

**DOI: 10.7596/taksad.v6i1.774**

**Citation:** Ahmadzadeh, F., & Mohandespour, F. (2017). Examining the Social Function of Dramatic Rituals of Mazandaran with Emphasis on Three Rituals of *tir mā sizešu*, *bisto šeše aydimā*, and *čake se mā*. *Journal of History Culture and Art Research*, 6(1), 832-851. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.7596/taksad.v6i1.774>

## **Examining the Social Function of Dramatic Rituals of Mazandaran with Emphasis on Three Rituals of *tir mā sizešu*, *bisto šeše aydimā*, and *čake se mā***

**Fatemeh Ahmadzadeh<sup>1</sup>, Farhad Mohandespour<sup>\*2</sup>**

### **Abstract**

This study investigates the social functions of Mazandaran ancient rituals and examines the relationship between dramatic rituals and indigenous cultures from the past, and the effect of traditions left by the ancestors in today's society. Geographical domain of this study is entire Mazandaran from East to West, and it is tried to consider the quality of performing the rituals and sanctity of these rituals. This study includes an overview of research, literature and research history, theories of social function of dramatic rituals of Mazandaran, data analysis, and discussion and conclusion. Library and field methods are used to collect the required data on a large scale.

In conclusion, it could be argued that further understanding of common beliefs among the people of Mazandaran now and in the past could prevent the disintegration of generations, and it should be noted that all past beliefs and rituals of Mazandaran do not have suitable capabilities to be implemented in today's semi-modern generation and are just for reminding and general knowledge.

**Keywords:** Social function, Ancient beliefs, Ancient rituals, Mazandaran rituals, Social culture.

---

<sup>1</sup> Department of Humanities, Tonekabon Branch, Islamic Azad university, Tonekabon, Iran. E Mail: [fatemeh.maz9@yahoo.com](mailto:fatemeh.maz9@yahoo.com)

<sup>2</sup> Corresponding Author, PhD in Art research Tarbit modares university, Iran – Tehran. E Mail: [Farhad\\_mohandespour@yahoo.com](mailto:Farhad_mohandespour@yahoo.com)

## **Introduction**

Many of the rituals held in Iran are alive in people's belief, and have many functions even now for creating happiness and holding celebrations. The rituals that come from ancient mythology have long had an effective role in worship and praising the forces that govern human life.

These are the forces existing in subconscious of the collective masses and have adapted to the human life today in form of stories, songs, and rituals, so the persistence of these myths in many areas of human life today is undeniable.

Many of these rituals and customs have reached the human today with small or great changes and have mingled with different religions in such a way that the recognition of the basic shape of the ideas behind these convictions is difficult.

Among these beliefs are the assumptions and rituals that exist about **bisto šeše aydimā**, **čake se mā** and **tir mā sizešu** in Mazandaran. This ancient national celebration has been along performing a ritual called *lāl šîš zani* in northern areas of Iran such as Golestan, Mazandaran, Gilan, and cities such as Taleqan, Shahmirzad, and Damghan.

Performing these rituals still enjoys a certain boom in many villages of Mazandaran. In recent years, attempts have been made by scholars from various fields to find and root the components and origins of these rituals. In this research, we are intended to study the nature and reason of these rituals with a perspective different from previous studies and away from celebration concept.

This different perspective deals with rituals to take steps in order to understand and identify some unknown dimensions and examine the social function of the rituals from the past until now with a religious scale.

## **Problem Statement**

Given its history and the emergence of multiple factors of progress in its primitive society, Mazandaran has secrets, of which rituals could be an example. Although scholars have generally defined rituals as character, customary practice, tempers, habits, practices, religion, temperament, feature, and mood, Elizabeth S.ayvanz's theory approves the contradictory definitions of the scholars. However, the author of this article studies rituals as mysterious functions in Mazandaran that is a symbol of good and musable coexistence.

The rituals of **tir mā sizešu**, **čake se mā**, **bisto šeše aydimā** and all reflect the spirit and mood of the people who have ancient and genuine civilization. From the perspective of social functions, rituals can be influenced by daily life, including work, family, and personal and

social relationships. Although many of these rituals have mixed with religion, religion and folklore, certainly, they still have preserved their traditional old nature.

For example, **tir mā sizešu** is a ritual where Arash myth flows through it and despite the presence of religious beliefs, it is strongly dominated by national beliefs.

By examining social functions of Mazandaran rituals, this study answers the question of what the most important rituals of Mazandaran are according to social functions. The subject of this study is recognition of the status and social function of dramatic rituals in Mazandaran, and among other issues of this research is the quality of formation of these drama and sub-dramas in Mazandaran.

The author tries to analyze the relationship between dramatic rituals and local culture left from the past and examine the impact of traditions inherited from ancestors in the bustle of modern society.

### **Related Research**

Several books have been written in this regard including *A Window on Customs, Quotations, Rituals and Performances of Mazandaran* by Jahangir Nasri Ashrafi. In this study, by examining theater and sub-issues relate to it, Nasri Ashrafi has compiled his book in several chapters, including rituals and beliefs.

Although Nasri Ashrafi has not offered a specific solution for benchmarking to create dramatic works, he has examined rites of different regions of Mazandaran, from the point of implementation, sub-cultures, and the background of traditions remaining from the past.

From the rituals to authors of drama: Nasri Ashrafi, Shirzadi Ahudashti along with Sohrabi, the authors of the mentioned studies, in several chapters, have dealt with history of culture and dramatic rituals in Mazandaran that could contribute to social relations.

Music contains a few scattered studies on some of the ritual, dramatic, and musical issues of Iranian ethnicities. Some studies included in this work have national aspects and others are dedicated to some cultures and sub-cultures of Iran tribes and nomads.

It should be noted that this work entitled *Drama and Music in Iran* was published in three volumes in 2004 by Around Publications sent Aaron and welcomed by those interested in Iran oral traditions.

### **The Importance and Necessity of Research Topic**

Addressing the issues of rite, culture, and beliefs, which are of the major concepts and issues in social life, sheds light on hidden layers of human group behavior throughout history and shows clear prospects of the actions and performance of a society.

No doubt, without knowing the opinions and beliefs of the past, one cannot have an embodiment of future route to run and organize social and cultural programs. It is with proper understanding of the facts that one can visualize the past and separate the changes recently created and thus design future with a profound cultural support.

In this era when social and cultural lives of the Iranian people have a special importance and invaded by industrial and automotive culture, dealing with research on traditional, urban, rural, and tribal societies and identifying human-making cultural values in them are of great importance. Many of these ancient rituals are valuable heritage of our land, most of which have been abandoned or are at risk of being forgotten.

Conducting various parts of this study attracts attention of scientific and cultural centers to these cultural rituals, and searching for roots and cultural context creating them leads to their development and cultural value. It is our duty to be active in preserving this valuable heritage as the researchers of the field of art and culture.

Studies of this kind have a great role in paving the path for further studies and help identify and introduce Iranian ethnic cultures along with similar cultures in the world. Keeping these rituals leads to value beliefs and prevent forgetting values and genuine Iranian traditions, especially Mazandarani ones.

### **Research Method**

The purpose of choosing research method is researchers' determining of what method can help find the answers to the questions raised more accurately, faster, and cheaper.

This depends on the purpose and nature of the subject and the researcher's executive facilities. In the present study, entitled “Studying the social function of dramatic rituals in Mazandaran,” considering all the above, the researcher considered descriptive method for the study.

### **Spatial Scope of the Study**

Geographical limit of this study is Mazandaran from East to West and it is tried to conduct the study in places where traditional rituals are held.

### **Temporal Scope of the Study**

The age range is from 1934 to 1956 of men and women that can help achieve the ideas and beliefs in this study.

### **Method of Determining the Case Study:**

Data collection tool in this study includes documentary method (the researcher uses library method by visiting the library in Mazandaran).

## **Observation Method**

Concerning the sensitive and important issue of social function of dramatic rituals of Mazandaran, the researcher believes that it is subject to the researcher's belief, he has referred to several places in order to have interviews with experts and old people specialists in the neighborhoods and the experts of this field. In doing so, the researcher has referred to places of holding this ritual in Culture Center, Farhang o Ershad, Broadcasting, different regions of Mazandaran, and theaters where the rituals are performed to witness the ceremony from close and do not argue baselessly. Then the researcher dealt with the studies conducted, used valid databases, and journals in the field.

## **Data Collection Tools**

Notes, images, interviews, the Internet, libraries, and valid databases

## **Methods of Data Analysis**

According to the observations, field research, and population, the researcher examines the data and results of research, and tries to find a cogent answer to the main research question.

## **Limitations of the Study:**

According to the field studies, the researcher in this study survey needs people aged 50 to 80 years to be able to explain well about holding these rituals. Unfortunately, now with pass of time, many rituals are not performed as the past or individuals familiar with these rituals cannot easily be found. Moreover, a borderline should be considered between rituals and religion. Unfortunately, in some cases, rituals become close to superstition.

## **Introducing Mazandaran**

Mazandaran province with an area of about 23756.4 square kilometers makes up 1.46 percent of the country's area. Its northern limit is the Caspian Sea, the southern limit is Tehran and Semnan, its western limit is Gilan, and the eastern limit is Golestan. According to the latest national distribution, it has 22 cities: Amol, Babol, Babolsar, Behshahr, Tonkabon, Juybar, Chaloos, Ramsar, Saari, Savadkooh, Simorgh, Ghaemshahr, Galugah, Mahmoudabad, Neka, Noor, Noshahr, Fereidoonkenar, Abbas Abad, Savadkooh North, Kalardasht and Miandrod. It has 58 cities, 55 districts, 129 rural districts, and 3697 villages (statistical Yearbook of Mazandaran, Management and Planning Organization of Mazandaran, 2002).

Mazandarani people speak Persian language and Mazandarani dialect. Mazandarani dialect that is the surviving dialect of ancient Iranian language (Middle Persian) is common almost everywhere in the province. Mazandarani call themselves Gilak and their language Gilaki. In this province, 7.99% of the population is Shia Muslims.

Examining human resources status and employment of the province shows that of the total population, 1071463 people (about 40.01 percent) are economically active and approximately, of every 2.87 people of the province, only one person is working or is looking for a job. Provincial unemployment rate is 10.2 and 89.8 percent is the employment rate (Management and Planning Organization of Mazandaran, development planning studies, Volume I, 2011).

### Tabari Calendar

After the death of Yazdgerd III, the last Sassanid king in the year (31 Persian year) Espahbod Gil Jamasb, King of Tabaristan, raised the independence flag that is the origin of Tabari Calendar. Tabari Calendar months at the beginning had the same name as ancient Iranian calendar. Perhaps it could be argued that Tabari Calendar is a kind of “Kharaji Calendar” or a combination of three calendars: “Vahijegi,” “Orfi,” and Kharaji that was common in the early and late Sassanid era. This is because such as Vahijegi, is has a leap year, and like Orfi year, it has all the rituals and national customs, and like Kharaji Calendar, taxes were given in it (Houmand, 1996, 10).

**Table (1):** The names of the months of Persia: The old Iranian, Vahijegi, Deilami, Tavari, Kharaji, Percy, Jalali, and New Iranian

Spring	No	The months names	Receiving features of each month in short	Days
	1	Farvardin	Faravati, the redemption of plant, nurturing the soul and life force	30
	2	Ordibehesht	The beauty and majesty of the best way, flourishing and sublimation	30
	3	Khordad	Henrodat, honesty and justice, clustering	30
Summer	4	Tir	Tishtrya, guard of rain, when the wheat and barley give yield, very long	30
	5	Mordad	Amordat, immortality and eternity, keeper of the plant, warm and lighting	30
	6	Shahrivar	Fire guardian, the land of dreams, desire and	30

			abundance	
Fall	7	Mehr	Mitra, Blaze and the treaty of friendship, month of fruits, equality of day and night	30
	8	Aban	Angel of water, water abundance, prosperity and rising of rivers, the moth of dried fruit	30
	9	Azar	Yeter, angel of clean and dear fires, setting fire, light keeper	30
Winter	10	Dey	Dathoush, Dadarhoush and the Creator, the return of the sun	30
	11	Bahman	Vohu Manah Nikmanesh, long cold, Setting Sadeh fire	30
	12	Esfand	Spanta Armaty, clean humble, defeat of cold, the advent of Farvardegan	30
	-	Andargâh (Epahomene)	Ahnood, Ashtood, Sepantmad, Vahukhshtar, Veshtohisht	5
	The number of days of the year			

(Humand, 2015, 41)

**Table (2):** Concurrency of new Iranian months: Solar with Ancient (Kharaji), Tabari (Mazandarani) and ancient months (Kharaji), Deilami (Gilani)

Time	Order of Months	Tabari Months	The start of ancient months simultaneous to new months	Tabari (Mazandarani) months	Deilami months order (Gilani)	The start of months simultaneous to new Iranian months	Deilami (Gilani) months
-	Patak		From 1 to 25 Farvardin		Panjik	Began months	From 16 to 20 Farvardin

		(andargâh)		(andargâh)	
Spring	9	Arkeh mah	From 6 Farvardin to 6 Ordibehesht	Sia mah	From 19 to 21 Farvardin
	10	Damah	From 15 Ordibehesht to 30 Khordad	Dia mah	From 20 Ordibehesht to 18 Khordad
	11	Vahmaneh mah	From 4 Khordad to Tir 2	Varfaneh mah	From 19 Khordad to Tir 17
Summer	12	Norzamah	From 3 Tir to Mordad 1	Esfandar mah	From 18 Tir to Mordad 16
	1	Fardineh mah	From 20 Mordad to 30 Mordad	Nowrouz mah	From 17 Mordad to 15 Shahrivar
	2	Karcheh mah	From 1 Shahrivar to 30 Shahrivar	Kurach mah	From 16 Shahrivar until 14 Mehr
Fall	3	Har mah	Shahrivar 31 to 29 Mehr	Ariyeh mah	From 15 Mehr to 14 Aban
	4	Tir mah	From 30 Mehr to 29 Aban	Tir mah	From 15 Aban to 14 Azar
	5	Malar mah	From 30 Aban to 29 Azar	Mordal mah	From 15 Azar to 14 Dey
Winter	6	Shervineh mah	From 30 Azar to 29 Dey	Sharir mah	From 15 Dey to 14 Bahman
	7	Mir mah	From 30 Dey to 29 Bahman	Amir mah	From 15 Bahman to 14 Esfand
	8	Ouneh mah	From 30 Bahman to 29 Esfand	Aval mah	From 15 Esfand to 15 Farvardin

(Humand, 2015, 41)

Religious and national festivals and ceremonies in Iran, since antiquity, were held in each month with the name of that month. Of these twelve festivals, only Tirgan called *tir mā sizeû* (thirteen night of Tir) is still held in Mazandaran. Nevertheless, holding other celebrations such as Farvardingan, Ordibeheshtgan, and so on have been forgotten.



## **Functionalism**

Functionalism is of major theories of sociology, so that from the late 1930s until early 1960s sociology, it was being introduced through functionalism in America. Functionalism in historical context was born in social and cultural context of West, but our research and scientific centers use this theory as a general theory in analyzing social issues, and teaching sociology students.

This study, while accepting the principle of functional analysis, claims that common functionalism carries native cultural and social conditions of its birthplace, which has caused serious problems for its efficiency in the communities different in cultural and social terms, and this theory will require reconstruction. Concerning the relationship between its theory and assumptions, it becomes clear that the current theory of functionalism in religious communities, especially in our Islamic society, has serious inefficiencies because of its basic conflicts with religious ontological and anthropological principles. It is natural that it experiences disruption and inefficiency in methodological perspectives. As the explanatory power of the theory of functionalism in those Western societies, where the bourgeois class is not formed, faces challenges, in religious communities, it has faced challenge as well. The abovementioned theory cannot explain social phenomena correctly and fully according to our social and religious conditions, because this theory has formed in a cultural environment very different from the cultural environment of religious communities. Therefore, the functionalism theory of dramatic rituals, like other exotic theories, will be efficient in our religious communities only under two circumstances:

First, it changes cultural foundations of religious community and is in line with their cultural foundations. That is why a theory that is conservative in its community may act radically and seek change in another community.

Second, changes happen in the main assumptions of the theory and theory is reconstructed in accordance with the culture of our religious communities. In other words, after recognition, the localized theory produces another theory. Otherwise, this theory and similar theories will be inefficient in our communities and its implementation will be detrimental to our or any other society.

## **Ritual**

Ritual always means the repetition of a "practical example" that the ancestors or gods have done at the beginning and history, and human thanks to manifestation of holiness tries to give "ontological" sense to the most banal and senseless actions. Thus, the man in old times tries to

pass through the borders and reach beyond time to eternity by converting all the biological acts to formalities, ceremonies, and rituals.

### **Functions of Rituals in Human Life**

In primitive societies, human has guaranteed his survival by implementing rituals. This set of regular actions, which is called ritual, gradually delivers another child to human society in the historical process called drama, but drama is not the primary phenomenon, although has many factors in common with ritual. Ritual and theater use the same basic elements: music, dance, speech, masks, costumes, performers, spectators, and the stage. In the most primitive rituals, the use of pantomime dance with ragtime is essential and the sound of singing sometimes becomes necessary. Speech and dialogues are of less importance, but mask and clothes are considered as the main means of implementing rituals. The dominant emergence of these functions can be used in theater with a variety of methods and degrees. Thus, it can be concluded that primitive and theatrical rituals that we know are clearly linked together.

### **The Impact of Rituals on Human**

First, holding rituals is an ethereal and divine duty. By performing them, the individual frees himself from the retribution and punishment of doing religious practices. Secondly, performing the rituals correctly brings gifts and blessings. Since human is a collective entity seeking groups, finding collective identity and social recognition is meeting one of his basic needs. Holding ceremonies and rituals is a kind of mental and physical engagement whose existence and necessity is essential for human survival, and participation in religious rituals make psychological refinement for the participants.

### **The Differences between Rituals and Drama**

In the process of evolution and change into drama, rituals have lost something called faith of narrators and partners, and today, performing drama is not a heavenly and divine task. Moreover, its non-implementation causes no terrible side effects for the individual or society, but why? It is natural that with the advancement of knowledge, humans thinking will change, and they will not say prayers for rain or hold ceremonies for change of seasons.

### **What is Ritual Drama?**

Nazarzadeh Kermani points out ritual-traditional drama are nothing new, and since the art of theater is born and nurtured in a rituals-religious strain, it can be argued that in a period of history these two phenomena, theater and religion, have been one. There have been no significant differences between religious rituals and drama rituals, but what is done today in contemporary theater as ritual drama is often far from the concept of religion and follows apparent and contractual aspects of the rituals, and using this form is because of using drama

tricks. In this method, playwright and director try to transfer their own special revelation and experiences using rituals and revelation to the groups of performers and thus to spectators. For example, some of Shakespeare's works can be discussed: including "Richard III".

### **The Function of tir mā sizešu in Mazandaran**

Some experts consider tir mā sizešu the same as Tirgan that was held on thirteenth Tir (solar equivalent of 12 Aban). Mythologists have considered it to be related to the rising of Tishtrya Halvi star or Tishtariye in Avesta. In some areas in the evening of thirteen Tir (4 July), people lit torch or suchu and went to welcome this evening. Under the pretext of this night, a piece of fabric was sent to the bride from the family of the groom a day before tir mā sizešu, in addition to conventional rites of that night. People of Savadkouh believe that on tir mā sizešu for a moment all waters of the world stand still and if one can understand that moment, whatever he throws into water will be gold. People believe that this night is the only night when the horse closes its eyes and so-called sleeps (Yousefi, 2001, 59).

### **Lāl šiš/ Lāl šuš**

The most important ritual of tir mā sizešu is running "lāl šiš," due to which this ceremony is called lāl.lāli.šu (šiš means a thin stick and lāl is the one who goes to people's houses without saying a word at the night of thirteen Tir and hit their bodies gently with the same stick) (Pahlavan, 2004, 90).

The performers of lāl lāli are mostly boys and rarely women are selected as lāl. They moved towards people's homes in different groups of two to five while reciting poetry (Khalatbari, 2008, 136).

Sometimes lāl used to jump into a river with cold water at the evening of 12 Tir to become mute and unable to speak during the performance. Lāle. Mār (mute mother, who was with lāl and gathered the gifts) was obliged to provide twigs of berry tree in that evening (tute.šiš-šišk.tute) (Madjidzadeh, 2005, 79).

In some areas of Mazandaran, lāl did not paint his face black, but covered his face with a cloth or a hat, while only his lips and mouth were clear. He used to go to people's houses along with two assistants, šiš.dār, carriers (twigs) and the one with the sack (carrying gifts of the people that poured in his bag and carried them) went to people's homes.

At the night of thirteen, people were waiting for lāl and his team. They are messengers of good health and happiness and removers of suffering and disasters. Lāl enters the house and rooms without talking, does not speak, and even does not smile. He is serious and passionate and does not beg. People give him remuneration for his performing the ritual. Lāl was responsible to fondle all the assets and organisms and inanimate ones with šiš, and all were

interested in receiving the blow from lāl and that blow was as a good omen and believed that they will get their intention and desire. According to their economic situation, homeowners put some money, rice, sugar, honey, sesame sweets, rice cookies, wool socks and the like inside the bag of lāle.mār. In some places, the landlord put the gratuity of the group in a bundle and sent out of the window, and lāl thanked the landlords in loud voice saying a,a,a,a,a (Khalatbari, 2008, 136).

Šiš ceremony continued late into the night. For thirteen unlucky ominous not to strike, lāl continued his job in silence and did not speak at all. In the end, the group gathered in the house of one of the members and divided what they had gathered among themselves. Then they washed their face and hands and tried so that no one noticed who the lāl was, because it is believed that if this secret is revealed, the wishes are not met. Landlords used to place the stick and šiš under roof of the house (čăč) and take care of it until thirteenth of the next year. It was believed that with the presences of the sticks, blessing of the house increased and the barn of the property owner was saved from thieves and harmful organisms. To test the lāl's resistance, who had sealed his mouth with a cloth, some playful people of the family used to tell jokes to make him laugh or speak. If they succeeded in breaking lāl's silence, then deprived him of the gift of that house, but few people managed to break the silence and resistance of lāl.

When going to people's home, lāle.mār says

- lāl bamou, lāl bamou
- Pareh burdeh, emsal Bamou
- Aspeh asp savar bamou, piseh gondeh khar bamou
- lāl ana, lāl ana, Sali ata var nana
- Khahu pashalvar ana, lāl chak gali nana
- Ama khejalati nava

Lāl came lāl came. Last year past, this year came. He came on white horse back, piseh gondeh khar came (piseh gondeh khar is food composed of flour, rice, powdered walnut, persimmon sap sugar or honey or sugar cane or forest persimmon).

Lāl comes once a year with blue pants. Shall the lāl's leg

Not break and do not embarrass us (PoorKarim, 1976, 82).

### **Divination**

Sadegh kia writes: "Among the other rituals of tir mā sizešu is divination (mostly from Hafez) as well as "falgush" in Tabari, it is called "Gushdari," Gushyari, and Gushari" (Kia, 1948,

249). The most important divinations of this night are pin horoscope, walnut horoscope, “Gushdari,” and Hafiz divination.

### **Sinjağ.fāl (Pin Horoscope)**

To do this, they thrust a pin or a needle to the skirt of the one with the intention (mostly girls about to marry) as stitching. Then a woman or a man from family, neighbors and close friends sang a few local songs and lyrics (like singing or narration). At the end, the audience judged the horoscope from the concept of the verses to see whether it was good or bad.

In another type of this horoscope, at first, the copper container of milking was filled with water. The water was prepared from different sources or from the houses of neighbors. The audience or family members threw things like pins, rings, beads, etc. into the container, then the person who had memorized some poems, sat by the dish, began to stir up the water inside the container, and recited poetry.

The poems were usually Amiri attributed to Amir Pazevari. At the end of every couplet, they took something out of the container and gave it to the owner. He used to relate the poetry with his intentions and interpreted it. In some parts of Mazandaran, for removing objects from inside the container, pubescent girl was gotten help from, but sometimes the one reading poetry did it.

### **Fal -e- Hafez**

Hafez book of poems is used more than other books for fortune-telling. In *tir mā sizešu* the druid is the one who has brought Hafez book, doyen, or literate person of the meeting. The druid told fortune from Hafez even for children in the cradle. If he were interested in a number of absentees, he would tell fortune for them too (Rooholamini, 1990, 40).

Durid closes his eyes and places his forefinger inside Hafez's books, then opens the book, and starts to read the lyrics from the beginning of that page. If poetry suits the intention of the person with the intention, it brings him happiness, otherwise it is considered ominous. According to Rouholamini, folk belief is that in divination of Hafez, he must be sworn to have a good horoscope.

### **Walnut Horoscope**

To run the walnut horoscope (*pekkā*), durid turns some walnuts in his closed palm and throws them on the field. Then the one with the wish takes one of them from the ground and the quality of the inside of the walnut represents a good omen or a bad fortune.

## **Gushyari**

this used to be of the horoscopes of *tir mā sizešu*. At the time of sunset, marriageable women and girls used to stay as *falgush* (eavesdroppers) on the paths and perceived the passersby's words as their horoscope. If they hear a bad word, they see it as revelation and become so unhappy that cannot be described" (Allameh, 1949, 110).

## **Foods**

In most parts of Mazandaran, the refreshments and snacks of this night are called *xāčči / xārči* (good thing). Depending on the location and status of the family, it includes things such as sweets (homemade or from market), oranges, pomegranates, watermelons, melons, pistachios, raisins, toasted wheat, rice sweet or *bādune/baudune*, *Maklmeh/Dokhtarduneh/māmu.jing.jing* (combination of rice, white or brown sugar and oil), a variety of seeds, roasted pepper, walnuts, hemp, sesame sweets (*pešte.zik*, a combination of sesame, black or white sugar or honey plus oil) and the like, which should be thirteen (Rooholamini, 1990, 87).

In the past, according to the tradition, mother in law would sit beside the samovar, gave freshly brewed tea to all family members, and then divided the food among all. On this night, the girl who has a husband, when she wants to go to her father's house, her husband must have a watermelon to offer to her father, and if the boy goes to his father's house, his wife should have a watermelon to give to her father.

After drinking tea, the head of the family takes watermelon, leaves in a tray, takes the knife and saying "Enjoy your meal all" cuts the watermelon, and offer everyone. After eating watermelon, they bring grapes, and the family head gives it to everyone. At this time, the father goes out quietly and out of sight of all, takes a broom, gets back into the room quickly, and hits everyone's back saying "Disaster away, pain and disease away," and then sits in his place (Rooholamini, 1990, 98).

According to some researchers, **tir mā sizešu** of Mazandarani is the ancient Iranian celebration of Tirgan and "*lāle.šiš*" is a sign of Arash's arrow that remains a year in homes so that the next year again, *lāl* comes with new sticks.

*Lāl* is a symbol of the old Iranian state who were stopped of holding their ceremonies because of being "Gabr" (Zoroastrian) and they stayed silent (Poorkarimi, 1976, 84).

Perhaps the rituals of the night and walking in the streets and beating people with sticks are signs of making people aware and inviting them to fight the alien to rise up and be a hero like Arash. Moreover, getting together at night is a symbol of preparation of people for the enlightenment, the exchange of ideas, and struggle against oppression and darkness.

A number of elderly in Mazandaran believe that Imam Ali (AS) was born on the night of **tir mā sizešu** and this night should be celebrated.

### **Functions of Bisto šeše Aydimā**

Iranians have always respected their dead and have always tried to keep them happy with them in any way possible. Giving votive and alms for the dead, which is one of the most common rituals of Friday night in most parts of the country, is a symbol of this. In addition, among residents of most rural and urban areas of the country, last Thursday of the year is dedicated to the dead and as we know, on that day, people go to the graves of their missing loved ones and read Fatiha for the souls of them and give charity.

Mazandarani people consider 26 of Eid al-Tabari, which is Tir 28 (July 19) as the Day of the Dead, and a special ceremony is held every year on this day in rural areas. Most of the residents of villages in Mazandaran, who have an irresistible urge to hold ceremonies and to participate in it, do not know about the history of it and his philosophy. However, there are resources on the subject telling us this ancient ritual is of the old traditions and myth of Mazandaran rooted in the beliefs of the people of Pishdadi era. According to the Wikipedia encyclopedia, Fereydoun at the age of 16 secretly went to his mother and asked the secret of his life and when he became aware of the murder of his father by the order of Zahhak, he built a great army of Mazandarani people and went to fight Zahhak. During the war that took place, a great number of his warriors and supporters of his army were killed, but he defeated Zahhak and chained him. Mazandarani people see 28 Tir (July 19) as the victory day of Fereydoon over Zahhak and besides celebrating this day, they pay homage to the brave young men who died during the war of Fereydoon against Zahhak. Mazandarani people call this day *bisto šeše aydimā*. During the years of holding this tradition life, they have added honoring their dead to the event and every year with the arrival of this day, they lit torches and hang from the porches or columns of houses or trees in front of their houses. Moreover, by going to cemetery, they attend the graves of their dead and light candle or *suchu* (wood torch) and damn Zahhak. In some villages of Mazandaran, it is the tradition that a few days before *bisto šeše aydimā*, people prepare for the ceremony. They cook great food, prepare sweets and fruit, and early in the morning, they go to the shrines and cemeteries and remain by the dead's graves, eat there, give votive, and a local market is formed at the margin of the market, and the participants in the ceremony trade.

Then in the evening, women and girls return home, and some of the men of the village on behalf of the others go to see the rice paddies and upon returning, they promise the flourishing stems of the rice to the people of the village. The villagers, after hearing the good news, for thanksgiving for the growth of rice stalks, gather in one place and celebrate it. On this day,

various events including elegy, horse riding, wrestling, and so on are held and after finishing of the traditional wrestling and determining the champion, the sheep already prepared is awarded to the champion.

### **Functions of se mā, Recalling a Ritual (čake se mā)**

Dance and music have existed in Iran since long time ago. In the Achaemenid and Parthian eras in addition to the religious aspects, it had martial aspect. "In Mehr ritual, an unknown form of it was common among the Parthians, during the Sassanian these two arts were seen more the past. Traces left of various dance ceremony of the old times before the great empires are to the extent that leaves no doubt in proving the existence of this art in Iran plateau (Nasri Ashrafi, 2000, 31).

### **Se mā**

Native wise dances are certificate and mythical symbol of the ethnic groups. These charismatic dances are the symbols of the spirit, ideas, love, and the life code of our various communities.

"Se mā" / čake se mā is the delicate, elegant, and exciting dance of Mazandaran people that according to a saying "it has its roots in Indo-European dance." Although Se mā dancers are usually women and generally Se mā is a female dance, some men are adept in its implementation. In addition to its religious aspects, Se mā is a social dance that is done the family meeting and celebration of joy.

Mazandarani celebrate their wonderful moments with Se mā and with this ritual dance, they coordinate with nature they want to dominate. Se mā dancer imitates the movements of birds, animal, movement in the leaves of the trees in dance moves. Se mā is often a solo dance and if done collectively, anyone acts alone and independently. By wearing a floral garment as well as short trousers with many wrinkles and flappy called "šelvār" / "šele Šelvār" / "šelvārkel kel" or (Shaliteh), on their long pants "tāmun" / "tang tāmun" or (tange tāmun), they show their art. Mazandarani men also have a special dance that is obsolete today. In epic dance of men, Se mā dancer ponds one of his feet on the floor and raises his hands continuously in a coordinate way. While leaving, Se mā dancer takes the hand of one of the spectators brings him to the scene and leaves the scene.

"Lāk semā": this is a kind of semā done with bowls, trays and the like. In some areas of Mazandaran, "dasmāl semā" is also common. In "dasmāl semā," the performer shows his art with a handkerchief in his hand.

"Majme semā": This is a semā with a majme (a big tray) over the head and "lampā semā" is semā with a burner is also other types of dance.



“Derum/ derum bakordan” is a dance that is common in some parts of western Mazandaran. Derum is done both individually and group during weddings and family celebrations after the victory of the wrestler in "Lucho" wrestling. In the music of Mazandaran, there are cheerful pieces that are usually run by Sorna (a kind of horn). “Semā hāl,<sup>3</sup>” “gaberge / gevāgre,<sup>4</sup>” “reze kāri,<sup>5</sup>” Rouwni,” “jeloi jeli dā ri,<sup>6</sup>” and “Šar.o. Šor<sup>7</sup>” are of the components played at weddings.

Semā hāl shows different states, and it is in Segah theme, which is close to stick dance of Khorasan in rhythms and melodies. Semā has a special feature in Mazandaran weddings. On such occasions, one cannot consider a particular time for its implementation, but in the following times, it is more:

- Rakht barshi (tailoring clothes) (the day before the wedding while tailoring garment bride and groom clothes)
- Henandu sho: henna night after putting henna on the bride and groom hands
- Darzi sho shabe darzi (the night before the wedding)
- Hadye girun: ceremony of getting gifts
- Majme. Girun: majme. Giran
- Atthe arrival of the bride to the groom's house
- Homemade instruments used in semā are Tasht Volak that some women have a special skill in playing them. The spectators with applause "Kolle vang" (song) and joy accompany the musician and semā dancer. Mazandaranis ritual dance, semā, belongs to the future of children of this land that industrial civilization, and considerations and necessities of the life have faded its color. We hope the dynamics and durability of this ancient, heavy, and full of nice-attraction dance.

---

3 Sama state

4 This is played when the groomsman comes next to the groom by Sorna along with decerkoten (timpani), gaberge is in the theme of Abouata.

5 Reze kāri: is of the final pieces of the wedding, which will be played on three tones in Segah.

6 jeloi jeli dā ri: is in Shur theme that is played while taking the bride home, played in three tones, which is in Segah theme

7 Šar.o. Šor: this is of the the parts related to dance at weddings played in the groom's house in three tones, which is in Segah theme

## **Conclusion**

Mazandarani people live in the lap of nature and their sustenance and production is mostly with livestock and agriculture. The impact of customs in their lives has been remarkable. These new forms of life have rendered some social functions of some ideas and beliefs ineffective and have made them outcast in the current society. The secret of inefficiency of functionalism theory refers to its cultural roots.

Functionalism is the product of modern science and formed according to the bourgeois class culture in America. Due to the conflicts of these presuppositions with the Islamic community culture, traditional functionalism cannot properly explain issues of this kind of society, unless it makes the cultural foundation of those communities in line with it and makes it local.

## **Recommendations and Solutions**

1. Creating appropriate places as museums or traditional structure with the old tissue structure and government and authorities support to create cultural centers or various exhibitions to introduce and demonstrate the capabilities of these beliefs, which can be in form of various exhibitions or theater or movie scenes that is more attractive and more durable
2. Organizing and giving orientation to the beliefs and the participation of the younger generation can prevent the rupture of generations and promote the quality level of respect for past generations. In his regard, one can show appropriate models consistent with respect for past generations. Moreover, with respect and connecting the ideas and beliefs of the ancestors to good behavior of today, one can preserve both the tradition and modernity that in turn destroys many social problems the youth face in today's world.

## **References**

- Ariel, D. (2011). *History of Civilization (Vol. 2)*, (Trans.: Amir Arianpour), Tehran: Scientific and Cultural Pub.
- Assadian Khoramabadi, M. (2005). *Rites of Passage in Iran*, Tehran: Bright.
- Binayi, D. & Vazinabadi, G.A. (2001). *Proceedings of the Caspian Range*, Tehran: Conductivity.
- Bracket, O. (1996). *The history of World Theater (Vol 1)*, (Trans.: Hushang Azadivar), Tehran: Morvarid.

- Dekhoda, A. A. (1998). *Dekhoda Dictionary*, Tehran: Print Publications Institute of Tehran University.
- Enayati, A. A. (2002). *A look at the History: Customs and Culture of Mazandaran*, Shelfin.
- Golamali, V. (1986). *Mazandaran and Astar Abad*. Tehran: Scientific and Cultural Pub.
- Kotanayi, M. (1991). *Mazandaran Oral Literature (Vol. 1)*, Tehran.
- Krapocarl, A. Malinowski, V. & Kazenoloy, S. (1993). *Treatise on the History of Religions*, Translated by Jalal Stari, Tehran: Soroush.
- Majidzadeh, M. (2005). *Ancient Rituals*, Saari: Cultural Research.
- Malakpour, J. (1985). *Excerpt from the History of Theater in the World*. Keyhan.
- Monshi, A. N. (2011). *Calila e Dimna: Dramatic Rituals*. Tehran: Pars book.
- Mousavian, S. J. (1992). *An Essay on the Geography of Savadkuh*, Saari: Mahshad Institute.
- Nasri Ashrafi, A. D. & Sohrabi, S. J. (2012). *From Ritual to Drama*, Saaari: Aaron Pub.
- Nasri Ashrafi, A. D. & Sohrabi, S. J. (2013). *Exploring Themes of Ritual Singing*, Saari: Aaron Pub.
- Rooholamini, M. (1992). *Principles of Anthropology*, PNU, Attar Publications.
- Rostami, A. R. (2009). *Beliefs, Ideas, and Thought of People*. Saari: Zare offset.
- Saidinejad, R. (2009). *Cultural and Media Atlas of Mazandaran*, Publication Office of Research.
- Satari, J. (2012). *World Mythology (Vol. 3)*, Tehran: Markaz Publications.
- Segal, R. A. (2011). *Myth and Religion*, Translated by Ahmad Reza, Tehran: Mahi Publications.
- Shakhan, E. & A. B. Muhammad ibn J. (1972). *Bukhara History of Performing Rituals*, (Trans.: Abu Nasr Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Nasr Alqobadi). Tehran: Iranian Cultural Foundation.
- Shayan, A. (2000). *Mazandaran Books*, Scientific Publications.
- Tafazali, A. G. (1998). *Maulana and Sufi Sema in America, Two Worlds*, 5.
- Yazdanpanah, L. T. (2003). *Mazandaran History*, Tehran: Cheshmeh.
- Yousefi, F. (2001). *Culture and Tradition of Savadkuh*, Saar: Shelfin.
- Zoka, Y. (1978). *Dances in Art, History and People, 191-193*, Tehran.

## **Other Sources**

Abedi, A. H. (2016) Kharkak, 44 years old, Co-operative Village.

Atashak, H. A (2016) Rostailfor, 55 years old, a retired Central Alborz Steel, Third Grade Guidance School.

Barzgar, F. K. H. (2016) Zirabi, 90 years old, Housewife.

Darzi, M. (2016) Amol, 62 years old, a Shopkeeper, Read and Write.

Derakhshandeh, H. A. (2016) Palasfild, 54 years old, a Retired Education, BA in Psychology.

Hosni, M. (2016) Sarkhabad Shirgah village, 65 years old, Housewife.

Hosseini, N. (2016) Haft tan, 57 years old, a Retired Education Diploma.

Jamali, I. (2016) Sorkh Kala Savadkuh, 73 year old, Illiterate.

Mahjouri, M. Gh. (2016) Kelarjan, 69 year old, Farmer.

Mahmoudi, R. A. (2016) Alamkala, 60 years old, a Shopkeeper.

Mehrabi, KH. (2016) Gadilakala village, 50 years old, a Retired Education Diploma.

Mohammadi, M. J. (2016) Darzikala, 70 year old, Farmers, Illiterate.

Najafi, M. (2016) Savadkoh, 54 years old, Housewife, Literate.

Nourinejad, I. (2016) Ghaemshahr, 70 years old, a Shopkeeper, Arth.

Talebzadeh, M. Gh. (2016) Rustayatu, 70 year old, Farmer.

Teimuri, T. M. (2016) Raiskala village, 53 year old, Housewife, Fifth Grade Guidance School.

<http://www.aftab.ir>

<http://www.tebyan-babol.ir>

[http://www. Weboy.zendennood.com](http://www.Weboy.zendennood.com)

<http://www.google.com>

<http://www.yahoo.co.com>

<http://www. Mazandaran.com>

<http://www.tabarestan.com>