



Sirni Zagovezni Giving forgiveness



The Bulgarian Orthodox Church celebrates the feast of Sunday of the Holy Sepulchre, called by the people Syni Zagovezni. The feast is celebrated seven weeks before Easter and one week after Mesni Zagovesni, and after it, the Lent begins.



- ▣ The feast is also called Pokladi and Forgiveness. Traditionally, on Midsummer's Eve, relatives and acquaintances forgive each other for any wrongdoings during the past year. In some places in Bulgaria, after the evening service, forgiveness of church officials with Christians takes place. In this way they follow the warning of Jesus Christ: 'If you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your sinners'.



On Midsummer's Eve, the younger ones go around older relatives and loved ones - in-laws, in-laws, in-laws, in-laws, older siblings and ask for forgiveness and kiss the hand of the hosts, saying the traditional words of forgiveness, "Forgive me, Daddy." "You are forgiven, may God forgive" is the obligatory response. That is why the holiday is also known as Forgiveness Day.

- According to tradition, an elder cannot ask forgiveness from a younger family member.



- On Sundays, bonfires (pyres) are lit and after they burn out, they are skipped for health. Then people play around them and sing songs. That is why the feast is also called Pokladi. In some parts of Bulgaria, the custom of oratnitsi (ogruglitsi) is common - these are torches of straw that each householder turns around his head and thus drives fleas away from the house.





The custom of throwing darts (also known as butarnitz or boturnitz) is also very popular. Each bachelor shoots a lighted arrow with a simple bow made by himself into the yard of the maiden he has taken a fancy to. Usually this goes on until late in the day. The maiden's family stays awake to extinguish the flames while she collects the arrows herself. Whichever maiden gathers the most arrows from her yard is the most personal and the most liked.



For the table on Zgoveshni are prepared banitsa with cheese, boiled eggs, boiled wheat, halva with nuts. It is also customary to perform the custom of hamkane: a piece of white halva or a boiled egg is tied on a red thread and lowered from the ceiling. The oldest man spins the thread in a circle and each member of the family, mainly the children, tries to catch the halva or egg with his mouth. Whoever succeeds will be alive and well throughout the year.



- In the week before Midsummer, some Thracian villages set off Kuker troops. Masked men, dressed in furs and adorned with bells, go around the homes, play comic skits and bless for health and fertility. The group usually has a leader, called a "hajiya", and a "kukerska bride" or "baba" - a man dressed in ragged female clothes and holding a ragged baby.



- The rite of Sirnitsa is subordinated to the preparation for the Easter fast, which lasts 49 days. That is why it carries the idea of "last rites". Dairy foods may be eaten for the last time. The ban on weddings after Midsummer is also symbolic. Lent does not only mean vegetarianism. Sex is also strictly forbidden. Fasting is a kind of magic that is supposed to induce fertility. In tradition it signifies a temporary death, after which a new birth necessarily follows. It thus symbolizes the eternal cycle, the turning of the cycle from infertility to fertility.



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