



Article

## Religious Beliefs in Azerbaijan Wedding Tradition

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**Abstract:** This article examines religious beliefs embedded in Azerbaijani wedding traditions as an important expression of family, marriage, and cultural identity. In Azerbaijani society, wedding ceremonies are not merely social celebrations but also reflect religious values inherited through generations. The study highlights several symbolic practices, such as beginning wedding rituals with the word Bismillah from the Holy Quran, performing istikhara before marriage decisions, and passing the bride and groom under the Holy Quran. These practices demonstrate how religious belief becomes integrated into the structure of marriage customs and collective identity. The article argues that Azerbaijani wedding traditions represent a combination of national, religious, and psychological consciousness that strengthens family values and social continuity. Therefore, the wedding tradition functions as a cultural space where Islamic beliefs and Azerbaijani identity are preserved and transmitted.

**Keywords:** Azerbaijan, Holy Quran, family and marriage, wedding

### 1. Introduction

Wedding traditions are among the most important cultural expressions in human society because they reflect the values, beliefs, and social structures that shape family life. In many communities, marriage is not only understood as a union between two individuals, but also as a sacred social institution that connects families, communities, and religious principles. For the Azerbaijani people, wedding traditions occupy a central position in the preservation of cultural identity and the continuity of family values. These traditions reveal how collective memory, moral teachings, and religious symbols are transmitted from one generation to another. Therefore, studying Azerbaijani wedding traditions provides an important perspective on the relationship between religion, culture, and social identity.

Religious belief plays a significant role in shaping the meaning and structure of Azerbaijani wedding ceremonies. The presence of Islamic values in wedding customs indicates that marriage is viewed as a morally guided and spiritually meaningful process. Religious expressions such as beginning ceremonies with the word Bismillah demonstrate the belief that every important life event should begin with remembrance of God. This practice reflects the deep connection between daily cultural activities and religious consciousness. As a result, Azerbaijani wedding traditions cannot be separated from the spiritual values that give them meaning and legitimacy.

One of the notable religious practices in Azerbaijani wedding tradition is istikhara, which is performed before making an important marriage decision. In this practice, families seek guidance from a religious person, such as a dervish or spiritual figure, to determine whether the prospective bride and groom are suitable for each other. The use of prayer, rosary calculations, and spiritual consultation reflects the belief that marriage

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should be based not only on social agreement but also on divine approval. This shows that Azerbaijani society places great importance on spiritual harmony in family formation. Thus, *istikhara* becomes a symbolic bridge between human decision-making and religious belief.

Another important practice is the act of passing the bride and groom under the Holy Quran. This ritual symbolizes blessing, protection, and the hope that the couple's married life will be guided by religious values. The Holy Quran functions not only as a sacred text but also as a cultural symbol of moral authority and spiritual security. Through this ritual, the wedding ceremony becomes a space where religious faith is publicly expressed and collectively witnessed. This practice also strengthens the idea that marriage is a sacred responsibility that must be lived according to ethical and spiritual principles.

Based on these cultural and religious realities, this article aims to examine religious beliefs in Azerbaijani wedding traditions as an expression of national, religious, and psychological identity consciousness. The study focuses on how religious symbols and rituals are embedded in marriage customs and how these practices contribute to the preservation of Azerbaijani cultural identity. By analyzing wedding traditions through a cultural and religious perspective, this article highlights the importance of marriage rituals as a living heritage. The discussion also shows that Azerbaijani wedding traditions are not merely ceremonial practices, but meaningful cultural systems that reflect the spiritual worldview of the community. Therefore, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of the interaction between religion, tradition, and identity in Azerbaijani society [1], [2], [3].

## 2. Materials and Method

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach to examine religious beliefs in Azerbaijani wedding traditions. The qualitative approach is appropriate because the study focuses on understanding cultural meanings, symbolic practices, and religious values embedded in wedding ceremonies. Rather than measuring social phenomena statistically, this research seeks to interpret the meaning behind rituals such as saying *Bismillah*, performing *istikhara*, and passing the bride and groom under the Holy Quran. These practices are analyzed as cultural expressions that represent the religious consciousness of Azerbaijani society. Through this approach, the study provides a deeper explanation of how religious belief shapes family and marriage traditions.

The data used in this study are based on textual and cultural descriptions of Azerbaijani wedding practices. The main focus of analysis is the religious elements that appear in wedding traditions, especially those related to Islamic belief and family values. The research examines how these elements are practiced, understood, and preserved within the community. Each ritual is interpreted according to its cultural function and symbolic meaning in the context of marriage. This method allows the study to identify the connection between religious teachings, social customs, and national identity.

The data analysis was conducted through descriptive interpretation. First, the religious practices found in Azerbaijani wedding traditions were identified and categorized. Second, each practice was analyzed based on its symbolic, cultural, and religious significance. Third, the findings were connected to the broader concept of identity, particularly national religious identity and psychological consciousness. This analytical process helps explain why wedding traditions remain important in Azerbaijani society and how they continue to preserve religious values. Therefore, the research method emphasizes interpretation, cultural understanding, and contextual analysis [4], [5].

## 3. Result and Discussion

The findings show that religious beliefs are deeply embedded in Azerbaijani wedding traditions. Wedding ceremonies are not only social events but also religiously meaningful practices that reflect the spiritual foundation of family life. The presence of religious symbols in wedding rituals demonstrates that marriage is understood as a sacred responsibility. This understanding strengthens the role of religion in guiding social

relationships and family formation. Therefore, Azerbaijani wedding traditions function as a cultural institution that integrates social customs with religious values.

One important religious expression in Azerbaijani wedding traditions is the use of the word Bismillah at the beginning of wedding activities. This practice reflects the belief that every important action should begin by remembering God. In the context of marriage, Bismillah symbolizes blessing, sincerity, and spiritual protection. It also shows that the wedding ceremony is not merely a festive event but a sacred beginning of family life. Thus, the use of Bismillah becomes a religious marker that gives spiritual meaning to the entire wedding process [6], [7].

The practice of istikhara is another significant finding in Azerbaijani wedding tradition. Before a marriage proposal is accepted, families may consult a religious person to seek spiritual guidance regarding the compatibility of the prospective couple. This practice indicates that marriage decisions are not made solely based on personal preference or family agreement. Instead, they are also connected to religious belief and the hope for divine approval. In this sense, istikhara reflects the community's belief that marriage should be spiritually harmonious and morally supported [8], [9].

The role of religious figures in the istikhara process also reveals the importance of spiritual authority in Azerbaijani society. Religious persons such as dervishes or spiritual caretakers are seen as individuals who can provide guidance in important life decisions. Their involvement shows that religious knowledge and spiritual interpretation are valued in the marriage process. This practice strengthens the connection between family traditions and religious leadership. It also demonstrates how traditional society maintains respect for religious wisdom in matters of marriage and destiny.

Another important ritual is the act of passing the bride and groom under the Holy Quran. This practice represents a strong religious symbol in Azerbaijani wedding tradition. The Holy Quran is viewed as a source of blessing, moral guidance, and protection for the newly married couple. Passing under the Holy Quran symbolizes the hope that the couple's future life will be guided by faith and religious principles. This ritual shows that the sacred text occupies an important place not only in worship but also in cultural ceremonies.

The bride also holds an important position in Azerbaijani family and marriage traditions. In the wedding context, the bride represents the continuation of family values, social honor, and religious responsibility. Her role is connected to the broader meaning of marriage as the foundation of family life. The seriousness attached to the bride in wedding traditions reflects the community's respect for marriage as a sacred institution. Therefore, the bride is not only a central figure in the ceremony but also a symbol of cultural and religious continuity.

These wedding practices also reflect national identity consciousness. Azerbaijani wedding traditions preserve the collective memory of the people and connect present generations with inherited cultural values. Religious rituals within weddings help maintain a sense of belonging and cultural uniqueness. They show how Azerbaijani identity is shaped through the interaction of Islam, family customs, and traditional social values. In this way, wedding ceremonies become a living expression of national and religious identity [10], [11], [12], [13], [14].

From a psychological perspective, these traditions provide emotional security and social confidence for families and couples. Rituals such as Bismillah, istikhara, and passing under the Holy Quran create a sense of blessing, protection, and certainty. They help families feel that the marriage process has been conducted properly according to both cultural and religious expectations. This psychological dimension strengthens trust in the marriage decision and reinforces social harmony. Therefore, Azerbaijani wedding traditions serve not only religious and cultural functions but also emotional and psychological functions within society [15].

#### 4. Conclusion

This study concludes that religious beliefs occupy a central place in Azerbaijani wedding traditions. Practices such as beginning ceremonies with Bismillah, performing istikhara, and passing the bride and groom under the Holy Quran demonstrate the strong relationship between Islamic values and marriage customs. These rituals show that marriage in Azerbaijani society is viewed as a sacred, moral, and socially meaningful institution. The wedding tradition functions as a medium through which religious belief, family values, and cultural identity are preserved. Therefore, Azerbaijani wedding traditions represent an important form of national religious heritage.

The discussion also shows that Azerbaijani wedding traditions contain not only ceremonial meanings but also psychological and identity-related significance. Religious rituals provide spiritual assurance, emotional confidence, and social legitimacy for the couple and their families. At the same time, these traditions strengthen collective identity by preserving cultural practices inherited from previous generations. The integration of religion and tradition in wedding ceremonies reflects the continuity of Azerbaijani national consciousness. Thus, the study affirms that wedding traditions are essential cultural spaces where religion, identity, and family values meet.

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