күйеу жігіттің үйінде бетті ашудың қоғамдық процесі атты үш кезеңге бөлуге болады. Олардың тарихи ретроспективадағы сипаттамасы, талдауы мен жіктелуі «беташар» қазақ ритуалының ерекшеліктерін және оның өңірлік айырмашылықтарын ғана емес, сонымен қатар туысқан халықтар арасындағы тарихи және мәдени байланыстарды да анықтауға мүмкіндік береді.

Демек, зерттеу барысында ретроспективті, салыстырмалы, құрылымдық-функционалды және семиотикалық тәсілдер қолданылды. Жалпы түркі мұрасы ретіндегі беташар рәсімінің маңыздылығы жаһандану дәуірінде ғана күшейе түсіп, олардың жиынтығы семантикалық құрылымның фактуралық көрінісін қамтамасыз етеді. Мақалада 2010-2019 жылдары Қазақстанның әртүрлі аймақтарында жиналған «беташар» салт-дәстүрінің заманауи тәжірибесі бойынша далалық зерттеу материалдары пайдаланылды.

Мақала Қазақстан Республикасы Жоғары білім және ғылым министрлігінің АР09259280 «Қазақ мәдениетінің тілдері этникалық бірегейліктің негізі ретінде: семиотика және семантика-сы» жобасы аясында дайындалған.

**Түйін сөздер:** «беташар» үйлену рәсімі, дәстүр, қазіргі заман, сәукеле, «өлім» және «тірілу» символдық мотиві, қазақтар, параллельдер мен ұқсастықтар, түркі мұрасы.

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### **Мотив символической «смерти» и «воскрешения» невесты в казахском свадебном ритуале беташар: традиция и современность**

Ритуал «открывания лица» невесты практикуется у многих тюркских народов в этнографической современности, который сходен даже чисто фонетическим названием: казахский «беташар», кыргызский «бет ачар», татарский «бит ачар» и многие другие. «Беташар» с казахского языка переводится как «открывание лица».

Сегодня этот ритуал практически у всех тюркских народов трактуется как публичное представление невесты, а для нее как знакомство с семьей и многочисленной родней жениха. Но, его явная видимая функция скрывает под собой гораздо более глубокий смысл, чем кажется на первый взгляд.

Условно ритуал беташар можно разделить на три взаимосвязанных этапа: подготовка свадебного наряда невесты, обряды, проводимые в отчем доме и непосредственно сам публичный процесс открывания лица в доме жениха. Их характеристика, анализ и классификация в исторической ретроспективе позволит выявить не только особенности казахского ритуала «беташар» и его региональных отличий, но и исторические и культурные связи между родственными народами.

Отсюда, в ходе исследования использованы ретроспективный, сравнительно-сопоставительный, структурно-функциональный и семиотические подходы. Их совокупность обеспечит фактурное проявление смыслового конструкта ритуала беташар как общетюркского наследия значимость, которого только усиливается в эпоху глобализации. В статье использованы материалы полевых исследований по современной практике ритуала «беташар», собранных в разных регионах Казахстана в 2010–2019 годах.

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**Ключевые слова:** свадебный ритуал «беташар», традиция, современность, саукеле, мотив символической «смерти» и «воскрешения», казахи, параллели и аналогии, тюркское наследие.

## **Introduction**

Rapid urbanization and modernization of the twentieth century led to fundamental social changes in the traditional culture of Kazakhstan. Under these conditions, many rites and rituals have changed, undergone significant transformations, and in some cases even lost their original meaning.

In this regard, the twentieth century was marked by significant revisionism of Kazakh wedding ceremonies (identification of viable and «elimination» of obsolete ones) together with the modernization of the traditional Kazakh society (transition to a sedentary lifestyle and change of ideology). During the Soviet period, «Komsomol» weddings were practiced, and many rituals in the orbit of the wedding ceremony were abolished, *betashar* was conducted simplistically (especially in cities). Its significance

and role were actualized during the period of Kazakhstan's Independence. Now there is a real renaissance of the marriage ceremony as one of the key moments in the life of modern Kazakhs, strengthening their identity. The unconditional solemnity and entertainment of *betashar* led to the formation of an entire event and creative industry.

As in the traditional period, today the *betashar* ritual is usually an obligatory part of the Kazakh wedding ceremony. Its viability is supported by akyns, families and partly by the wedding industry, as well as cultural events and scientific research.

The purpose of this article is to reconstruct the sacred meaning of the traditional Kazakh wedding ritual «betashar», which includes the motif of «temporary death» and «resurrection» of the bride in a new capacity – as the hostess of the hearth.

## Materials and methods

The article uses the materials of field research of the authors of the article collected in different years (2010-2019) in Kazakhstan (Almaty, Karaganda and Turkestan regions), partially supplemented by 2020 materials on Almaty and Karaganda regions. The latest data became the basis of the nomination file «Betashar – Kazakh wedding ritual» (coordinator Zh. N. Shaigozova) in the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage) from the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Moreover, unique samples of Kazakh traditional saukele, stored in the funds of the Russian Ethnographic Museum (REM) and the Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (Kunstkamera), were used as research materials in St. Petersburg (Russia).

In the course of the study, retrospective, comparative, structural-functional and semiotic methods were used, which allow expanding the conceptual and conceptual apparatus of the study, as well as describing the semiotic meaning of the bride initiation rites.

## Literature review

Wedding ceremony of Kazakhs as an object of scientific research has always attracted the attention of domestic and foreign scientists. The theoretical works of H.A. Argynbayev (Argynbayev 1996), A.T. Toleubayev (Toleubayev 1991), K.Sh. Shulembayev (Shulembayev 1975), N.Zh. Shakhanova (Shakhanova 1998), R.M. Mustafina (Mustafina 1991), S.H. Shalginbaeva (Shalginbaeva 2002), Z.A. Jandosova (Jandosova 2008), K.S. Matyzhanov and A.B. Aitbayeva (Matyzhanov, Aitbayeva 2019) and others are the materials for studying the wedding ceremony of the Kazakhs. They identify the main ethnographic and meaningful contexts of this ritual, including ritual songs that allow us to reconstruct aspects of interest to us.

Some questions of the continuity of family and wedding rites on the materials of field expeditions are consecrated in the work of Zh.N. Shaigozova et al. (Shaigozova, Muzafarov, Sultanova 2019); the article by A.B. Naurzbayeva et al. (Naurzbayeva, Shaigozova, Kulsarieva, 2021) is devoted to the comparative analysis of the Finno-Ugric and Turkic bride initiation ritual: general and specific in traditional sacred knowledge on the example of the Ob Ugrians and Kazakhs; the analysis of the attributes

of the Kazakh wedding ceremony is presented in the works of L.F. Popova and O.V. Starostina (Popova, Starostina 2007) and others.

Wedding ceremonies of other Turkic peoples are considered in the works of G.P. Snesev (Snesev 1969), N.P. Lobacheva (Lobacheva 2001), N.A. Tadina (Tadina 1995), E.V. Kamaleev (Kamaleev 2014), N.O. Tadyшева (Tadyшева 2021) and many others. The study and comparison of variants of Turkic and other cultural traditions revealed a whole layer of coincidences, which indicates the presence of a single ancient phenomenon in the presence of specific national characteristics.

The Kazakh betashar ritual in this article is considered as the most important stage in a girl's life and qualifies as a rite of passage, the essence of which is identified and characterized by A. vann Gennep (Gennep 1999). The scientist identified three interrelated stages of the rites of passage: the preliminary (separation), liminar (intermediate) and postliminary (inclusion), noting that all three stages of the rite of passage are included in each ritual cycle.

All the described ethnographic works and the results of field research provide the basis for considering the betashar ritual as an integral phenomenon, in which the motive of «temporary death» and «resurrection» of the bride is clearly manifested. It is precisely in these «motives» of the ritual that the original sacred meaning of betashar lies.

## The main part

The group of wedding ceremonies among many peoples, according to A. vann Gennep, includes rites of separation and intermediate rites and ends with rites, either preliminary inclusion in a new environment, or rites of separation from a transitional state ... then follow the wedding rites of inclusion in a new environment and often the rites of conjugal union (Gennep 1999, 109). This confirms the universality of the three interrelated parts of the rite of passage (in different cultural variations): rites of separation, intermediate rites and rites of preliminary accession.

The rites of separation in Kazakh culture also include a whole cycle of events. First of all, this is a kind of farewell visit of the bride to relatives, where the song is performed, which has been repeatedly noted in the works of domestic ethnographers (Argynbayev 1996; Toleubaev 1991, etc.). This element of the rite is now considered to be almost a rare and forgettable tradition. Literally from the Kazakh language, the word «synsu» translates as «sobbing»,

and the tradition itself is a performance of a girl's song-lamentation or a farewell song. Usually, each bride herself composed her own song-lamentation, or turned to the services of a poet-akyn. In *synsu*, the bride thanked her parents, said goodbye to her maiden life and sang about her hopes and dreams of a future life.

Not only the very fact of the *synsu* as a farewell-crying speaks of the presence of the motif of «death» in the wedding ceremony but also images-attributes of border worlds or portals connecting the worlds in the text of the farewell song itself. About this, analyzing the songs of the wedding ceremony of the Kazakhs of Zhetysu, A. Berdibay et al. notes: the image of a mirror, a tree and a threshold can be found in the poetic texts of «*synsu*» and the female «*zhar-zhar*» in Zhetysu, as well as in the central and eastern regions of the country, where «the mirror is understood as the border between life and death» (Berdibay, Babizhan, Abugazy 2020, 62). The image of willows/birches (trees in general) connecting all worlds is a well-known element of Turkic natural philosophy, and the threshold is the boundary between the worlds (one's own and another's) and one of the special places for «passing the rite of female initiation» (Raikova 2016, 69).

Thus, the motif of «death» is clearly present in the bride's farewell ceremony with relatives, which was reconstructed by B. Kokumbaeva (Kokumbaeva 1989). The scientist divides this rite into three interrelated parts: 1) performed on the eve of the wedding (*synsu* or *aryz olen*) is a mourning of their «dying» for the family (hence the proximity of wedding and funeral cries); 2) young men from the groom's side revive the bride as a member of their kind – sing *zhar-zhar* (male). Women, as it were, prevent her «resurrection». On behalf of the bride, they sing female *zhar-zhar*, which is very close to the male one in mood and melody. This stage ends with the change of the girl's headdress and the loosening of her hair (as in a funeral rite!) and the fact that braids are braided into one – in a feminine way; 3) *korisu*, *koshtas*. It is performed before leaving for the groom's village, at the end of the wedding at the bride's house (the bride's departure – *Uzatu thoy*). The bride's «former» relatives approach her yurt in order to say goodbye to a new member of another kind. The bride is already dressed as a young woman (Kokumbaeva 1989, 19).

I. Altynsarin also gives interesting information about the bride's send-off: «father, mother, brothers and all relatives hug her for the last time, and crying begins. Many true tears are shed on this day by

relatives, but poor *kelenchek* (the young) cries more inconsolably, they beg her for a long time to take off her girlish cap (*yarmulka*), and, wearing a clumsy *saukele*, she resists it for a long time, but the hour has come, she is dressed as a young woman and, put on a horse, is sent» (Altynsarin 1975, 24).

Accessories also play an important role, emphasizing the «special» state of the bride at this moment. According to ethnographic sources (Argynbayev 1996; Toleubaev 1991, etc.), it is known that before leaving for the groom's house, the bride wears a *saukele* headdress, covering her face with a *zhelek*-veil. The semantic and symbolic content of the custom of covering the bride's face with a ritual headdress in Turkic cultures is interpreted as the disappearance of the bride from the father's family (ritual temporary death), and the *saukele* wedding headdress itself is a visual embodiment of the three-part structure of the world, which is repeatedly emphasized in the scientific literature (Akishev 1984; A.Z. Karakuzova, A.Sh. Khasanov 2011; N. Volodeeva et al. 2018) and others.

«The semantics of *saukele* is the unity of the World Mountain and the World Tree (the cone of the headdress is the World Mountain; the feathers of the owl are the World Tree). The *saukele* on the bride is the designation of the trinity of the world, the three parts of which mean nothing by themselves: only together they create something new: the mother universe, the bride», scientists write (Karakuzova, Khasanov 2011, 63).

The *saukele* was made by skilled craftsmen, and the best copies of it could cost up to 100 horses. While preserving the general canonical image, each of the *saukele* was distinguished by an individual decor, which carried a certain symbolic load. Its decor often contained ornamental images in the form of the sacred tree of life, ram's horns – a symbol of grace, plant ornaments and many other symbols were filled with materials from which the decoration of the headdress was made. For example, the Kazakhs believed that silver had a protective power, and the magical function of stones was expressed as amulets against damage and the evil eye – coral, pearls – from the eyesore, carnelian – a symbol of well-being and joy, and so on.

As a rule, this headdress was passed down from mother to daughter, from generation to generation. According to custom, the bride was dressed in a wedding outfit at her father's house. The *saukele* was put on the bride by a respected woman, for which she received an expensive gift from the groom. After the wedding, the young woman wore a *saukele*

on special occasions for a year, more precisely, before the birth of her first child. Experts' opinions on the etymology of the word «saukele» vary: in one case it is believed that it comes from two words: sau – sunny, beautiful and kele – head, in another sau – whole, protected, and in the third the name of this headdress comes from the Iranian word «shah» (king). Some authors associate the root «kel» with the Iranian «kale» (head), «kul» – from the Iranian name of the headdress «kolah» (hat), that is, «royal hat» (Sukhareva 1954, 33). The phrase «sau kilen» (healthy daughter-in-law) consonant with saukele in Turkic languages may also reflect the meaning of its name as a headdress of a cult or ceremonial purpose, I. Bogoslavskaya believes (Bogoslavskaya 2013, 49). But, in general, all the attributes – clothes and its decor, horse decoration, etc. emphasized the special status of the bride.

In addition, the motive of «death» in the ceremonial farewell of the bride to her relatives, elements of «struggle» or rivalry are manifested, expressed in female and male aitys (zhar-zhar in the semantic meaning of friend-spouse), between girls and women during the change of headgear, etc. Ethnographic sources indicate the existence of a kind of imitation of the struggle of bride's girl friends with a group of women, where the girls were not allowed to remove the maiden's cap from the bride, and the women sought to put a female headdress on her. Such a custom existed among the Kazakhs, Karakalpaks and other people.

Another form of manifestation of the motive of struggle is the once-existing educational game «tartys» or «bolys-uy» among the Uzbeks and other people of Central Asia. R. Abdullayev writes about it: «in the groom's retinue, that was going to meet with the bride, there were necessarily a singer, wits and jokers. In the ceremony of this holiday, the custom of the bride's «flight» to another village was observed, where singing competitions took place between girls and boys, a comic struggle for the bride (tartys) was conducted between her fellow villagers and the party protecting the interests of the groom, or between women and boys, or women and girls. This struggle ended with the bride being carried away to her father's yurt on a carpet (koshme) and put behind a curtain, where the groom was later brought to (Abdullaev 2006, 142).

The motive of rivalry is observed already at the stage of matchmaking. Ethnographer N.J. Shakhanova writes this: «the food was used in comic contests and games between the mating clans: for example, the younger matchmaker smears the remains

of the *kuyryk bauyr* dish on the face of one of the representatives of the bride's side. Then he steals the cup; in turn, the women from the bride's village subject the matchmakers to various tests: they pour flour over the *bylamyk*, smear their eyes and face with flour» (Shakhanova 1998, 130).

The inclusion of struggle or rivalry in the cycle of the bride's farewell rites once again emphasizes the dominant role of the motif of «temporary death» in it, and G. Kuzbakov is certainly right, noting «that the mythological content of zhar-zhar ... is the struggle of Life and Death, in which birth, life in a new quality is represented by the masculine principle, and death, departure from family – female» (Kuzbakova 2006, 299).

Thus, the situation of the temporary/symbolic «death» of the bride is played out in the Kazakh rites of separation many times: farewell to relatives, unwinding of multiple braids and braiding of one braid, changing the headdress and closing the face, songs (zhar-zhar, synsu), game elements imitating struggle / rivalry, etc.

The connection of the wedding ceremony with the funeral was noted among the Tatars of Bashkortostan. For example, analyzing this aspect, E.V. Kamaleev writes: seeing parallels in bathing in a wedding bath and in the ritual ablution of the deceased, we believe that in both cases there is a «purification» for the transition to a new status of a married woman and the presentation of the human soul before the «Supreme Court» (Kamaleev 2014, 130).

After the completion of all the ceremonies in the bride's house, the next cycle of rites begins, referring to the «intermediate» ones. In such an «intermediate» state, of course, the bride needs special protective measures. The bride's moving to a new house – the groom's house itself was decorated with a whole wedding cortege with the transportation of the dowry in the form of a yurt and its decoration. Sometimes, instead of the bride, wearing a saukele and on her horse, her brother's wife, zhenge, rode. Such a «disguise» aimed to deceive the dark forces. A protective measure was also the placement of the bride in her husband's house behind a white curtain, called *shymyldyryk*.

We can say that this custom is a ritual isolation, and if we recall the funeral rite, then there is a similar isolation of the deceased, for whom a separate yurt was usually set up in traditional culture. The curtain covering the bride from everyone was practiced by the Altai Turks: «the bride was considered sacred, pure (bailu), therefore she was covered with a curtain, and no one should see her face until she

acquired the appearance of a married woman. It was only after the ceremony of dressing up and braiding the bride's hair that she presented herself in a new capacity to her relatives by marriage», writes N.A. Tadina (Tadina 1995, 59).

We see similar things among the Kyrgyz and Yakuts. Analyzing the ethnocultural parallels of both peoples, D.U. Sapalova notes that the bride of both peoples was brought to the groom's house with her face covered. To do this, a piece of white cloth was attached to her headdress, which the Kyrgyz called *burkonchok* (Yakut *burun* and Kyrgyz *burkon* mean «to hide») (Sapalova 2009, 45). Almost identical closure of the bride's face with Kazakhs, Kyrgyz and Yakuts is found among Altaians, Khakas and Tuvinians. First, in the yurt of the bride's parents, the girl's hair is braided in a special way, a *tumalai / dumaalai* wedding veil is tied. The bride says goodbye to her parents' house – walks around the yurt three times in the sun and goes to the groom's yurt, which she also walks around in the sun three times, writes N.O. Tadysheva (Tadysheva 2021, 122). In all ethnic variations, there is a common understanding of the bride in an intermediate state as dangerous, requiring special protection.

In some regions of Kazakhstan, according to our field research, before the start of *betashar*, the bride passes through simulated bonfires of fire, after which her mother-in-law (*ene*) fumigates her with the smoke of smoldering *peganum* (*adyraspan*), which symbolizes ritual purification (preparation for birth in a new status). The fire and smoke of *peganum* are believed to have magical power. Then the bride, under the guidance of her mother-in-law, pours oil into the fire (appeasing the spirit of fire) and the *betashar* ritual itself begins. A similar thing is observed among the Kyrgyz: before entering the house, the newlyweds, for the purpose of ritual purification and consecration of their future life together, walked around the bonfire once or three times, then the bride treated the host spirit of the fire with melted butter (Sapalova 2009, 45).

Interestingly, some Turkic peoples practice other forms of the bride's «return» to the world of the living. For example, E.V. Kamaleev reports on the Tatars' tradition of determining the location of a water source by the bride – a *su yula* near the groom's house. Referring to A.K. Bayburin, the scientist believes that he sees a deeper semiotic meaning in these tests performed with the bride moving to the groom's house, where performing these actions means «returning» to the bride the properties of a living person that she had lost at the beginning of the

wedding (Kamaleev 2014, 131). At the same time, the bride approaches the river (water source) against the current and returns home with the current.

If in the traditional period, according to ethnographers (Argynbayev 1996; Toleubayev 1991; Altynsarin 1975, etc.), the *betashar* ritual was held on the very first day of the bride's arrival at her husband's house, today it is performed directly at the wedding with a large crowd of people. It is conducted by *akyn* (poet-improviser), who performs the song *betashar zhyr* in a song or recitative form to the accompaniment of a *dombra* (musical instrument). The song in an emphatically laudatory form introduces the bride alternately to the ancestors of the family, parents and groups of relatives of the groom.

The bride, together with *zhenge*, bows (*salem beru*) to the listed relatives of the groom after each such verse-dedication. Each group of relatives to whom the bride bowed, in turn, thank *akyn* for the performance, bestowing, as a rule, a sum of money. The text of *betashar zhyr* ends with good wishes. The well-known musicologist S.A. Elemanova believes that this tradition, popular at modern Kazakh weddings, is constantly being updated, since the *akyn* or singer invited to perform «*betashar*» composes the text according to the actors (Elemanova 2012, 78). Here I would like to draw attention to the figure of the person correcting the ritual – *akyn*. According to the research of E.D. Tursunova (Tursunov 2001), *akyn* as a representative of the clan «concentrates the power of all its members, he is the «mouthpiece» of the clan, manifests the generic community in his individual speech» (Elemanova 2012, 69), and in the case of *betashar*, he is the embodiment of the mediator between the worlds, the main «harmonizer» of the ritual. It is at this moment that the success of the ritual – the rebirth of a girl into a woman depends on the *akyn* intermediary, so the Kazakhs still have the principle of careful and deliberate choice for his choice.

After the presentation of all the relatives to the bride, the culmination of the ritual comes: *akyn* lifts the *zhelek*-veil with the neck of his *dombra*, revealing the bride's face. We will designate this as «resurrection» or «new birth». Her mother-in-law usually takes off the veil completely: she kisses her, wishing happiness to her new daughter. Here, with the help of a song-text and material actions, the situation of the «birth» of a girl in a new status, the appearance / accession of a new member of the clan is demonstrated. The opening of the *zhelek* signifies the birth, resurrection of the bride. At this moment, the older relatives of the groom perform the rite of «*shashu*»

– showering the newlyweds with sweets and coins, wishing the young happiness, fertility, and abundance. A similar tradition of showering with something is recorded among the Tatars. Scientists note about this: «the tradition of showering young people with grain, down, coins, designed to bring happiness, wealth, well-being, and prosperity to family life, and treating them with honey and butter and getting up young on a pillow means wishing a sweet and calm, «soft» family life» (Kamaleev 2014, 130). This component of the wedding ceremony (the performance of the shashu rite among the Kazakhs and other Turkic peoples) will be called a symbolic exit from the transition period, the moment of completion of the ritual.

Thus, in the wedding ceremony of almost all Turkic peoples, clear sequential ceremonies are held, which «accompany the bride's transition from one state to another, from the «alien» world to «her own» (Tadysheva 2021, 123).

### Conclusion

Consideration of the *betashar* ritual as a rite of passage: the temporary death of the bride and her rebirth in a new capacity is marked by the rites preceding it in the bride's house, the wedding dress, the inventory used and the functional role of the person correcting the opening of the face. Folklore (ritual songs), performed on time and before the ritual, also plays an important role in this process.

This ritual and the wedding ceremony of the Kazakhs as a whole is a complex ideological complex. Analysis of published information and observations on family rituals shows that it is the most variable of all family and household rituals, and the semantic core of the *betashar* ritual are relics of ancient beliefs expressed in the motives of the symbolic «death» and «resurrection» of the bride.

In other words, *betashar* symbolizes the inclusion of the bride in the family collective of the

groom, who elevates her to a new level not only as a wife and future mother, but also as a new member of the family/clan.

According to the field research, the Kazakh wedding has preserved the main features of ritual actions and numerous tangible and intangible signs marking the stages of their conduct: the beginning, the central moment of the ceremony (exchange of values) and the completion (closing) of the ritual. It is safe to say that, as before, today in different regions of Kazakhstan, the rite may differ somewhat in details but not in semantic content. People still believe that careful preparation and strict adherence to the sequence of the ritual, including the professionalism of the *akyn* as a key figure of the ritual is very important. In their opinion, this is the key to the future joint happiness of the young and the relationship of their families.

Each of the participants of the ritual is clearly aware of their role and significance in it. Today, the *betashar* ritual does not require such a complex entourage as before. The vestments of the newlyweds, as well as their relatives / guests, may be quite modern, but this does not affect the meaning in any way and does not detract from the significance of *betashar*.

However, the peculiarities of the modern Kazakh situation cause a negative forecast regarding the existence of national traditions, including *betashar* in the near future. E.V. Kamaleev writes this: the palette of rituals and rituals of the traditional period was replaced by a laconic modern Tatar wedding, in which the material side and the festive and playful manner of conducting prevailed over magical beliefs (Kamaleev 2014, 132).

Regarding the modern Kazakh wedding, we can state the same. Today there is a danger that new generations of Kazakhs will perceive only the purely external side of wedding ceremonies, oblivious to their sacred meaning, strengthening the national cultural code.

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