# THE LAMENT TRADITION AMONG THE UZBEKS

## Özbeklerde Ağıt Geleneği

**Yrd. Doç. Dr. Selâmi FEDAKÂR***

**ÖZ**

Özbek folklorunda, tabiat olaylarına ve insan hayatının geçiş dönemlerine bağlı olarak ortaya çıkan pratikler "Merasim Folkloru" başlığı altında değerlendirilmektedir. Geçiş dönemleri adı verilen uygulamalardan biri Özbek Türkleri tarafından "Matem Merasimi" olarak adlandırılır. Özbeklerde matem merasimi, ölüm haberinin alınmasından başlayarak, ölünün gömülmesi, yedisi, yirmisi, kırkı ve bir yılın dolmasına kadar devam eden pratiklerle bu pratiklerde icra edilen ağıtları içine almaktadır. Özbek ağıtlarının genelini ifade etmek için "Matem Koşıkları" terimi kullanılır ve bu koşuklar söylendikleri yere ve zamana bağlı olarak adlandırılır.

Bu makalede önce, Özbek bilim adamlarının ağıt türünü adlandırmada kullandıkları terimler ve ağıt türleri hakkındaki görüşleri değerlendirilmiştir. Daha sonra, Özbek ağıtları; icra yeri, icra zamanı ve icra ortamları dikkate alınarak tasnif edilmiştir. Tasnifteki başlıkların altında yer alan ağıt türlerinin icra edildiği pratikler hakkında kısaca bilgi verilmiş ve söz konusu ağıtların icracıları, icra şekilleri ve inceleme konusu ağıtların çeşitli özellikleri üzerinde durulmuştur. Makalenin sonunda ise, Özbek ağıt yakma geleneği içerisinde oluşturulan ağıt türlerinden örnekler verilmiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler**

Ölüm, Ağıt, Yas, Özbek, Yığı, Yoklav

**ABSTRACT**

The practices related to natural occurrences and the transition periods in human life are listed under the title of "Ceremonial Folklore (Merasim Folklori)" in Uzbek folklore. One of the practices performed during the transitional periods in human life is called "Mourning Ceremony (Matem Merasimi)" among the Uzbeks. The mourning ceremony consist of the practices and the laments performed as soon as the news of death is received, during the burial, on the seventh, twentieth, and fortieth day after the burial, and also practices and laments performed until a year has passed from the burial. A general term used for Uzbek laments is called "Mourning Songs (Matem Koşıkları)" and those laments may have different names in accordance with their place and time of performance.

In this article, firstly, I will discuss the terms that have been used laments by the Uzbek scholars and, I will also evaluate their opinions on the Uzbek genre and subgenres of lament. Later on, I will try to classify Uzbek laments considering the place, the time and the context of their performance. Following brief information provided on the practices according to which the several lament genres are performed, I will dwell upon the performers, the style of performance, and various features of the laments under examination. At the end of my article there will be samples of different lament genres composed and sung in the Uzbek lament tradition.

**Key Words**

Death, Lament, Mourning, Uzbek, Yığı, Yoklav

Considered one of the ancient creations of Turkish literature, laments are briefly defined as poems whose subject matters are death and separation. "At least, since the Hunnish Turks, whose laments appeared related to burial and "yuğ" ceremonies, laments mean encomia for the dead. However in time, the mortality of the universe, the shortness of life, betrayal, unfaithfulness, the passing of youth, complaints of fate, situation, condition and experiences such as separation, enlarged the meaning and content of laments" (Elçin 2001: 290).

Whether related to ceremonies or not, the most typical feature of laments is that they are being performed in the framework of a "lamenting tradition" which has been shaped according to the social and cultural structure of the society they are created in. Especially the laments created during death ceremonies, in the framework that the tradition designated, in respect to performer, place,

* Ege Üniv. Edebiyat Fakültesi, Türk Dili ve Edebiyatı Bölümü Öğretim Üyesi. selami.fedakar@ege.edu.tr

time and the context of the performance, are affected by the practices during mourning and burial ceremonies. The opinion expressed by Y.M. Sokolov, who emphasizes the relation between burial traditions and laments, saying that "as the wedding songs have a specific basis and shape related to various parts of the wedding ceremonies, the laments are somehow connected to various parts of burial traditions as well" (Bali 1997: 9), underlines the importance of burial traditions in shaping the lament as a literary genre.

The fact that most of the Uzbek laments are performed only during the death ceremonies and insufficient research on Uzbek laments in Turkey has encouraged us to work on this subject. It is important to point out that the main aim of this article is not the mourning and death ceremonies among the Uzbeks; it is the laments created and performed during these ceremonies.[1] In this article, firstly, I will discuss the terms that have been used for naming the lament genres by the Uzbek scholars and also their opinions on Uzbek lament subgenres. Later on, I will try to classify Uzbek laments considering the place, the time and the context of their performance. Following brief information provided on the practices according to which the several lament genres are performed, I will dwell upon the performers, style of performance, and various features of the laments under examination. At the end of my article there will samples of different lament genres composed and sung in the Uzbek lament tradition.

For a better understanding of the subject matter, it would be helpful to provide some information on the place of the lament genre in the classification of Uzbek folklore creations. The ceremonial practices related to natural events and the transitional periods of human life are expressed by the term "Ceremony Folklore (Merasim Folklori)" in Uzbek folklore.[2] The practices which are generally named as transitional periods and expressing the specific terms in one's life are "burial" and "mourning" ceremonies. These ceremonies are examined under the title of "Mourning Ceremony Folklore (Matem Merasimi Folklori)" by Uzbek scholars (Sarımsakov 1998: 208). Among Uzbeks, the mourning ceremonies include the practices begun upon receiving the news of death and lasting until one year has passed. The laments are the kinds of folk poetry created during those ceremonies as part of the practices.

Pertev Naili Boratav discussed the laments under the title of folk songs. While classifying the folk songs according to their place of performance, function and context, he placed the laments as a fourth category under the subtitle of "Folk songs sung during the lamenting ceremony" which is listed under the main title of "Ceremonial Folk Songs" (Boratav 1982: 150-151). The Uzbek scholar Muzayyana Alaviya classified Uzbek folk poetry according to its "function, theme and genre features" and examined the laments under the category "Mourning Song (Aza Koşığı)" under the main title "Seasonal and Ceremonial Songs (Mevsim-Merasim Koşıkları)" (Alayiva 1974: 149-152). The term "Mourning Song (Aza Koşığı)" used by M. Alaviya has been used commonly as "Mourning Song (Matem Koşığı)" by Uzbek scholars. As can be understood from all the provided information, just like in Turkey, in Uzbekistan the laments are accepted as a subgenre of ceremonial folk songs.

Having provided information on the place of laments within the genres of Uzbek folk poetry, it will be better to evaluate the terms used for laments in Uzbek Turkish, and the subgenres of the Uzbek laments. It is because Uzbek scholars have not reached an agreement on one term to designate all the laments, they have different opinions on the subgenres of lament in their studies.

As one of the first researchers on Uzbek laments Muzayyana Alaviya, in her work "Uzbek Folk Poetry (Özbek Halk Koşıkları)" uses the term "Aza Koşığı" for the laments, and she considers and examines "Yığı", "Yoklav", "Aytım" and "Bozlav" under the same title (Alayiva 1974: 140-152).

Bahadır Sarımsakov, who has been working on Uzbek ceremonial folklore, before discussing laments, first classified Uzbek mourning ceremonies in which laments are created and performed, and then he evaluates the laments in this framework. According to his record, the mourning ceremonies in Uzbekistan consist of traditional practices and these ceremonies take place in three stages. According to Sarımsakov, the first stage begins with the evening of the day on which the death occurred and continues till the burial. The second stage is the period of taking the dead from the house and burying the body. The third and final stage consists of the practices that last a year from the burial. The scholar states that two lament genres are performed in these stages, and one of these genres is called "Yığı", which is performed in all three stages, and the other one is called "Mourning Yar-Yars (Matem Yar-Yarları)" which is only performed in the first stage (Sarımsakov 1998: 208). If Sarımsakov's classification of mourning ceremonies is carefully examined, one can see that these ceremonies consist not of three, but two stages. Since "from the evening of the day on which the death occurred to till the burial" consists of the first stage, and "taking the dead from the house and burying the body" consists of the second stage. His thoughts show that there is no lament genre in the second stage, so these two stages can be combined in just one stage. In that case, it is possible to say mourning ceremonies, during which Uzbek laments are performed, take place in two stages. The first stage consists of "the evening of the day on which the death occurred to the burial" and, the second stage consists of "a year passed after the burial".

B. Sarımsakov also makes some evaluations on the terms used for laments in Uzbekistan. He says that "According to Alaviya's work; the terms 'bozlav', 'aytım' and 'yoklav' are also used for lament. We have never encountered those terms in folk usage. In our opinion, among the Uzbeks the term 'yığı' is used more commonly. The term 'bozlav' is more about emotional style and used in poetical discourse. 'Yoklav' expresses a subgenre of 'yığı' which is performed after the burial. Because the term 'yığı' is used after the burial ceremony in public, it is called 'yığı-yoklav'. The term 'aytım' is not used in place of the term 'yığı', but it is used for the words said upon a sad situation. To sum up, the most commonly performed type of mourning poems is called yığı" among the Uzbeks (Sarımsakov 1998: 209). Later on in his study Sarımsakov suggests that "if an Uzbek 'yığı' is being performed upon having lost a mother, and performed after her burial ceremony, in other words the 'yığı' is performed at the third stage, conditionally we call those kinds of lament 'yığı-yoklav'" (Sarımsakov 1998: 214).

As can be understood from these citations from Sarımsakov, the scholar stated that the most common lament genre is "yığı" and the term "yığı" is being used as corresponding to the term lament. As for the term "yığı-yoklav", performed after the burial, it is considered a subgenre of "yığı". Apart from the term "yığı", he also points out another subgenre of lament that is called "Mourning Yar-Yars (Matem Yar-Yarları)". However, if only the term "yığı" is used to correspond to lament, and thus "Mourning Yar-Yars", which are performed in mourning ceremonies and consist of "death" as the subject matter, are not called as a sub-

genre of lament, then what should they be called? Thus, there is some ambiguity in Sarımsakov's ideas.

Nadir Abduhalatov agrees with Sarımsakov in using the term "yığı" as a designation of lament among the Uzbeks. According to its performance place and time, the scholar, classifies the "yığı" into two categories, and calls the first group "yığı" which are performed till the burial, and the second group "yoklav yığı" which are performed after the burial (Abduhalatov 1999: 54-57). The ideas of Abduhalatov, who uses the term "yığı" in correspondence to lament throughout his study, are very close to the ideas expressed by Sarımsakov. The only difference between them is the usage of the term for a subgenre "yığı" as "yığı-yoklav" and "yoklav-yığı".

Another study of the Uzbek laments is done by Ahuncan Safarov and Darman Orayeva. Their work is called "Bozlardan Uçgan Ğazal-Ay". In the introduction of this work samples of Uzbek lament texts and some evaluations of Uzbek laments in general are provided. In order to express the laments in the introduction part of the work, the term "Mourning Songs (Matem Koşıkları)" is generally used. In their first lament classification the laments are divided into two groups as "yığı" and "yoklav". They classify "yığı" into three groups; the first group is called "Yığı", the second group is called "Lullabies for Death (Ölim Allaları)", and the third and final group is called "Mourning Yar-Yars (Matem Yar-Yarları)". "Yoklav" is divided into seven subgroups as follow; "Nevruz Yoklavı" "Hayıt Yoklavı" "Yoklav Yar-yar", "Alla Yoklav" "Yetti Yoklavı" "Kırk Yoklavı" and "Yıl Sındı Yoklavı" (Safarov-Orayeva 2004: 8-9).

Darman Orayeva's work entitled "Uzbek Mourning Ceremony Folklore (Özbek Matem Merasimi Folklori)" is the only study of the Uzbek laments and mourning ceremonies. In this work, the Uzbek laments and mourning ceremonies are examined fully. D. Orayeva has made a detailed study of the mourning ceremonies and she has also examined and classified the laments within the framework of mourning ceremonies. Throughout her work, for the term lament the scholar uses the term "Mourning Songs (Matem Koşıkları)", and in some parts of her work she prefers to use the terms "Mourning Ceremony Songs (Matem Merasimi Koşıkları)", "Yığı" and "Yoklav".

Before discussing the features of the lament genre, as opposed to Sarımsakov, Orayeva suggests that "yığı" and "yoklav", which are performed during mourning ceremonies, are different genres. To sum up the explanation of the scholar: the laments which are performed during the period of "Third Day" or "Seventh Day" ceremonies are called "Yığı", and the laments performed to remember the death and to cite the good things that he/she had done during his/her life, are called "Yoklav". The "yığı" and "yoklav" genres are very different from each other as to their subject matters, structures, the place, the time, and style of performance. Surely there are wailings in the structure of "yığı" such as "*vay vay ey*" "*vay dad ey*" and exclamatory expressions to show who cries for whom. Whereas in the genre of "yoklav" there are not wailings or exclamations. In the genre of "yoklav" there is groaning to remember the dead and to complain of life without him/her (Orayeva 2004: 15-16).

According to Orayeva, the most important difference between "yığı" and "yoklav" emerges at their performance place and time, and the reason for this difference can be observed in the way the death is expressed. One should not expect that the lament texts performed before the people who have come to give condolence to the relatives of the dead or the wailers called "yığıçi" or "goyanda", and the texts performed after the death, generally outside the death house or

away from relatives, are the same. In the part of the evaluation of Uzbek laments, Orayeva has examined and classified them under the titles of "Yığı", "Yoklav", "Matem Allaları" "Matem Yar-Yarları". Among these lament genres; she examined "Yoklav" under five titles as "Nevruz Yoklavı", "Hayıt Yoklavı", "Yoklav Yar-Yarı" and "Alla Yoklav" (Orayeva 2004: 19-57).

It can be seen that Uzbek scholars, whose ideas have been conveyed here so far, used terms such as "Aza Koşığı", "Matem Koşığı", "Yığı" and "Yoklav" in correspondence to the lament genre.[3]

The stem of the term "yığı" should be given special attention since this term is used as corresponding to lament by Sarımsakov, Abduhalatov and Orayeva. When one looks at the stem of the term "yığı" one can easily see that it is associated with the words "*yuğ*/*yoğ*" which are the words used to express death ceremonies in the Orhun inscriptions. On this matter, the information provided by Fuad Köprülü about the words "*yuğ*" and "*yığı*" is highly enlightening. It is possible to summarize Köprülü's ideas as follows: the word has infinitives like, "ağlamak" in Ottoman Turkish and "yığlamak" in Chagatai, and has derivatives such as *yığlagur* and *yığı*: *yığlagur* means "crier" *yığı* means "crying". It can be understood that the word "yuğ" found in the Orhun monuments has lost its mourning ceremonial meaning during the 15-16th centuries as a result of the Islamic impulse, and has given place to the word "yığı" which has a more limited meaning (Köprülü 1999: 87-88). Gerard Clauson also points out that in the word "*ığlamak*" which means "ağlamak" is a derivation from the root "*ığ*" and has such forms as "*ağlamak*" and "*yığlamak*" (Clauson 1972: 85).

Departing from the information provided by the scholars cited above, it is possible to make the following evaluations: the word "*yığı*" which is used in Uzbek Turkish and the word used in Turkish "*ağıt*" (lament) share the same root, but it is hard to say whether they are the same in meaning. The word "*ağıt* (lament)"[4] is derived from the root of "*ağla-* (cry)" (Uludağ 1988: 470) in Turkish, and it means both crying and is also the name of the "ağıt (lament)"[5] genre in Turkish folk poetry. In Uzbek Turkish, the word "yığı" which is derived from the root "*yığla-*" also means "ağlama (crying)" (Özbek Tilining İzahli Luğati, 1981: 350), but rather than referring to the "ağıt (lament)" genre in general, it expresses a well-known and widely performed type of the lament genre.

In my opinion, the reason for the emergence of usage difference between "ağıt (lament)" and "yığı", which were derived from the same root, is because they have followed different developments in two different geographic areas. In the beginning, while laments were performed only in mourning ceremonies called "yuğ", they have late acquired different features in Turkey and Uzbekistan. At first, the laments performed in Turkey consist only of death and death related topics. In the course of time, besides the topic of death, tragic events have also become part of the laments.[6] In Uzbekistan, on the other hand, at first the topic of death was the only subject matter of "yığı", but in time, as a result of the alternation with different genres, "yar-yar" whose real performing place was wedding ceremonies, began to be performed in mourning ceremonies. Similarly, at first the death topic was the subject matter of yığı, but later on this topic became the subject matter of lullabies, which resulted in creation of "Matem Allaları". As a result of performing laments other than in mourning ceremonies the "Yoklav Yar-Yarları" came into existence. While the subject matter of laments has widened in Turkey, new subgenres of lament have emerged in Uzbekistan.

It is a fact that "yığı" is the most common lament genre in Uzbekistan. It is my opinion that the term "Matem Koşıkları (Mourning Songs)" is used to cover all kinds the lament performed in Uzbekistan. In other words, the term "Matem Koşıkları" is used to express the lament as a genre.

In this part of my article, I would like to make some evaluations of the genre features of Uzbek laments. It is useful to remember that most of the Uzbek laments are related and performed in burial or death ceremonies. The reason for this practice is the fear of ancient peoples to perform laments separately from mourning ceremonies. It is a folk belief that if laments are performed separately from the death ceremonies, people would face tragic results (Abduhalatov 1999: 55-56). Therefore, it is forbidden to talk about death and things related to death and to perform the laments in other times. As a result of this folk belief, in fact, it is not possible to do fieldwork and gather information from the informers at any given time (Orayeva 2004: 4).

Being performed only at death ceremonies resulted in some kinds of restricted views, namely that the subject matter of Uzbek laments has not been enriched and varied, that the Uzbek laments only consist of the subject matter of death and related issues. Thus, I believe that it wouldn't be right to examine Uzbek laments depending upon the classification made by their subject matters. Having examined the lament classifications of the Uzbek scholars, according to the way laments are expressions of death, I would like to classify Uzbek laments in two main groups: "The Uzbek Laments Performed Before the Burial", "The Uzbek Laments Performed After the Burial".

Considering the place and time of performance, it is possible to classify "Yığı" and "Matem Yar-Yarları", under the title of "Uzbek Laments Performed Before the Burial", and "Matem Allaları" and "Yoklav" can be listed under the title of "Uzbek Laments Performed After the Burial". It is also possible to divide "Yoklav" into the three subgroups of "Nevruz and Hayıt Yoklavları", "Alla Yoklav" and "Yoklav Yar-Yarları".

## A. LAMENTS PERFORMED BEFORE THE BURIAL

### 1. Yığı:

Yığı is the most commonly performed and well-known lament genre among Uzbeks. The yığı is begun to be performed right after the occurrence of death or upon receiving the news of death, and there are wailings and lamentations in it. The reason to express the pain and sorrow of death in yığı is because this genre of lament is performed at the day of the burial in the house of the dead person (Safarov-Orayeva 2004: 7) and next to the dead (Orayeva 2004: 26). It is also a tradition among Uzbeks to cry for the dead. According to K. İmamov, the reason for this tradition is that "among Turkic people, there is a belief that crying will spare a life for the sake of the dead" (İmamov 2001: 60).

The most important feature of yığı is that they are performed with crying, lamenting and gesticulating. For instance, according to the Uzbek tradition, women who stand still next to the dead, perform yığı by closing their eyes, and covering their mouth with a tissue. These gestures mean "my eyes shouldn't see this, my ears should not hear what I say, and this is just a dream." One of those woman stays that way until another woman says "let it go, death came from God, open your eyes" (Safarov-Orayeva 2004: 8).

There are some varieties in the subject matter of yığı in accordance with the age of the dead person and degree of affinity with the yığı performer. Different yığı are performed in respect to the age of the dead person; one kind is performed upon the death of little children; other kinds

are performed for the death of young boys, girls at the age of marriage and for elderly persons. Among these, the most emotional laments are performed for the loss of young boys and upon the death of girls at the age of marriage. For the girls who died just before their wedding ceremony, the yığı is performed by a group women who clap their hands standing as a circle. An accompaniment of clapping to a yığı performance is to strengthen the wailing (Orayeva 2004: 24).

The degree of affinity between the yığı performer and the dead person results in subject matter differences between the yığı. For example, in the yığı for the father, they compare him to the "sun and head of the household", for the mother to the "moon and fountain", and for the uncle to the "door bolt" and for the child to the "rose or nightingale" (Safarov-Orayeva 2004: 7). If the dead is a male the expression "oh my man" is used, if a female "oh, my rose", if a sibling "my dear" (Orayeva 2004: 19). Besides those features, it should also be pointed out that in yığı taboos have a strong place that is due to some superstitions. In order to escape the negative effect of taboo, people avoid using some words in yığı, and such words are expressed with some symbols such as, "grave=a palace without any windows", "shroud=collarless shirt", "coffin=horse tree" (Abduhalatov 1999: 56).

Yığı are performed by close relatives of the dead person or professional mourner women called "yığıçi" or "goyanda" (Orayeva 2004: 18). Those women are invited to the ceremony when a notable person of the society or a person who has many children and grand-children has died (Sarımsakov 1998: 211).

Although the yığı are mostly performed by women performers, there are yığı performed by men. Among the Uzbeks, men cry only till the burial ceremony. The weeping of a woman who has lost her husband is quite natural, but if a man wails because of his wife's death, this is not approved. Instead of crying among the people, the husband goes aside in the house and cries quietly for the death of his wife. Close friends of the dead person wear a new "çapan"[7] and cover their head with "döppi"[8] or "kalpak" and tie a piece of fabric on their belly as belt. The people mourn and perform laments while holding a walking stick called "black stick" made out of black willow (Abduhalatov 1999: 57-58). These kinds of lament are called "Hassakaşlar Yığısı" (Orayeva 2003: 61). Bahadır Sarımsakov points out that both the cradle and the coffin are made of black willow tree, and therefore the name of this tree is mentioned so frequently in the "Mourning Yar-Yars (Matem Yary-Yarları)" (Sarımsakov 1998: 211).

Darman Orayeva, classifies the Uzbek yığı performed in mourning ceremonies thus: "Yığı for Addressing the Dead Person", "Yığı for Announcing Death", "Yığı for Sending off the Coffin", "Hassakaşlar Yığısı" and "Yığı for Greeting People Coming Back from the Cemetery" (Orayeva 2003: 58-61).

Yığı are usually composed of independent quatrains, but they are connected to each other with respect to their meanings. Even the number of syllables and rhymes are not very regular, but in general they are composed of an octosyllabic meter.

**2. Matem Yar-Yarları:**

As previously pointed out, as a lament genre "matem yar-yarları" emerged due to the fact that "toy yar-yarları" began to be performed in mourning ceremonies. "Toy yar-yarları", which are accepted as the source of "Matem Yar-yarları", are the kind of poems performed at wedding ceremonies. These poems when they are performed in the traditional ritual are called "kız köçürma (bride procession)" at wedding ceremonies (Orayeva, 2004: 44). "Matem yar-yarları" are performed

more calmly in comparison with "toy yar-yarları". "Matem yar-yarları" are usually performed in the house of the dead person, at the time of bathing the deceased and putting on the shroud (Sarımsakov, 1983: 29).

Bahadır Sarımsakov argues that "matem yar-yarları" are performed only for the girls who died young before getting married. However, Darman Orayeva emphasizes that "matem yar-yarları" are performed for both girls and boys who died young and before getting married in the Bukhara region. According to Orayeva's observation, the "matem yar-yarları" are performed at the day of the burial for the girls, "Çimildik Tutdi" and "Salla Öraş" ceremonies, and for the boys "At Törladi" and "Ton Kiydiriş" ceremonies (Orayeva, 2004: 45).

At "Çimildik Tutdı" ceremony they are performed when a young girl dies; women gather as a circle next to the dead and flap a canvas called "çimildik", and perform their "matem yar-yarları" (Sarımsakov, 1983: 29). The canvas called çimildik is a white tent that is set up at the corner of a house for the bride and groom in wedding ceremonies. One can see here that the material that is used at a wedding is also used at a mourning ceremony.

"Matem yar-yarları", except the dead girl's mother, are performed, by the close relatives of the dead girl, and the professional women mourners at the "Çimildik Tutdi" ceremony. First these laments are performed by the professional mourners and than the relatives repeat the refrain. The professional performers of "matem yar-yarları" and "toy yar-yarları" are very different from each other. While the professional performers of "matem yar-yarları" don't perform at wedding ceremonies, the professional performers of "toy yar-yarları" don't perform at a house of mourning. The professional performers of "matem yar-yarları" are usually old women who are experts of performing these kinds of lament, and who are effective with their way of performing (Sarımsakov, 1983: 29-30).

After the "Çimildik Tutdi" ceremony, the "Salla Öraş" ceremony is arranged. Originally this ceremony was performed when a newly-wed woman gave a birth. Salla Öraş means "tied down". This ceremony is believed to be an indicator for a woman to become the lady of her house and a mother. Matem yar-yarları are performed in this ceremony, while the close relatives dress the dead and wrap the head with a canvas (Orayeva, 2004: 45).

Another place for "matem yar-yarları" is in the "At Törladi" and "Ton Kiydiriş" ceremonies in which "matem yar-yarları" are performed for men who died before getting married. These ceremonies are performed right before the dead is taken to the cemetery. The "At Törladi" ceremony is performed by women who gather in a circle around the horse of the dead person. They kick and stamp and turn around the horse while performing "matem yar yarları".[9] Later on, first they cut the hair of horse's tail and mane and then they release the horse into the wilderness. Today in these ceremonies if the deceased did not have a horse, a wooden horse is made and they put the clothes of the dead on it, and then once again women turn around the horse and perform "matem yar-yarları" with professional mourners (Orayeva, 2004: 54-55).

Following this ceremony the "Ton Kiydiriş" ceremony takes place. In this ceremony, an old man dresses the deceased with a new "çapan" and "döppi". This is a ceremony which is also performed for the groom at the wedding (Orayeva, 2004: 55).

These ceremonies are actually a part of the wedding ceremonies in Uzbekistan, and it gives the impression that they are performed in order not to debar the deceased from the stages they

will experience in the future and are therefore performed both at a death and a wedding ceremony.

The formation features of the "matem yar-yarları" have a typical structure. Generally these poems are formed as quatrains, the word "yar-yar" is repeated at the end of each line or the line placed at the end of the quatrian. The lines "*Hay-hay ölen hay ölen, armanlı kız yar-yar / Anaları derdiga dermanlı kız yar-yar* that occur in the "Toy yar-yarları" are repeated as refrains in matem yar-yarları. Besides the refrain lines, the number of syllables in each line can vary. Those lines may have eleven, twelve or fifteen syllables in the same quatrain.

**B. LAMENTS PERFORMED AFTER THE BURIAL**

**1. Matem Allaları:**

The term "Alla" corresponds to the term "lullaby" in Uzbek Turkish. "Matem Allaları" are related with the lullabies which are sung to put children to sleep. "Matem allaları" are performed more calmly compared to the lullabies. The "Yığı" that is performed in mourning ceremonies makes the participant of the funeral cry, but the "matem allaları" are performed to relax and calm down the relatives of the dead person (Orayeva 2004: 36-37). "Matem allaları" are performed in a very sad manner upon the death of a baby or old person (Orayeva 2005: 55).

The most important feature of this genre of lament is that in every lines or in some lines of these verses the word "alla" is used as a rhyme, or that there are after every line repetitions like "*Alla, rabbim, alla hu-ya*" and "*alla, ha, alla, alla ya, bir alla*" etc. (Orayeva 2005: 56).

The most important reason for the emergence of this lament genre is that "death" is accepted as an enduring sleep. Just like lullabies are performed for the baby to fall asleep, "matem allaları" are performed to enable the deceased to pass over to death, which is accepted as sleep. When these laments begin to be performed, the relatives of the dead stop crying and listen to them silently (Orayeva 2005: 56).

"Matem allaları" are usually performed at the ceremony of "Hatın Yatdi" which takes place on the evening of the burial. This ceremony is called "Evvel Akşam" and "Evvel Keça" in some parts of Uzbekistan. According to the essence of the ceremony, one of the close relatives of the dead, usually a woman, for a night sleeps in the bed where the dead slept when he/she was alive. The name of this ceremony emerged in connection with this sleeping ritual. It is based on the belief that at the night of the burial the dead comes into the dream of the relative who sleeps in the dead person's bed, and says if there was a thing that he/she could not do when he/she was alive (Orayeva 2004: 48).

Sometimes "matem allaları" are performed before the burial. Depending on the performers, the time and place of performance, "matem allaları" may show some variety. The "matem allaları" performed at burial ceremonies for the elderly are performed by professional mourners called "allaçi" or "allagoy", but in "hatın yatdi" ceremonies they are only performed by the female relatives of the death. For dead babies these laments are performed by shaking a crib. For this reason, to shake an empty crib is not acceptable in the folk tradition (Orayeva 2005: 58).

Since "matem allaları" are improvised poetry, they are performed in different syllabic meters. The number of lines in quatrains may differ. However, they are usually formed as two lines or quatrains. A variety of rhyme schemes can be observed as well (Orayeva 2005: 59).

**2. Yoklav**

There is no crying in yoklav, because they are performed sometime after

the death and not in the burial ceremonies. Since the subject matter of yoklav texts consists of remembering the dead, reverence of the deceased and longing for the past life etc, there are expressions of groaning rather than crying in the yoklav. In respect to their performance place and time the yoklav is divided into the following subgroups:

**a. Navruz and Hayıt Yoklavı:**

Four-five relatives of the dead, on the evening of the Nevruz holidays or a religious holiday called "hayıt" among the Uzbeks, pray after visiting the cemetery and also practice some traditional ceremonies in which they perform the yoklav. In those yoklav the words "Nevruz", "Sümelek", "Sacrifice" and "Ramadan" are frequently used. "Yoklav" that are performed by women are usually formed of independent quatrains (Orayeva 2004: 34-35).

**b. Alla Yoklav**

The Alla yoklav, which is performed for the children who lost their mother during birth or were left orphans, are performed to refresh the souls of the dead father or mother. These kinds of yoklav are performed in a mournful way by widows who have become unprotected and alone when very young, with a child. The Alla yoklav has no specific performing place and time (Orayeva 2004: 35-36).

**c. Yoklav Yar-Yarları:**

The Yoklav yar-yarları are very different from other Uzbek laments with regard to their place of performance. These kinds of lament are performed at the wedding ceremonies of boys or girls, who lost their parents. They are performed both for remembering the lost father or mother and to make the soul of the lost ones happy (Hatamov-Sarımsakov 1979: 233-234; Orayeva 2004: 34-36).

In the light of all the information I have so far provided, it is possible to evaluate lament tradition among Uzbeks as following:

As a result of the mutual history and cultural unity of the Turks, the earliest samples of lament that emerged among the Uzbeks had been first called "Yığı". However in the course of time, as a result of the performance of different lament genres and the creation of lament subgenres; among Uzbeks the term "Matem Koşığı" has become more common. The most important feature of these Uzbek laments is that they are usually performed in burial or mourning ceremonies. As a consequence, the subject matters of Uzbek laments are about death and death-related issues. According to the time of their performance, i.e. whether they are performed before or after the burial, and the age, sex and the degree of the affinity of the dead person to the performers, there are some differences between the lament texts. The Uzbek laments are usually performed by women, but there are some other laments performed by men. However, according to their performance manner the ones performed by men differ from the ones that are performed by women.

Uzbek laments have a variable structure due to their formation features. Although most of the laments are composed of quatrains, there are laments with stanzas of two, three, five or more lines. Uzbek laments are performed in the syllabic meter which is considered as the national meter of the Turks. This meter may vary in the Uzbek laments, where there are forms of heptasyllabic, octosyllabic or hendecasyllabic verse. It can be seen that there is a parallelism between the lamenting traditions at many points in Turkey and in Uzbekistan. It is possible to say that the parallelism is not only between the laments and the lamenting tradition in two Turkic societies, but it can also be observed in almost every part of the Turkic world.

**YIĞI:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Bağlarda açılgan gülim, vay gülim, | Oh my dear rose that blossoms in the gardens, |
| Sayrab turgan bülbülim, vay gülim, | Oh my dear rose that sings like a nightingale, |
| Güllar solıb, bülbül ketdi, vay gülim, | Oh my dear rose, roses fade and nightingale is gone, |
| Artar endi müşkülim, vay gülim. | Oh my dear rose, now my troubles are high. |
| Kalam-kalam kaşlaring, vay balam, | Oh my love, your beauty glorifies, |
| Kalandarlar kıldi meni, vay balam. | Oh my love, you made me act like a dervish, |
| Humar-humar közlaring, vay balam, | Oh my love, your eyes are mysterious, |
| Humarilar kıldi meni, vay balam. | Oh my love, you made me all alive. |
| Yığlab aytay kayga ketding, | Crying with all my heart, tell me where you are, |
| Güli rayhanim balam, vay balam. | Oh my love, my rose, my basil, my love |
| Bu anangni taşlab ketding, | You left your mother all alone, |
| Akilu danaginam, vay balam. | My clever and wise, my love, |
| Akilu danaginamga, vay balam, | My clever, my wise, my love, |
| Berdi kim aççık şarab, vay balam? | Who gave you bitter wine, my love? |
| Közyaşlarim sel bolib, vay balam, | My tears turned to a torrent, my love, |
| Kıldi bağrimni kebab, vay balam. | My heart was filled with sorrow, my love. |

(Gülyar 1967: 221)

**MATEM YAR-YARYARLARI:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Hay-hay ölan, hay ölan, armanlı kız, yar-yar, | Hay-hay ölan, hay ölan, troubled girl, yar-yar, |
| Analari köngliga darmanli kız, yar-yar. | Girl with a remedy for her mother's heart, yar-yar. |
| Lalecan ham ketyapti u dünyaga kelinçak, | Lady Lale also passes over, little bride, |
| Ayim kızım saçlari kara tala halinçak. | My lady girl's hair swings on a dark willow. |
| Mal-dünya, sanaga köz salmadi, yar-yar, | She did not care about wealth and thanked God, yar-yar, |
| Bu dünyaga mehman bolib huş ketmadi, yar-yar. | She was a guest in this world, had not enjoyed it, yar-yar. |
| Serv kaddi hiraman, cahan kızı, yar-yar, | Tall girl, coy girl, worldly girl, yar-yar, |
| Aşığıga yetmagan, canan kızı, yar-yar. | Apart from her lover, dear girl, yar-yar. |
| İkki koli tapada, yariga yetalmaydi, | Feeling helpless, apart from the lover, |
| Cümla kızlar içida, oynalmaydi, yar-yar. | Among all the girls she can not dance, yar-yar. |
| Hay-hay ölan, hay ölan, hamrah kızı, yar-yar, | Hay-hay ölan, hay ölan, friendly girl, yar-yar, |
| Ahiratga ketuvdi padşah kızı, yar-yar. | Flies toward eternity, daughter of a sultan, yar-yar. |
| Selam, berna kızım, huş kelibsiz, yar-yar, | Hello my dear girl, welcome, yar-yar, |
| Mehman bolib bu dünyaga, huş kelibsiz, yar-yar. | Welcome to this world as guests, welcome, yar-yar. |
| Ayim kızım saçlari kara talga halinçak, | My lady girl's hair swings on a dark willow. |
| Ayim kızım ketadi kara yerga kelinçak. | My lady girl goes to the dark side, little bride, |
| Arzusiga yetmagan armanli kız, yar-yar, | Troubled girl, she cannot fulfill her desire, yar-yar, |
| Ahiratga kelinçak, darmanli kız, yar-yar. | Girl with a remedy, she flies through eternity, little bride, yar-yar. |
| Hay-hay ölan, hay ölan, canan kızım, yar-yar, | Hay-hay ölan, hay ölan, my dear girl, yar-yar, |
| Hur kızlarning içida padşah kızım, yar-yar. | Among all the houri girls,my queen girl, yar-yar. |

(Sarımsakov 1988: 218-219)

**MATEM ALLALARI:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Alla deb kötardilar, | They deceived, said Allah, |
| Can anam, canım anam, alla. | My mom, my dear mom, alla. |
| Hak hükmüni bitirdilar, | Ceased the rule of Allah, |
| Can anam, canım anam, alla. | My mom, my dear mom, alla. |
| Alıb ketdi elü heşingiz, | Taken by friends and neighbors, |
| Yaningizda yok bir kişingiz, | Nobody aids you for anything, |
| Dad, lahatda yalğız başingiz, | Oh no! All alone in the coffin, |
| Kanday keçar hallaringiz, alla. | No one knows how your condition, alla. |
| Can anam, canım anam, alla. | My mom, my dear mom, alla. |
| Ketaringni bilmedim, alla, | Never thought you would leave, alla, |
| Yolingizda turmadim, alla, | Never been an obstacle for your aims, alla |
| Lal bolib bul tillarim, | My tongue has become tied, |
| “Kayting ana”demadim, alla. | Couldn’t say, “Come back, mom”, alla. |
| Can anam, canım anam, alla. | My mom, my dear mom, alla. |
| Kıbladan kelgan şamal, | The wind comes from Mecca. |
| Bağrimni veyran ayladi, alla. | Broken my heart into pieces, alla. |
| Bemahal kelgan ölim, | The death at an unexpected time, |
| Canimni veyran ayladi, alla. | Ruined my heart, alla. |

(Safarov-Orayeva 2004: 91)

**NEVRUZ YOKLAVI:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Almadan atlar kılay, | Let me create horses from apples, |
| Bargiga hatlar kılay, | Let me write letters on its leaves, |
| Navruz küni anacanimni, | Let me remember my dear mother, |
| Oltırıb yadlar kılay. | On the holy Nevruz day. |
| Oyılsin yerlar, oyılsin-a, | Let the earth be devoured by hell-a, |
| Ortasidan bölinsin-a, | Let it become divided so well -a, |
| Navruz çağı anacanginam, | Let my mother flourish again like a snowdrop,-a, |
| Bayçiçek bolib körinsin-a. | On the holy Nevruz day-a |
| Ösmalar ekkim keladi-ya, | Let me plant henna seed -ya, |
| Bergini tergim keladi-ya, | Let me pick its leaves -ya, |
| Bugün Navruz, mehribanimni, | Let me see my beloved mother once |
| Birgina körgim keladi-ya. | On the holy Nevruz day-ya. |

(Navruz 1992: 31)

**ALLA YOKLAV:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Köngil ardağım, alla, | My secret place in my heart, alla, |
| Süyangan tağım, alla-ya. | My resolve, my protector, alla. |
| Atasidan kalgan yadgarim, | My inheritance of his father, |
| Solımasin bağım, alla-ya, | Never fade away my garden, alla-ya, |
| Alla-ya, alla-ya, alla. | Alla-ya, alla-ya, alla. |
| Top-top bolib kelar mehman, alla, | Oh! Gather everyone, alla, |
| Canginang bolsin aman, alla. | Just be alive, alla. |
| Yüzingni körmay ketgan-a, alla-ya, | That your father never felt you, alla, |
| Ataginang könglimda arman-a, alla, | Is my biggest hunger, alla. |
| Alla-ya, alla-ya, alla. | Alla-ya, alla-ya, alla. |
| Ata yüzingni körmading balam, alla, | Never felt your father, oh my son, alla, |
| Mehriga heç toymading balam, alla. | Never felt his love, oh my son, alla. |
| Bağıçlaring bağlay desam, alla, | If I try to tie your shoes, alla, |
| Sen nega meni kuymading balam, alla, | You never made me attempt too, oh my son, alla, |

| | |
|---|---|
| Alla-ya, alla-ya, alla. | Alla-ya, alla-ya, alla. |
| Ulğaysang atangning yüzi bol, alla, | Be like your father, alla, |
| Mening körar közim bol, alla. | Be my seeing eyes, alla. |
| Ayrılık derdi ölsin balam, alla-ya, | Let the parting end, oh my son, alla-ya, |
| Sen bilan üyimiz tolsin balaginam, alla, | Let our house be filled with you, oh my son, alla, |
| Alla-ya, alla-ya, alla. | Alla-ya, alla-ya, alla. |
| Alla-ya, alla-ya, alla. | Alla-ya, alla-ya, alla. |

(Safarov-Orayeva 2004: 110)

**YOKLAV YAR-YARLARI:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Bakka çıksam, | If I go to the garden, |
| Bağ şamali, | The wind blows, |
| Kakülimni yazadi. | Dishevels all my hair. |
| Toyim küni, | At my wedding day, |
| Zalim ögay, | With the cruel stepparent, |
| Yüragimni ezadi. | Trembles my heart. |
| Bugün bolsang, anacanim, | If you were alive, my dear mom |
| Sılar eding başimni. | You would stroke my hair. |
| Berar eding ak Fatiha, | Pray for me the sura of Fatiha, |
| Tilar eding yaşimni. | Wish me a long life. |
| Anav tağning üstiga, | At the top of that mountain, |
| Koy kelibdi, yar-yar, | The sheep waits, yar-yar, |
| Atasi yok singlimga, | To my orphan sister, |
| Toy kelibdi, yar-yar. | Came the wedding-feast yar-yar. |
| Barib ayting Cebrail, | Go and tell the Angel Gabriel, |
| Beklariga, yar-yar, | To their master, yar-yar, |
| Atamni yubarsin, | Tell them to revive my dad, |
| Toylariga yar-yar. | To the wedding-feast, yar-yar. |
| Astanangni astida, | Under the threshold, |
| Atang yatar, yar-yar, | Lies your father, yar-yar, |
| Ak boz atni yubarsang, | If you send the gray horse, |
| Kelmay yatar, yar-yar. | He can't come, he lies there, yar-yar. |
| Atang sening bolganda, | If your father was alive, |
| Sığır satib sepingni, | By selling his cattle, |
| Kılmasmidi, yar-yar. | Wouldn't he buy a trousseau for you, yar-yar. |
| Tüya satib tügmalar, | By selling his camel, |
| Almasmidi, yar-yar. | Wouldn't he buy buttons for you, yar-yar. |
| Aftabga suv kuydik, | We put water under the sun, |
| Isımaydi, yar-yar. | It never gets hot, yar-yar. |
| Ögay ekan anasi, | Her mom is a stepparent, |
| Yığlamaydi, yar-yar. | She never cries, yar-yar. |
| Hay-hay ölan, can ölan, | Hay-hay ölan, can ölan, |
| Atasizmi, yar-yar. | Is she an orphan, yar-yar. |
| Atasining yoğıdan, | Since she lost her father, |
| Bahasizmi, yar-yar. | Is she worthless, yar-yar. |

(Safarov-Orayeva 2004: 109)

**NOTES**

1 See for the mourning and death ceremonies in Uzbeks Fatma Açık. "Özbekistan'da Defin ve Taziye Merasimleri." Milli Folklor, Sayı: 61, 2004, ss. 142-148; Hüseyin Baydemir. "Özbekistan'da Ölüm Adetleri." Turkish Studies, Sayı: 8, 2009, ss. 662-683.

2 For further information about Uzbek ceremony folklore see Bahadır Sarımsakov. Özbek Merasim Folklori. Taşkent: Fan Neşriyatı, 1986.

3 The Arabic word "Aza" corresponds to the Persian word "Matem" and both words in Turkish have the same meaning "Yas (Mourning, Grief)". As a result of conveying the same meaning, there isn't any reason to call those laments by different terms as "Aza Koşığı" and "Matem Koşığı".

4 A similar situation is observable in Azerbaijani Turkish as well. In Azerbaijani Turkish, the word lament corresponds to the word "ağı" which is also derived from the root "ağla-". See Pertev Naili Boratav. Folklor ve Edebiyat-II. İstanbul: Adam Yayınları, 1982, s. 444.

5 For further information about the word lament see İsmail Görkem. "Ağıtlar." Türk Dünyası Edebiyat Tarihi. Cilt: 3, Ankara: AKM Yayınları, 2003, ss. 452-453.

6 For the topics and examples of laments in Turkey see also Erman Artun. Türk Halk Edebiyatına Giriş. (4. Baskı) İstanbul Kitabevi Yayınları, 2008, ss. 160-178; Doğan Kaya. Anonim Halk Şiiri. Ankara: Akçay Yayınları, 1999, ss. 275-309.

7 A traditional cloth worn over a daily dress by Uzbek men.

8 A traditional hat worn by Uzbek men.

9 Forming a circle, kicking and stamping (striking the ground with their feet), in this ceremony is also called "sadrga tüşma" or "sadr tepiş" in Uzbekistan. This ceremony is performed only allusively in some regions. For samples of the laments performed in these ceremonies see Kambar Nasriddinov. Özbek Defn ve Taziya Merasimlari. Taşkent: Halk Mirası Neşriyatı, 1996, ss. 40-51

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