AFGHANISTAN: A CROSS CULTURAL VIEW

by

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A foreigner coming to America informed about our national holidays, our eating habits, our more than two hundred religious sects and many of the other phenomena that are popularly thought to be the American culture, would still be unable to define that species of human, the American. While this information might provide clues for the foreign visitor, he would readily admit that the information is far from adequate.

Yet it is often with precisely this kind of information that the American expects to understand cultures other than his own. The notion that culture is the body of legends, customs, rituals, and handicrafts that are peculiar to a group of people, while still popularly adhered to, was long ago found to be inadequate by the anthropologist. While this data may be useful to the anthropologist, its usefulness usually rests on the fact that it serves as a clue. And what was once the domain of the anthropologist has become the concern of the historian of literature, art, or music.

The anthropologist is no longer the collector of folklore, but he reads it. And he is not the cataloger of customs, although he studies them. He uses these clues of culture to discover what attitudes and institutions are basic to the uniqueness of a particular group of people. The anthropologist now views cultures as a closed system of questions and answers concerning the universe and man's behavior in it, which has been accepted as authoritative by a human society.

While the basic reality that all human beings encounter is similar, the understanding of this reality varies from one culture to another. The basic components of life are similar in all cultures, but the meanings assigned to them differ from culture to culture. Death in the American culture, for example, is viewed by many as the inevitable end of the worn out human machine. Except in the case where the death is accidental or the person is young, little reference is made to the will of God. But in the Afghan Islamic View, death is a direct act of God; there are no laws of nature which dictate the running down of the human machine. Birth, illness, recovery and eventual death all take place according to the direct will of God.

Each culture defines the relationship and roles that people are to assume in their interpersonal relationships. Along with these roles come prescribed rights and obligations. Because the basic human relationships are found in all cultures, one is easily deceived into thinking that a brother and sister relationship, for example, means the same thing in every culture. First, what is a sister? American culture defines her as a girl born of the same mother or father, or adopted legally into the family of a boy. In addition to these possibilities the Afghan culture provides two more. One is that if a girl and boy are nursed by the same woman they become brother and sister. Also, if a boy and girl swear under oath that they are brother and sister, the oath creates this relationship. Responsibilities also differ. The American boy will arrange a date for his sister with a good friend. The Afghan boy, however, is bound by honor, generally, not even to discuss his sister with anyone outside his family. So the definition of sister and the responsibilities one has to one's sister differ significantly between the Afghan and the American cultures.

Examples such as these are many. The two mentioned above give some notion of the variations between cultures.
Cultural Understanding

Culture is the least understood human-relation phenomenon. It is axiomatic that most people have only a very basic understanding of their own culture, although they are able to exist within its structure quite adequately. The reason for this is that culture is seldom objectified, members of a cultural community are informed by osmosis, rather than by formal study, as to the acceptable attitudes, roles, behavior expected by the culture. Parents, through example, praise, and punishment communicate to their children "correct" cultural behavior. Later the whole community further informs its citizens of its cultural expectations by approval and disapproval.

The American child seated with his family at dinner, reaches for the salt and pepper which is in front of his mother. The father corrects: "Does the cat have your tongue?" "Ask your mother for what you want and she will pass it to you."

The Afghan child seated with his family at dinner asks his mother for the salt and pepper. The father corrects: "Don't you have hands? Don't bother your mother; reach for what you want."

Thus both children begin to form a notion of what is expected of them, and later they will communicate these tenets to their own children.

The outsider, who wants to learn how to live within a cultural community other than his own, has a much more difficult time. He is seldom openly corrected and members of the cultural community often hide their disapproval. He finds himself, as it were, in the midst of a playing field, and the game is well in progress. He understands neither the game nor its rules. Add to this dilemma the fact that the game is so well known to the players that no one has ever seen the need to write down its rules and that all of the signals are given in a foreign language. This is what all of us experience in a new culture. And unless we pavishly stomp off to a quiet familiar corner, the challenge to learn is ours.

Before discussing the actual learning process, there are several prerequisites that should be considered:

1. Without an adequate knowledge of Dari or Pashto, the volunteer has little chance of success. He is like a deaf man who goes to a symphony and finds the movements of the conductor to be his only aesthetic experience.

2. The volunteer must become something of a child in his endeavor to learn the tenets of the Afghan culture. He must have a child-like sense of wonderment at new things to be discovered. The art of being curious must be cultivated. And he must be ready to open and surrender himself to an encounter with a new reality rather than to surrender that reality encountered to arbitrary treatment.

As mentioned in the section on culture, the basic reality that all people encounter is similar, but differences exist in the meanings assigned to these basic units of reality. Charles Lado, in his book Linguistics Across Cultures, indicates a method for the comparison of cultures. This method gives a novice in cross-cultural understanding a framework within which to begin his study.

The first set of cultural experiences to consider are those that exist both in the culture of one's origin and the target foreign culture. While the outward appearance of these forms may be identical, the meanings may be very different. For example, an Afghan will usually tell his host that he is going to leave a party about a half hour before he really intends to leave. The duty of the host is to ask him to stay, which he does. Then when the time arrives that he really intends to leave, he announces again that he is leaving and the host again suggests that he stay a little longer. At this point he most likely will leave, although he may sit for another few minutes.

The American guest, on the other hand, usually carefully watches his time; and when he says that he is going, this is his real intention. To be polite his host will often encourage him to stay, but usually the American indicates that he must leave and then does.

Another area is that in which the meaning and the form are similar, but the time or place of occurrence differ. An understanding of these is sometimes made difficult because much time is required before a discernible pattern of occurrence can be observed.

An example of this involves the times for social visits. In America, the time after supper is usually considered appropriate. The day's work is finished, the evening meal is eaten, and friends visit one another. For the Afghan, however, the day's work finishes about sunset, and he eats his evening meal two or three hours later. So the ideal time for visiting occurs between about five and seven o'clock. Because this time usually coincides with supper time for Americans, there is apt to be some cross-cultural misunderstanding.

A third area for consideration is that in which two cultures each have different forms for the same intended meaning. This is particularly troublesome when the forms themselves have opposite meanings in their respective cultures. An example might help to clarify this.

An American visiting in our home wanted to convey to our cook that the meal he had prepared was very good. The conventional American signal, with the clenched fist and the extended thumb to indicate that something is tops or very good, indicates a rather obscene notion in the Afghan culture. Our cook was a little angered by this, and only by convincing him that this meant something else in America did domestic peace return.

There are, of course, many subtleties that are only broadly included within these general patterns. As one becomes more adept at observation this method will decline in usefulness. With a fair command of the language and a willingness to learn, the volunteer will be ready to understand the people with whom he will live for two years.

Conclusion

These general principles about cross-cultural understanding, and the random descriptions of some facets of Afghan culture serve only as an introduction to the challenge facing every volunteer. At this point several cautions are in order:

1. Just as the cultures of the world indicate the various expressions of the human personality so each individual within a culture differs. In the same way that there are no carbon-copy Americans, there are no carbon-copy Afghans.
2. Culture is not a thin veneer that covers the real human being. Culture is always a powerful factor integrated into the personality of the individual. If culture is not understood and accounted for in all interpersonal relationships, the only result will be disappointment.

3. The Peace Corps is not an agency for the Americanization of the Afghans, nor does it intend to bear the White Man's Burden. And while the Afghans may be interested in American customs and attitudes, the Peace Corps Volunteer's first concern should be to work toward a modern Afghanistan, not a Western one.

4. Lastly, the only value of understanding a culture is to use this understanding in one's work and personal relationships. The data of anthropology is useful to the Volunteer, but knowledge for knowledge's sake is a sterile reward.

Shelly, in his Defense of Poetry, says something to the effect that it is not for lack of principles about right conduct that men murder and steal and commit all sorts of crime, but for a lack of an imaginative awareness of the meaning of those principles. This imaginative awareness is the basis on which a valuable intercultural experience can be found, both for the Volunteer and for his Afghan acquaintances.
In each of the above examples the intention of both the American and the Afghan is either to show respect, to make a guest comfortable, or to oil the wheels of human interaction. The outward expressions of this intention, however, vary considerably.

Both the American and the Afghan want to give their guest tea. But for the Afghan, to ask a guest if he would like tea is to put him in the embarrassing position of accepting. Both the Afghan and the American are concerned about the welfare of a man’s family, but the way to ask this in culturally different. The other examples are of the same nature. One of the trouble spots in a cross-cultural experience is that while often the intention is the same, it is expressed in a very different way. Many aspects of politeness in Afghanistan will be found to be of this nature.

The Nature of Politeness

For the sake of this consideration of politeness I offer the following definition. Politeness is in the group of speech and behavioral practices that are formal externalizations of respect or kindness and which also serves to oil the wheels of human interaction.

In any society, politeness in Afghanistan does not follow a stereotype. There are minimum acceptable standards for polite action and there are maximum limits beyond which politeness becomes flattery or obsequiousness. The young Afghan child learns to find the happy medium after years of training and consequent approval and punishment. For the foreigner the learning process is more difficult in that he comes into the society as an adult and most of the means used by a culture to teach its own members do not apply to him. At the same time, however, the learning process may be less painful in that the newcomer can use his analytical powers to achieve understanding. With this in mind, we move to a broad consideration of the major aspects of politeness in Afghanistan.

The Criteria of Politeness

In America we consider politeness in some way to be especially associated with the behavior of children. We would not usually talk of a polite salesman, but rather a courteous one. In this way we make a distinction rot between the reality of politeness and courtesy, but the adult and the childhood manifestations of respect.

In Afghanistan the same is also true. Respect is what is shown by a child to an adult, or an inferior to a superior, through politeness. An adult or a superior shows kindness, through courtesy or etiquette. A full understanding of the operations of politeness and courtesy in Afghanistan would require an understanding of the social structure of the society. For our

present purposes, however, it is sufficient to know that politeness is based on three factors: dignity, age, and rank. In general, the greater a man's dignity, age and rank, the more respect and, therefore, politeness accorded to him. The most important of these factors is probably age. Next would follow dignity and then rank.

In the upward direction, the young or those of low rank or dignity are required to show respect, through politeness, to those above them. On the other hand, those of greater age, rank and dignity are expected to show their maturity and kindness through courtesy.

Among those of equal dignity, age and rank, courtesy or politeness is the essential means of insuring that interpersonal relationships move smoothly.

Cultural Basis of Politeness

As mentioned, politeness is an external manifestation of respect. Polite behavior may be the result of genuine respect or it may be only a response to the cultural expectations of society.

One could conceivably be aware of the norms of politeness in Afghanistan and understand the people not at all. But if one were to know the cultural basis of politeness, or better, the cultural values that inspire politeness, he would be able almost intuitively to behave politely.

Prestige, self-respect, and human dignity seem to be at the root of the Afghan value system that determines politeness. As the individual at the bottom of the politeness scale looks up, the external requirements of respect increase with the dignity, age and rank of the people above him. The attitudinal aspects of politeness, however, are not necessarily graded in the same way.

A servant, for example, may show all forms of external politeness to his employer and not think much of him personally. He may, in fact, respect the shopkeeper on the corner more, while using few of the required forms of politeness.

Looking down the politeness scale, the employer will seldom, if ever, use any formal expressions of politeness, though he must always respect the basic human dignity of the servant.

The behavior of a superior towards an inferior...where none of the formal aspects of politeness are required...may then yield an understanding of those attitudinal elements of politeness that are most basic.

As a teacher, an employer, and an observer of others in such positions, I have found that Abruz, the Farsi term for pride, prestige, human dignity and self-respect, is the lowest common denominator for all attitudinal aspects of politeness. This may seem to be a truism, until the exact implications of this, within the Afghan cultural framework, are seen.

Abruz means literally "the water of the face." To pour out the water of someone's face...to insult him publicly, to embarrass him in front of others or to publicly and directly criticize someone...is a fundamentally rude or impolite action. To point out someone's error in a discussion is rude, if it is done in any way that makes the person lose face. To harshly or sarcastically criticize a student is rude. To demand that
someone admit a mistake or a fault is not only impolite, but something that will also prove very frustrating.

To some degree all of the above could also be said of the American culture. The difference, which is very real, is one of delicacy and degree. In the American tradition of give and take in debate and discussion, truth is considered, at least in principle, more important than the prestige of an opponent. The losing debate team gallantly congratulates the winning team because losing an argument is not so closely tied to losing face. This is not to say that each of us at some time or another has not burned with embarrassment at losing an argument. It does mean, however, that it is not impolite to mention facts, etc., that will demolish an opponent’s position. In arguments among Afghans... an art in itself... the participants will usually each present his views without directly confronting an opponent. Where it is an argument out of which some decision or plan must come, consensus is the goal. Compromise is frequent, and above all, each of the participants must attempt to express his view without apparently opposing the views of any of the participants. But again, politeness is an ideal; heated arguments, while relatively rare, are not unheard of.

Insuring that someone does not lose face has many ramifications. If a man loans a friend money, it is rude to directly ask for the return of the money. If a servant ruins a meal, it is impolite to mention this in front of guests. If a student makes a mistake, it is rude to question his competence or his intelligence. The examples are innumerable.

This basic concern for the self-respect, pride, and honor of a man is at the root of all verbal and behavioral aspects of politeness. These concrete forms that politeness and courtesy take in the Afghan culture are considered in the following section.

Politeness in Behavior

The external forms of politeness are directly related to position on the respect ladder. There are, for this reason, innumerable variations in polite behavior and, therefore, only those elements which are of direct concern will be considered here.

Greetings. Greeting a friend or acquaintance in Afghanistan requires... if one of the parties is seated, that he rise. A story is told of an older man who courteously rose from his chair every time he greeted a friend on the telephone. It is also required that the parties shake hands when possible. If it is inconvenient or impossible to shake hands, then both people will put their right hands over their hearts, while among students and teachers a modified form of salute is often the custom. If a person enters a room where everyone is seated, it is sufficient to put the hand over the heart and bow slightly, observing the order of prestige. On entering a room where only a few people are present, handshaking is done on the basis of prestige.

Visiting. Visiting is an important social institution. To visit someone is to show respect and friendship. The first visit should only be made at the invitation of the other person. Once this invitation has been accepted and the visit made, it is then polite to invite the other person for a reciprocal visit. After this visit, either party is then free to visit the other’s home whenever he wishes.

Times for visiting are usually open, although the late afternoon is often used since late afternoon tea is a national institution. Occasions for visiting are many. It is customary to visit a sick friend and to take some small gift to him. Some people are hesitant, however, to visit the sick on Wednesdays as...
gift to take to the sick but it should be noted that culturally yellow is symbolic of despair, and yellow flowers are, therefore, not appropriate.

A visiting guest should always be served tea or some refreshment. The American custom of asking "I'd like tea, etc., will almost always be met with a negative reply. It is better to prepare something and then serve it to the guest. If it is near mealtime, politeness requires that the host insist that the guest remain.

At the end of a visit it is expected that the host will accompany the guest to outside of the compound gate. The guest should always precede the host, regardless of their relative social positions.

If a visit is for business purposes, it is not polite to begin too hastily on the matter of business. The ideal is always to make every business encounter first a social one.

I was once given a letter of resignation to read. I struggled through the first page of Farsi, replete with admiration, cooperation, and satisfaction, wondering why this person wanted to resign. But within the last few paragraphs, reasons of a financial nature were mentioned and the permission to resign was requested. To have written the letter otherwise would have been rude.

Politeness in Speech

Polite speech is intimately bound up with polite behavior. Depending upon the social position of the two speakers or on the occasion, Farsi abounds in honorifics, formal elements of polite speech, and special forms to be used under different sets of circumstances. Those formal elements of polite speech will be considered at the end of this section. Some general observations, however, will be made at this point.

In a society where oral communication is far more extensive and significant than written communication, certain differences of attitude toward speech are to be expected.

The spoken word, for example, is capable of subjecting a person to the evil eye. The example given at the beginning of this paper about prefacing a compliment with "name xoda" is one of many. One remnant of this attitude toward the spoken word in English is the custom of knocking on wood when talking about some present good fortune that, if the facts were against us, might turn into misfortune.

In a situation, for example, where a person is late for an appointment and a guest appears at his door, it would be impolite to say that he had to leave for an appointment. Instead, a polite person would invite the visitor in to talk for a few minutes, possible explaining that unfortunately he would have to leave shortly. In many situations, however, it would be rude to leave or even mention an appointment, etc.

Such situations are many, but an Afghan proverb may serve as a guideline. A lie that does good is better than a truth that causes harm. If thought about, the proverb, rather than counseling falsehood, advocates sensitivity to the feelings of others.
Variations in Politeness

Cultural diversity within a single culture is axiomatic. There is no such thing as a carbon-copy Afghan, in the same way that there are no carbon-copy Americans. However, the limited homogeneity in the American culture that has come with mass communication and the great mobility of the American people has not yet come about to any great extent in the Afghan society.

There will, therefore, be differences in the formal aspects of politeness between the urban and the rural groups; between the educated and the uneducated; between the Pashtuns and the Tajiks. Some generalities can be made about these differences. In Afghanistan, as in America, rural people tend to be more traditional and conservative than urbanites. Polite behavior, as expressed in courtesy and etiquette, is more pronounced in the rural areas than in the urban centers. Verbal politeness, however, seems to be more prominent in the urban areas and especially amongst the middle and upper classes. The differences, in general, are ones of degree rather than of kind.

The above information is therefore intended to be a broad sketch of patterns rather than a comprehensive description of the diverse possibilities.

That's a NO-NO

A cross-cultural experience, if viewed in terms of do's and don'ts, begins to take the shape of running an obstacle course or making one's way through an enchanted forest. In every fairy tale there is some arbitrary "NO-NO" on which the success of the hero depends. Part of the reason for the popularity of these stories among children is that many of the injunctions that their parents impose on them also have the overtone of being just another aspect of the "ethics of elfland." "Don't interrupt when adults are speaking." "Don't mix your peas with your mashed potatoes." To the child these seem as arbitrary as "Don't look into the enchanted mirror." A precocious child might even answer that peas and mashed potatoes will eventually be mixed in his stomach. Later, however, the child, now an adult, realizes the need for respect and learns to avoid offending the sensibilities of others.

Within the Afghan system of politeness there are also some injunctions that should be observed. These are given here not as a list of do's and don'ts that will lead to politeness, but rather as a few limited pointers so that unintentionally no one will offend or be offended.

1. The left hand is considered unclean. It should not be used for eating or anything to anyone.

2. Blowing one's nose is very vulgar in a gathering, as is passing gas.

3. Aiming either one's posterior or the bottoms of one's shoes at someone is rude.

4. Not rising to greet a visitor is ordinarily impolite.

5. Eating alone in the presence of others is impolite.
Conclusion

Politeness, it has been shown, is composed of three basic aspects. Beneath all formal cultural expression lies the concern for the self-respect and dignity of the individual. In terms of the externals of politeness, these are conventional patterns of speech and behavior that both give flesh to respect for the pride and dignity of others in the society, and also oil the wheels of human interaction. What may first appear to be artificial and exaggerated should be seen in the light of a society that is expressing through conventions and various elements of its social and status structure.

A matter that will complicate much of his attempt to learn how to be polite is the fact that the foreigner is regarded as a guest even outside the situation of a party. He is the guest within a village, a school, or a hospital. He is not only a guest, but a foreign guest.

The natural disinclination of the Afghan to criticize is compounded by the fact that a person's status is that of a guest. The responsibility then is primarily that of the foreigner to be an astute and sensitive observer.

Expressions of Politeness and Cultural Significance

Greetings:

1. Salelam aélikum
   Response: Walaeykum assaelam
   or: Saelam aéla:kaem
   or: Walaeykam assaelam
   Kaelan saewi

This is the standard first greeting. The responses are interchangeable, except that the last is used only for children.

2. Following the initial greeting comes a group of various questions and answers that, in fact, do not seek or give information. They are often recited simultaneously:

   clitoraesëtën  How are you?
   clia:sëtën     How are you? lit. What condition do you have?
   Xubaëtën      Are you well?

3. Usually following these formal inquiries come several pertinent questions. These are used usually among people who know one another.

   xaneitën xæyriætaes? Is your family (lit. house) well?
   sewlada xubaëtëna   Are the children well?
   faezlë:xda xubaëtëna By the kindness of God, they are well.
4. When two people have finished their greetings and have begun a conversation, one will occasionally ask:

deqas ci:toræste:n (lit. The other how are you?)

Before smoothness can be attained in the greetings, some observation and practice will be necessary. Because people will tend to shorten the greetings in keeping with practice, it would be worthwhile to notice how Afghans perform the greetings. In general, women follow the same procedure as men. It would be wise, however, for the foreign woman to follow the cue of Afghan women where possible.

5. The greeting to the traveller is:

mandaane base:n (lit. "you not be tired.")

The answer to which is:
zendæ base:n (lit. May you live long.)

6. Several other greetings are used among friends and are very informal. These should be used only after a great deal of observation.

hesabo ketabet ci:toræs (lit. How is the account in your book?)
raeqæma raequænet ci:toræs (lit. How is the kind of your kind?)
cu:co puqæt ci:toræs (equivalent to: How's the old lady and the kids?)

This last expression is very, very informal and is listed here more for the reader's information than for a suggested phrase.

Leave-Taking

1. e:jæzaes ke mæ boraem May I leave? (lit. Is it permitted that I leave?)

When a guest is leaving a host's house, this expression is always required. It may be shortened in informal situations to e:jæzas?

The host will usually insist that the guest remain a little longer. Depending on the situation the guest will stay about ten minutes longer or he will leave in a few minutes.

Politeness requires of both the host and the guest to thank each other and to comment on the trouble that each has gone to: the host in preparing the food, the guest in coming.

2. boimansa:xoda Goodbye (lit. Remain with God.)
xo:da afez Goodbye, (lit. May God be your protector.)

The person who is leaving usually says the first and the person who is being left replies with the second. An alternate
to the second is:

_bae xoda saepordaemets_ (lit. I entrust you to God.)

**Expressions of Gratitude**

1. _Taessakor_  
   With thanks or Thank you.

   This expression is the most common and can be used in almost every situation where "thank you" would be used in English. There are, however, some particular expressions that are used in special situations.

2. _Zendae base:m_  
   May you live long.

   This is widely used to express gratitude for verbal kindnesses.

3. _lotf me:konem_  
   You are doing a kindness.

   This is usually used for comments of praise, etc.

4. _merabane:s_  
   This is a kindness.

   Used when some kindness is performed. For example, if someone passes a plate, etc.

5. _merabani konem_  
   Help yourself (lit. You do the kindness.)

   In the case that someone should pass a plate before taking something himself, the person to whom the plate is passed would use this expression.

**Expressions for Occasions**

1. _taebri:k_  
   Congratulations

   This is a general term of congratulations and is used for situations where congratulations would be in order in English.

2. _cesmaytan maeqbulaes_  
   (lit. Your eyes are beautiful.)

   This expression is used in answer to a compliment on clothing or other personal adornment. The thought behind this is that "Beauty is in the eyes of the beholder."

3. _iiaetan norbaeraek_  
   Congratulations on your Eid.

4. _cesmaytan ro:saen_  
   (lit. May your eyes be bright.)

   When someone tells that their father, etc., is coming to visit or that a letter has come from a friend or relative, this expression is used.

5. _zendaegi sereitan bapes_  
   (lit. May life be on you.)
This is an expression of sympathy used on being told by someone that either a relative or close friend of his has died.

6. Osmre xodae baeray su'ma baexsid (lit. He gave his life for you.)

An expression used to announce the death of a close relative or friend.

7. namsa xoda-... (lit. In the name of God.)

8. xoda sumaraes sefae bota (May God give you health)

This is used when talking to a sick man.

9. naassibe dorameena (May it be the fate of enemies.)

This expression is also used when talking to a man who has been hurt in an accident and expresses the sentiment that the man be freed from his pain and that it be given to his enemies.

The previous expressions are far from exhaustive, but they are intended to be a suitable sampling to enable the Volunteer to communicate in a culturally acceptable way. Another factor to be considered is that once a non-native speaker begins to use idiomatic expressions in a language, the native speakers of the language are more ready to speak naturally with him. Thus, this introductory list should open the door to learning the other expressions that he should know.

Pashto Expressions of Politeness and Cultural Significance

Greetings:

The greeting on meeting someone: (lit. May you not be tired.)

1. staray m (lit. Excuse me)
   1. taster m e sal

1. starsa: sei (lit. Good morning)
   1. taster m e sei
   1. mawaresei

This is the standard first greeting.

Following the initial greeting comes a group of various questions and answers that, in fact, do not seek or give information. They are often recited simultaneously:

1. teanga ye:?
2. sukaz te teanga ye?

How are you?

3. se ye:?
4. se ye:?

5. se jor ye?

Usually following these formular inquiries come several
pertinent questions. These are used usually among people who know one another.

6. (p) kô:r ki xaeyryaey dî y?

kucîryan së di? sta kucîryan ts ng di?

ware zare tsëngë di:

ware së di?

When two people have finished their greetings and have begun a conversation, one will occasionally ask:

nor:tsangae ye? (lit. The other how are you?)

Leave-Taking

1. ejazae dae? May I leave? (lit. Is it permitted that I leave?)

2. dæxoday paman! Goodbye (May God be your protector)

3. Pemèk di:se I entrust you to God.

4. pæxoday di:sparem I entrust you to God.

Expressions of Gratitude

1. te. kur With thanks, or Thank you.

This expression is the most common and can be used in most situations where "thank you" would be used in English. There are, however, some particular expressions that are used in special situations.

2. zwaendaey o:sei May you live long.

3. lotf mo:daey You are doing a kindness.

4. meraebani moide This is a kindness.

5. meraebani wëke Help yourself (lit. You do the kindness, or, come in, please!)

Expressions for Occasions

1. mobaraek Congratulations

This is a general term of congratulations and is used for situations where congratulations would be in order in English.
2. deextaeer dimubaraek sə! Congratulations on your Eid.

3. stægildirosoanal May your eyes be bright!

When someone tells that their father, etc., is coming to visit or that a letter has come from a friend or relative, this expression is used.

4. swæand yeastsæi te dorwobæxe He gave his life for you.

An expression used to announce the death of a close relative or friend.

5. nam xoda... (lit. In the name of God.)

This expression is used to preface all compliments, especially for children. The belief is that children are unusually susceptible to the influence of evil spirits and jinns. A compliment renders them even more susceptible.

6. xodadaydi:sæefαacæk! May God give you health!

This is used when talking to a sick man.

7. maessibe dosmæna May it be to the fate of the enemies.

In Kabul used by Pushtu speakers, too. This expression is also used when talking to a man who has been hurt in an accident and expresses the sentiment that the man be freed from his pain and that it be given to his enemies.

8. særagle: Welcome.

9. jar oiaì May you be well.

10. xoda dæ:sedaeæwæ May God bring to you fortune.

11. (h)aerke /æ rase: Come always.

The greeting expressions above are used at home only for the guests, or to greet someone who comes from another country.

The previous expressions are far from exhaustive, but they are intended to be a suitable sampling to enable the Volunteer to communicate in a culturally acceptable way. Another factor to be considered is that once a non-native speaker begins to use idiomatic expressions in a language, the native speakers of the language are more ready to speak naturally with him. Thus, this introductory list should open the door to learning the other expressions that he should know.
A few years ago in Kabul a man appeared, looking for his brother. He asked all the merchants of the market place if they had seen his brother and told them he was staying in case his brother arrived and wanted to find him. The next year he was back and repeated the performance. By this time one of the members of the American Embassy had heard about his inquiries and asked if he had found his brother. The man answered that he and his brother had agreed to meet in Kabul but neither of them had said what year.

The Silent Language*

Edward Hall related this incident as an example of the Afghan attitude toward time. The incident, I believe, is apocryphal, and, except in the case of two insane brothers, incredible. The author’s otherwise excellent comparison of American and non-American time systems stresses that the American must realize that different cultures understand, divide, and use time in often different and sometimes conflicting ways.

In the following discussion, I will describe the American time system as it has conditioned us and then describe the Afghan’s attitude toward time and its use.

American Time. In America, time is a commodity. It is quantified and its segments are valued monetarily or otherwise. But, at least informally, the quantifications vary as do the values attached to them. There is the Wall Street broker whose schedule stipulates that his barber come to the office every Wednesday between 2:45 and 3:05. The leisurely pace of life in the South stands at the other end of the stereotype spectrum of American time use patterns. However, an almost universal respect for time...a segmented and clock-oriented time, that...does exist.

The graph below is intended to describe the workday of the average American adult and, with slight variations, it is also applicable to the student.

```
Sleep  Eat  Work  Eat  Work  Eat  Relax  Sleep
12 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
```

This graph is, of course, a generalization. The average American is asleep between 12 and 6. He eats breakfast between 6 and 8. Working hours usually run from about 8 in the morning to 5 in the evening with an hour out for lunch. For most people, supper is between 5 and 7, which is usually followed by some sort of recreational activity.

Since the majority of the working American population is employed by some sort of factory, firm, or other business institution, the work schedule is the most inflexible part of the schedule. For this reason people tend to live around their working hours. But people are also clock-oriented in other areas of life. On a holiday it is not unusual to see someone look at his watch in response to the question, "Would you like to have lunch now?"

The pressures and exigencies of a highly mechanized and structured society have almost defied time. There are train, bus and airplane schedules, office hours, time clocks, television and radio program schedules -- all of which Americans use to regulate their lives. Americans live within segments of time, hours, and minutes, with only a limited regard for the natural unit of a day.

A natural result of a clock-oriented concept of time is that punctuality becomes a virtue. Add to this the pressures of a highly developed economy and time becomes a basic raw material in the processes of social as well as economic life.

Pre-school children become time conscious in terms of favorite television programs. School children are taught not to be late for school and to turn in their assignments on time. Adolescents soon learn the implications of being late for a date and the adult works under the pressure of deadlines. Time is money.

These attitudes towards time are not, needless to say, universal. Where time is viewed differently, as it is in Afghanistan, the American may be frustrated in trying to interpret time-reality in terms of the American system of time.

Afghan Time.

Social and economic situations in Afghanistan are for the most part not clock-oriented. They are, however, time-oriented. The basic temporal organization factor is the prayers required five times daily. With the exception of the night prayer, which may be recited any time before retiring, the other prayers are said at times fixed by the position of the sun. So as daylight hours increase and decrease with the seasons, the prayer times change...in terms of the clock...and accordingly the daily life routine also changes.

For this reason a graph of the daily time usage pattern, if given in hours, would constantly be changing. The graph that follows is, therefore, not in terms of hours, but rather in terms of the natural progression of a day.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dawn</th>
<th>Early</th>
<th>Late</th>
<th>Evening</th>
<th>Night</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Afternoon</td>
<td>Afternoon</td>
<td>Tea</td>
<td>Eat Relax Sleep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morning</td>
<td>Afternoon</td>
<td>Late</td>
<td>Evening</td>
<td>Night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prayer</td>
<td>Prayer</td>
<td>Afternoon Prayer</td>
<td>Prayer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above it is obvious that in the summer, when dawn occurs at around 4:30 - 5:00 A.M., the morning prayer is recited earlier, breakfast eaten earlier and work begun earlier. In the winter, on the other hand, all of these activities would take place later.

Because of the flexibility in the Afghan time system, Americans often get the mistaken impression that time is not

* The one hour change during Daylight Savings Time is another indication of the American clock-orientation. The clock is changed because of longer periods of daylight, but the schedule remains unchanged.
significant. And while generally time is not clock-oriented, it is important within the Afghan cultural context. A person will anxiously look at the sun, to be sure that he prays at the proper time. During Ramazan, the month of fasting observed by Moslems, the exact time of sunrise and sunset is very significant. People also will never fail to remember to count six nights after the birth of a child for theshawe shaash celebration. These are examples taken from the traditional culture.

As technology advances, and the administrative structure of government becomes more complex, a segment of the Afghan society is becoming more and more aware of "clock" time. The radio, for example, follows a schedule that is known to the majority of people and the broadcasting time (6-8 A.M.; 12-1 P.M.) have become new time segments for many people. Class and work schedules, while somewhat more relaxed than those in America, are also contributing to a growing awareness of clock time.

In a sense there are two system of time in Afghanistan: city and countryside. Many farmers in the United States do not feel that Daylight Savings Time is of concern to them, and in much the same way the approximately 90% of the population of Afghanistan, engaged in basic food production, are not bound to a clock in their work and social lives. But even among the rural population, a watch is a status symbol, possibly because it is associated with the important positions often filled by city people.

In the preceding discussion it has been stated that in both the American and Afghan cultures time is significant and its various uses fall within divisions of the day. American society, with its economic and social pressures, is required to operate on accurate clock-time. The Afghan culture also values time but the requirements of a basically agricultural economy can be fulfilled within a less segmented and mathematical time system. The small sector of the Afghan population working in business, government, education, etc., is tending more towards clock-oriented time but the cultural attitudes that prevail throughout the society are still felt in "Afghan clock time."

**Time Speaks**

Edward Hall points out in "The Silent Language" that "time speaks." Examples of this are numerous. If a student is always punctual we tend to think that he is conscientious. When an employee is always a few minutes late to work we think he is irresponsible. If we must wait two months for an appointment with a dentist, we assume he is capable and popular.

These statements are true of both the American and Afghan societies. But "punctual", "late", and "wait" have different connotations in both societies.

Punctuality has no one word equivalent in Persian. The phrase used to translate this concept means "care in coming on time." Punctuality is a concept that is viable only where time is discretely measured. This is not to imply that being late is not a social faux pas. An example may clear up this apparent contradiction.

Typically, people in Afghanistan will make appointments to meet in terms of three or four hour blocks of time. "I'll
see you early tomorrow afternoon." This means I'll see you between approximately twelve and three, depending on the season. In such a situation it is possible to be early or late but arriving within a predetermined three hour block of time would hardly be described as punctuality. Among a minority of people, however, the clock is used to determine the times of business and social engagements. Although there is somewhat less rigidity in the implementation of schedules, they are becoming more and more significant.

In most circumstances this would be an uncomfortable arrangement for an American - who would want to know "the time" or clock time. But in a society where time is not discretely measured and economic and social pressures are not such to require social calendars, this arrangement is perfectly acceptable.

Another factor is that people are basically home-centered. Because of this, an "appointment" set within a three hour block of time is usually adequate.

Being late can be a serious discourtesy in the Afghan culture, as it is in the American. But because of the comparatively flexible attitude towards time, the amount of lee-way a person has tends to be greater. In general, twenty to thirty minutes in a maximum period, beyond which excuses, and an explanation will be necessary.

Another area where "time speaks" is the amount of time required for advance notice. This is especially important in the American society, where often social calendars are filled a week in advance, and a short notice is considered insulting. In Afghanistan, however, advance notice is, by American standards, usually very short.

An invitation to dinner may be made early the same day or a day in advance. The American custom of inviting someone to dinner a week in advance is culturally incomprehensible and may even appear ridiculous. In Afghanistan advance notice for weddings, etc., is usually given two or three days before the occasion.

The above are some of the social implications of time in Afghanistan. Time is almost a vast natural resource, and while sociologists and psychologists in the West are concerned with the use of the increased leisure time that is an inevitable product of the continuing automation, many Afghans are living in such a situation. The difficulty experienced by some Westerners in coping with the leisurely attitude towards time is the basis for the apprehension of social scientists in the West.

The Paranatural Dimension of Time

A consciousness of a close synchronism between man and the universe explains and justifies what we mostly consider as mere superstition - the belief that certain hours, certain days of the week or of the moon phase, certain months or certain seasons are auspicious or inauspicious for the accomplishment of certain special actions or for any undertaking in general.

*Because of the Afghan image of foreigners as time-conscious, punctual people, some Afghans will follow the American usage
Many Afghans share with other peoples of the world a belief in the correlation between the operations of the macrocosm and the events of a man's life. Each person is believed to have a special star, which if found by an astrologer can be used to reveal a person's fate. The months of the year are divided into months of Earth, Air, Fire and Water, and marriages are sometimes contracted on the basis of favorable combinations of these elements.

More commonly people are aware of the periods which are propitious or unpropitious for certain activities. For example, a marriage should not take place between the Eids of Ramazan and Gurban. The period from Thursday noon to Friday noon is the best time for death. From the first to the thirteenth of the lunar month of Safar is a particularly bad time for most activities. All of these are strikingly reminiscent of some American concern for Friday, the Thirteenth. The significant aspect of all these beliefs is that while superstition is condemned by Islam, many of them have been, as it were, baptized with a religious significance. Some are undoubtedly pre-Islamic in origin, while others have evolved since the inception of Islam.

One belief concerning time that is religious in origin is that the future cannot be planned for with any certainty because it is formed by the will of God, which is unknowable. This belief exhibits itself semantically in "Enshallah" or "God willing" - a term which is often inappropriately and irreverently used by foreigners.

Another aspect of the belief that the future is unknowable concerns natural phenomena, such as rain and snow. When a cloudy sky is seen, we feel that it is logical to assume that it will rain or snow. The point is that we do not know whether there will be rain or not and neither does the meteorologist with all of his sophisticated apparatus. The Afghan, likewise, assumes that it will rain or snow, as attested to by farmers who cover the wheat remaining on the threshing floor because of a forbidding sky. His religious conviction, however, does not permit him to say that he knows about tomorrow's weather.

Conclusion

Attitudes towards time are culturally produced, and as such are ingrained and not changed without corresponding change within the culture. As foreigners working in Afghanistan, Peace Corps Volunteers bring with them attitudes and preconceptions about what time is and how it should be used. At times, conflict will arise when the two systems are in opposition. The point of integration with the volunteer and his Afghan colleagues will be achieved when the Afghan colleague appreciates that punctuality makes for a smoother-run operation, and the volunteer learns that an aggressive obsession with time alienates and embarrasses.

The following is a list of terms dealing with time:

**Time Terminology**

1. **Century**
   (qaern) - 100 years for a solar century
   30 years for a lunar century

2. **Year**
   a. **Solar year**
      (sāle:saamei:) 365 days
   b. **Lunar Year**
      (sāle:qaamri:) 354 days
   c. **Solar Leap year**
      (sāle:kaabi:sa) 366 days
Because of the difference in the solar and lunar calendars, the year 1970 is according to the Muslim solar calendar 1348-49 and according to the lunar calendar 1389-90.

3. Season
   a. Spring
   b. Summer
   c. Autumn
   d. Winter

3a. Season (faesil)

   a. Spring (beshar) - 1st 3 mos. of the solar year (93) days
   b. Summer (tabestan) - 2nd 3 mos. of the solar year (93) days
   c. Autumn (xaezan) - 3rd 3 mos. of the solar year (90) days
   d. Winter (zemestan) - last 3 mos. of the solar year (89) days (in Leap Year, 90 days)

4. Month (mah)
   a. Solar - 1st six months have 31 days each
      Next five months have 30 days each
      Last month has 29 days (30 days in Leap Year)
   b. Lunar - The Months have either 29 or 30 days

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<tr>
<th>Solar Month</th>
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<th>Corresponding Date in 1970</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hamal</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Mar. 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saur</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Apr. 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jumma</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>May 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sartan</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>June 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asad</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>July 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunullah</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Aug. 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misk</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Sept. 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aqrab</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Oct. 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qaas</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Nov. 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeddhi</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Dec. 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dalwa</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Jan. 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoot</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Feb. 20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lunar Month</th>
<th>No. of Days</th>
<th>Corresponding Date in 1970</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moharram</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Mar. 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safar</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Apr. 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rabia Awal</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>May 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rabia Alsane</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>June 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamadi Olwai</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>July 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jimady Alsani</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Aug. 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajab</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Sept. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaban</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Oct. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramazan</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Oct. 30</td>
</tr>
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<td>Shawal</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Nov. 29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zulqadah</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Dec. 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zulhijjah</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Jan. 27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The solar calendar is used for all official documentation. This became the official calendar during the reign of Amanallah Khan (1919-1929). Previous to this change, the lunar calendar was used for all official dating. The lunar calendar is still used in one form or another in rural areas. The current year is 1973, the lunar year is 1392-93 and the solar year is 1372-73. The year one in both the solar and lunar Moslem calendars was the year 622 A.D., the date of the Prophet Mohammad's flight from Mecca to Medina. The Moslem solar year begins on March 21. The lunar calendar, which begins 11 days earlier each year, begins in 1973 on January 21. The names of the solar months are the names of the signs of the zodiac.
5. Week (hafta)
Begins on Saturday and has seven days.
Friday is the religious holiday.

6. Day (roiz)
Two terms exist in Persian. The first, (saebanae roiz) describes the 24 hour period and the second (roiz) describes both the 24 hour period and the daylight period.

1. Divisions of the day:
a. (soibe kaeb) - a period of light preceding dawn, which is then followed by a period of darkness and then dawn.
b. (soibe sadeq) - dawn
c. (so:be) - morning
d. (pa:s sez cast) - before noon
e. (paegah) - rural term for morning
f. (chasht) - noon
g. (to:p) - a cannon which blasts every day at noon in Kabul and is used idiomatically to refer to the time itself.
h. (pishin) - early afternoon
i. (digaer) - late afternoon until dusk
j. (sham) - evening, dusk until nightfall
k. (shame:gaew gum) - literally, evening of the last cow; refers to the last part of evening before nightfall.
l. (saeb, saew) - night. This is the period from nightfall until dawn. Thus three o'clock in the morning would have no meaning in Persian; instead that time would be referred to as three o'clock at night. Another aspect of the usage of the word saeb is that (saeb e Joma) Friday night is actually Friday eve as in the English usage Christmas Eve, New Year's Eve, etc. The same is true of all of the days of the week.
m. (begah) - usual term for night

7. Hour (sat)

8. Minute (daeqiqa)

9. Second (sanyae)
At the basis of hospitality in Afghanistan is the concept that sharing is the primary social obligation. The poorest man, under certain circumstances, share what he has with his relatives, his neighbors, and even strangers. Food, considered sacred in itself, is the most important of the things to be shared. It is part of God's providential care for man and, as such, every man has the responsibility to see that his fellow man gets his daily bread, rozi.

Sheikh Atar in the Faenj Ketab, a book, the contents of which are well known even to the illiterate, tells us that "the guest brings his rozi with him, and the sin of the host are cleansed." The first half of this verse is commonly used as a proverb in Afghanistan to indicate that the man who gives food is only acting as an instrument of God's providence and that the food is given to the guest as his right.

Sheikh Atar also states that "the man who does not welcome guests is the enemy of God," and "the guest is the friend of God." Such sayings are known to everyone and serve to foster the belief that hospitality is a religious obligation.

The Traveler

The nature of the obligation and the way in which it is satisfied depends on the kind of hospitality required. The traveler is entitled to hospitality and the individual or community is bound to provide it. It is said that a traveler can go anywhere in Afghanistan and never worry about food or lodging. This, I think, is not an exaggeration.

In some places the traveler is welcomed by people of the community and then taken to one of their houses, where dinner is served by the master of the house himself, after which a place is prepared for the guest to sleep.

In the summer of 1967 I went by bus to Bamyan. On the way I began to feel sick, probably due to the heat and a lack of water. On reaching Bamyan I fainted as I got off the bus and woke up in a tea house looking at the scatty rafters and a crowd of anxious and concerned faces. Soon I was taken to a hospital where a doctor gave me a check-up and decided that I was suffering from heat exhaustion. A man, whom I had never seen before, offered to take me to his home and, after looking at the lonely surroundings of the hospital, I accepted and was taken there. For the remainder of that night my host force-fed me tea to combat the dehydration, and for the next two days I was given excellent care -- all by a complete stranger.

In many communities now the traveler is welcomed at the mosque, where rooms, hujrae, are set apart for the use of the mullah and travelers. When guests are housed in the hujrae, the people of the village -- usually taking turns -- send food for the travelers, and often at night, some of the men will gather there to entertain them.

The Right of Salt

Hospitality is also the strongest expression of interpersonal ties and relationships. Chering bread is the basic socially significant action. By this action, the host and guest create a unique set of rights and obligations that is referred to as the haq-a-naamak, the right of salt.
This "right of salt" is the automatic result of hospitality, and it places great responsibility on the guest to be faithful to and honest with his host.

Since it is culturally required that hospitality be reciprocated, the two people—both having been the guest and host of the other—have brought about a relationship involving mutual rights and responsibilities. These are taken very seriously and the man who disregards them is considered honorless.

If a man, for example, steals property from someone with whom he has ties of hospitality his crime is doubly despicable—first he has sinned against justice and secondly he has defiled the "right of salt."

A proverb describes such a person:

"Anyone who eats salt and does not recognize the salt container, is no better than a dog among the profligates of the world."

Another describes the man who defiles the right of hospitality:

"He ate salt and then urinated in the salt container."

A story is told about a group of thieves who one night entered a man's house while all of the family was asleep. The thieves, under the instructions of their leader, began carrying out carpets and cushions—anything portable, that had any worth. In the dark, the leader of the band reached into a cupboard, finding a hard smooth rock-like object. He immediately decided that it must be some kind of a gem. The thieves had almost finished their work when the leader put this "gem" to his lips. Tasting it, he was not only disappointed at finding that the "gem" was just a block of salt, but he was horrified that he had stolen the property of a man whose salt he had eaten. He immediately ordered his men to return all of the property to the house before the family awoke.

The Mechanics of Hospitality

The above is an analysis of the mystique of hospitality in Afghanistan, and from the short description, it is evident that hospitality has a great significance in this culture. There are legends about hospitable saints, stories describing the obligations of hospitality and proverbs embodying the attitudes and actions required of a host and his guest. The mystique is given concrete expression in the customs and formalities which hospitality requires and a knowledge of these is indispensable for one living in the Afghan culture.

Time and Place

In the broadest sense, any time is the time for hospitality. Hospitality may be extended for lunch or dinner or for late afternoon tea. Lunch is usually eaten around 12:30-1:00 p.m. and supper between 7:00 and 10:00, depending on the season—later in the summer and earlier in the winter. There are also formal occasions when hospitality is expected and these include the celebration six nights after a baby's birth, saqwa saqri engagement parties, sihirshordi and weddings, arsali.

*Many stories like above are told to children and serve as
Invitations are usually given only a short time before the event. It is not unusual to be invited to a wedding two days in advance and one can be invited in the morning for supper on the same day. Invitations are usually verbal except for most Kabul weddings, for which printed invitations are becoming fashionable.

The house is the usual place for hospitality, but some weddings and engagement parties are held in restaurants, clubs and hotels in Kabul. It is extremely rare that anyone be invited out to a restaurant for a meal, although two friends may decide to eat lunch together. It should be noted that "dutch treat" is not the practice. One person usually pays for the group and each person of a group of friends takes turns paying. Among groups of friends and relatives there is often a rotation system, daewraeki, by which each person or family invites the group to his home in turn.

The guest room, or living room, is usually a room different from the one normally used by the family. In some areas it is completely separate from the house and is called saedac. Where it is just another room in the house—an urban phenomenon—it is called mehman xana or, in Kabul, cituq salun.

This room will be the best furnished room in the house. Traditionally, there will be long cushions, tosaek, along the four walls, and behind these, against the wall, will be other pillows, pustaj, to lean against. In Kabul some families have started to use couches and chairs, but the arrangement is the same as with the cushions.

The Host

The Afghan ideal personality type is the generous, hospitable man. It is said that one can tell a generous man by the length of his dining cloth, daestaerxan, and such a man is called a nande, or giver of food, a highly complimentary term.

The ideal host should have certain qualities. Unlike his American counterpart, the Afghan host would never have his guest pitch in and help. He has been told since childhood never to make a guest work. Likewise, he considers it a serious obligation to always look happy in front of a guest. A proverb says, "The crown of a host is like the gatekeeper's stick." The host is expected to serve the guest some refreshment or food—depending on the time of day. To ask a guest if he wants something to eat is to embarrass him, and a proverb describes such a situation: "Does one ask a sick man if he wants the food necessary for good health?"

The host also must encourage the guest to eat and since it is polite for the guest to refuse, the host must energetically insist. An Afghan student who went to the U.S. told of his first evening there. He was to live with a family, who met him at the plane and took him home with them. He had not eaten all day because of the plane ride and was looking forward to a meal. His host asked him if he would like something to eat. He politely refused, expecting the host to politely insist. That night, as he went to bed hungry, he was sure that fate had placed him among the rudest people in the world.
As mentioned above, the guest has obligations to his host. He should, when visiting in a city other than his own, for example, remain with his host. To spend a day in one man's house and to then go to another's implies that the first host was unable to provide adequately for his guest.

If a male guest enters a house unaccompanied, he should make sure to give some warning of his arrival—often a cough—that the woman of the house can move out of sight. It is likewise impolite for a guest to inquire about any of the women of the household.

Before a guest enters the guest room, he should remove his shoes. The host will often insist that this is not necessary, but the guest should still usually do this. In the guest room the wall farthest from the door is the place of honor. The guest would always try to take a place close to the door, but the host will not accept this, and he will insist that the guest sit closer to the place of honor.

In sitting, the guest should avoid stretching out his legs or aiming the bottoms of his shoes at anyone. Women, unless their legs are completely covered, should have a sweater or shawl to put over them.

Once a person has been seated, it is polite to remain in that place and to move would imply that he was not comfortable with the people with whom he was sitting.

When it is time for the meal, the host will have a pitcher and basin, aeltaw laagsa, brought, and in order of importance, each guest will wash his hands.

Food

The food served at a meal where there are guests is, as everywhere, better than average fare. Party menus almost always include rice in some form, together with meat; chicken is a luxury because it is expensive. There will also be a side dish or two, one of which is usually potatoes.

Among the delicacies often found at a party meal are:

- bulani—a kind of large, leek-filled, fried ravioli;
- assak—a small boiled, leek-filled ravioli; covered with a creamy sauce of curd and meat; and
- kiciqorut—a rice dish with a curd sauce and ground meat.

The food at a party is much more of a status symbol in Afghanistan than it is in America. There are some families that prepare some dishes and keep these on hand for several days in the event that an unexpected guest might come. Also families will eat very sparingly so that there is plenty for the guest...somewhat the same as the custom of some Americans who, when they have an unexpected guest and insufficient food, say "F.I.B." or "Family Hold Back."

Etiquette

Once the meal has been served on the daestaqvon, often the head of the family will begin the meal with Bis-mullah a raahman a raahim; "Beginning in the name of God, the compassionate and the compassionating."
It is considered polite to wait for the guest or oldest person to begin to eat, and then first to just eat a piece of bread, symbolizing that bread is sufficient food for man. Only the right hand should be used, except that bread can be broken using both hands. When eating with one's hands, a person should take rice, for example, and cup it in a ball and then eat it. Bread should always be face up. It is not customary to carry on conversations while eating, and except for the host who sees that his guests are getting enough food, no one should watch the others while they are eating. It is polite to reach for something that one needs and this is preferred to interrupting another person's eating.

The host is expected to finish last, so that all of the guests feel free to eat as long as they want.

As mentioned above, the guests are to show polite restraint while the host is expected to encourage them to eat. When eating from a common platter, the host will often apportion the meat, seeing that the guest gets a large portion. Many people will leave a small portion of food in front of them to show that they have had their fill.

The qualities of a good meal are that the food be plentiful, the rice oily, and of course, everything delicious. It is not customary to compliment the host during the meal, but rather immediately before leaving. If fruit is not served after the meal, tea will be served.

When the guests want to leave, they ask the permission of the host, who inevitably asks them to stay a while longer. It is considered polite to stay for a few more minutes and then to leave. The host will insist that he has created a lot of inconvenience for the guest, and the guest says that it was he who caused trouble for the host. The host tells the guest to come back always, especially if it is the first or second time that the guest has been in that home. The host always accompanies the guest to the street, and often if the guest must walk some distance, the host will go with him.

Conclusion

Afghan hospitality is proverbial both among the people themselves and among those foreigners who have enjoyed it. It is sometimes embarrassing to the foreigner to be honored in such a lavish fashion, but to eat little is to imply that the food was not suitable, and to turn down a serious invitation is an insult.

One aspect of Afghan hospitality that the foreigner often forgets is that it carries with it the obligation of reciprocity. A proverb says: "The food of the generous stays in the stomach of the ignoble"—meaning that the ignoble do not reciprocate hospitality, and, therefore, the food stays in their stomachs and is not absorbed to their better health.

It is a mistake to think in terms of a stereotype, however, since, as has been mentioned, there are no carbon copy Afghans. There are people who don't like guests: "One guest doesn't like the other guest, and the host likes neither." There are guests who outstay their welcome, and the host acts accordingly: "The first day a bright smile; the second day bread and onions; the third day a long stick." But the cultural ideal as it is communicated to each generation is summed up in a proverb that particularly appeals to me:

"Honor the guest, o son. Even though he be an infidel.
SOCIAL STRUCTURE

It has been said that Afghanistan is a "closed society, in which each man is born to a set of answers rather than a set of questions." For a large percentage of the society this is true. The houses are made in the same style and with the same materials that have been used for centuries. The methods of agriculture used by today's farmer differ little from those of his long gone ancestors. His concept of the material universe has been affected little by the advancement of science. Social relationships follow patterns fixed in time immemorial.

But the picture is not as black and white as one would comfortably have it. Inside many of the traditional mud brick houses is a gleaming radio, whose fancy embroidered covering is removed, when it is turned on to bring the news of the world to isolated villages. There are the farmers who are tempted to use the seed and fertilizer distributed by the Ministry of Agriculture. Some who were shocked by the blasphemy of the Apollo XI are now curious about future flights. The patterns of social relationships are feeling new pressures as young men find employment outside the traditional occupations of their fathers.

Afghanistan was once described as a society that provided the closest approximation to a laboratory situation for the sociologist and anthropologist. Those days are gone in some parts of the country and more and more threatened in many other sections. Afghanistan is not a country in social turmoil, but the changes are coming quickly enough to alarm the conservatives and in a way so imperceptibly slow as to disenchant the liberals. It is within this context of unhurried haste that we describe the social structure of this country.

THE VILLAGE

The village is the basic indigenous socio-political territorial unit in Afghanistan. Its structure is fairly regular despite minor variations that are related to ethnic composition, degree of proximity to urban centers, size and means of livelihood.

Informal Power Structure.

Each village is composed of a number of extended households and in some cases a few unit households. One of these households either because of wealth, religious significance, education and experience, or prestige due to valor in war will have greater influence than the others. In the case that wealth is the factor—a prevalent one due to land-ownership patterns—the head of the household will be known as a Khan. The Khan, depending upon the degree of his wealth, will exert a greater or lesser influence in almost every area of village life. He is, however, subject to other pressures from within the village. Among the strongest of these is the religious one. Throughout Afghanistan are, for example, families who claim descent from the Prophet Mohammed. Individuals from these families—known as sayeds—are held in high respect by the people, and therefore are influential and powerful. Another significant religious personage would be the local Mullah, the Moslem priest. The Mullah's prestige, unlike that of his Christian counterpart, rests more on his piety and learning than on his vocation as the one called by God.

Other people of influence would be the teacher—still in many places a role filled by the Mullah—and people respected for their experience and wisdom. All of these people form the informal power structure of the village.
The Formal Power Structure.

The village is formally supervised by a headman, called in most places the Malek. The Malek may be elected by the adult males of the village or in some cases be appointed by the Khan with the approval of the people. The responsibilities of the Malek include representing the village or any of its members to the local extension of the central government, entertaining guests and presiding over meetings of the village council. The position of Malek is one of a mixed limited prestige and responsibility.

The village council is a group, often composed of the heads of the various families, that decides on matters relating to the village as a whole. Its area of authority includes such matters as repair of roads, upkeep of irrigation canals, water rights, etc.

In some villages there will be a village watchman and also a man to oversee the distribution of water through the irrigation canals.

Village Law and the Settlement of Disputes.

Islam provides its adherents with a limited form of theocracy, which, in principle, covers every area of human life. The application of Islamic canon law - the Shariat - is under the direct jurisdiction of the judge, or qazi. In most cases of minor infractions of justice, however, the village council, or the elders of the families involved, settle the matter within the village. Misuse of water rights, for example, would be handled as an offense against the customary law of the village and be settled within the community.

Because the structures for the formal administration of justice are not always available to people in remote areas, the village itself or, in many cases, the injured individual or his family will serve as both judge and jury. In serious matters which in less remote areas would be handled by a court legally recognized by the Ministry of Justice, the practice is often to achieve justice within the local framework. Matters involving two parties, if serious enough and not settled, will often lead to blood feuds and prolonged fighting.

Village Solidarity.

Because of common economic and social inter-dependence, the people of a village take great pride in their being from a certain place, especially vis-a-vis the outside world. While internal conflicts may exist, these are almost inevitably suppressed when difficulty arises between two villages or a villager is extolling the virtues of his hometown, waestaen. The Heratis talk of their high level of culture; the Katawazis of their bravery and independence; the Kandaharis of their hospitality; the Logaris of their music, etc. Much humor is based on regional differences, not unlike the nationalities jokes of the U.S.

When the central government was attempting to convince local communities to construct schools, it took advantage of this village pride by pointing out that rival villages had constructed such schools. The approach worked very successfully in many areas.

The Village and the Central Government.

Village solidarity is also evident in the village's relations with the central government. For many rural people the central government is still seen as an intruder. This is partially based on the fact that the government, in fulfilling its functions,
collects taxes and conscripts men into the army. For this reason, much of what the central government does is viewed with apprehension. This also is another factor that influences the villagers to handle their affairs locally without recourse to the central government or its representatives. But there is a relatively new trend among rural people that has influenced them to start making demands on the central government for the material advantages of progress. All of this is definitely the result of increased communication and mobility and a view born of increased expectations.

The Urban Phenomenon.

The direction that the social structures of rural Afghanistan are taking is partially represented in the urban centers of the country. "Here in the rural communities the traditional extended household dwelling pattern of a walled fort has, in places, given rise to offspring houses outside but near the original dwelling, in the urban centers—especially Kabul—the unit family household has become more common.

Rural road repair & defense, made up of the villagers themselves, have been displaced in the urban areas by government work crews.

Education which is still at an elementary stage of development in the rural areas, is relatively advanced in the urban centers.

While these urban developments are viewed as steps in the right direction by the liberal community, the conservatives and much of the rural population see it as leading to a weakening of the traditional Afghan Islamic culture. Remarkably enough there is even an incipient element of nostalgia and romanticism among some members of the urban community that talks about the simple, honest, and uncomplicated life of the villages. In passing it might be mentioned that the independent life of the Kocchi, or nomad, has always been a nostalgic theme in the folk literature of the Afghans.

The Status Structure.

As has been indicated, wealth, education, experience, valor and religion are the bases of status in Afghanistan. This is an oversimplification that would be true in any society.

Wealth, undeservedly attained, while receiving lip service, does not merit respect. Education, if not expressed in wisdom and piety, merits only scorn, etc.

For the villager as well as the city dweller, basic moral and intellectual qualities far outweigh the more measurable factors of wealth and education in true human judgement. On the other hand, in the conventional shows of respect and deference, position is the dominant factor.

The Status Scale.

Afghanistan has a status scale in terms of occupations that, like that of the U.S., may be considered to have white collar and blue collar divisions.

The fact that about 85% of the work force is involved in basic agriculture and the raising of livestock puts most of the population in the blue collar category.
Other occupations in this category include—in descending order of status:

Skilled workers: carpenters, electricians, plumbers, etc.
Unskilled laborers
Butcher
Blacksmith
Barber
Body washer

In the category of white collar workers the ranking within the government civil service is the scale:

Minister
President
Director
Head clerk
Clerk, etc.

The teaching profession, traditionally highly regarded because of its religious character, is now one of questionable status. Because of the low salaries of teachers, the mother of a teacher chided her son on his return from abroad: "Instead of becoming a teacher, you could have at least become a head clerk."

The higher ranking officers in the army are in prestigious positions.

The above arrangement of occupations is somewhat sterile and does not indicate (despite the status differences) the cultural richness with which each occupation is imbued. Although all of the professions share in this cultural heritage, only the example of the barber will be discussed.

The barber is in one of the lowest positions on the occupational status scale, but the folklore and beliefs concerning the nature and origin of the barber's profession give it an important religious significance. The founder of the barbering profession, according to popular belief was one of the Iranian companions of the Prophet Mohammad, whose name, Saelmane Pars, provides the Persian word for barber, saelman. His companion of the Prophet is remembered as a brave warrior, who also, when he served as the Prophet's barber, put the hair of the Prophet in his mouth so that it would not be desecrated.

The present day barber, although considered to be of extremely low status, looks back to this revered companion of the Prophet as his spiritual ancestor. In addition, the barber, in shaving off some part of the body hair, helps the individual to follow one of the religious traditions of Islam. He also is the usual person to perform circumcisions, and in this way, fulfills an important religious obligation.

Status Display.

In the rural areas the display of status is comparatively unpretentious. The size and quality of a house, and its furnishings, the extent of hospitality and in some areas the quality of horses are common manifestations.

For the white collar worker the degree to which he wears western clothing is an indication of status: a clerk, for example, may wear the traditional peran and tomban (shirt and baggy trousers), but the presence of a western suit coat or karakul hat indicates higher status. The director of an office will often have completed the clothing metamorphosis. Because of the high level of illiteracy the pen is an obvious status symbol. The briefcase, however, in
In the urban areas, in general, the rural factors apply adding the possession of western goods to the list. An automobile is the epitome of status symbols.

Women and Status.

Strangely enough the chadery is, in some circles, an important status symbol. Only since August 31, 1959, have women of the educated and upper classes appeared publicly without the chadery. Until that time rural women, working in the fields, as well as servants, were the only groups not to wear it. The chadery then was an urban symbol of status, in that these women did not have to work outside their homes. The quality of the cloth and the fineness of the embroidery were topics of female gossip and conversation.

Since 1959, however, the status value of the chadery has lessened within urban educated circles.

In addition to the chadery, diamond jewelry, as everywhere, is a girl's best friend.

Apart from status symbols, a woman's real status, among the women of a community, is a reflection of her husband's status. The wife of a Khan, for example, will often play an important role among the women of the community.

CONCLUSION:

The social and status structure of Afghanistan, as of any other country, provides the framework within which people carry on the most basic aspects of life. It determines who makes decisions, who carries them out, and to whose benefit. But structure is no more than structure. The individuals within each of the roles determines the shape it will take. The variety of roles that one man may play, for example, and the way that he plays them determine his real prestige in the eyes of the community. The body washer, lowest in status in terms of occupation, may also be a helpful neighbor, respected spouse and loved father.
THE INDIVIDUAL IN SOCIETY

The primary identifier of an individual in any society is his name. In the Afghan society, as well as in most Asian cultures, the name is composed usually in a way that differs from names in the West. The family name is a relatively new thing in Afghanistan and only a small percentage of people have one. Those who do have a name other than their personal or first name are usually people who have travelled abroad or because of their education or profession have thought it useful to have one. These second names may indicate their place of origin, e.g. Ghaznavi, Wardaki, or the name may indicate tribal relation such as Nurzai, Popal, etc. Some people have traced their ancestry back to some important religious leader and indicate their origins in names like Naqshband. Others have ingeniously created names to suit their own tastes, e.g. Sherdil (Lionhearted) or Tanweer (Illumination). In any event this is a new trend, and even in the cases where people have last names, they are still most often identified by their personal name.

Traditionally a person is called by his first name, and "here it is necessary to distinguish one Yasin from another, the name of the father of one in question may be mentioned. Among friends some characteristic of the person may be mentioned to distinguish two people with the same first name, e.g. Aziz-e sialah (the dark Aziz) or Aziz-e palwan (Aziz, the wrestler). On legal documents, however, a person is identified by his own name, his father's name and often also his grand-father's name.

An individual, in addition to a personal name, will often have a name which is used exclusively within his family. These names are often terms of endearment and tend to be flowery. Examples of these names are: Shirin Gul (Sweet Flower), Shah Agha (King Mister), Agha Shirin (Mister Sweet). Because of the nature of these names, they are very rarely known to anyone but the members of the family or very close friends.

It is considered to be disrespectful to call a stranger or someone of higher status by his given name. For this reason there are some generic words that are used. For example, a boy of five would call a man of 25 kaka (uncle). The same boy would call a man of 60 baba (grandfather). A man of 25 would call a stranger of approximately the same age berader (brother). A man would refer to a woman of approximately the same age as haensheree (a respectful term for sister). A woman who was much older would be referred to as madaer or madaer jin (mother or mother dear).

Another convention is that among friends jan will be added to the end of a name as a sign of endearment, e.g. Nader jan. To show respect when it is necessary to use a man's given name, agha, meaning mister, will be placed before the name as in agaye Elham. Xan, or master, may follow a name to show respect.

Among women, bibi jan, bibi or xo: num may be used. It is considered shameful for the family to advertise the name of one of its women.
Modesty

Despite the fact that Islam permits polygamy and at times men were known to have harems, there is a puritanical element in Islam. One obvious indication of this would be the seclusion of women. Some historians indicate that the chador was actually not Islamic in origin, but actually borrowed from the Byzantine empire by the Khorassan. Whether this be true or not is not actually significant. It seems that from the earliest times, based on the Koranic injunction that a woman "should not show her adornments," there has been some form of seclusion of women. The form that her clothing has taken has largely been a cultural matter. Strictly speaking, a woman should be completely covered with the exception of her face. Several years ago the Parliament attempted to define standards of dress that would be in keeping with Islamic principles. The tendency, however, to equate Western dress with modern and educated people militates against the development of a modern Afghan dress, that could be worn by educated women.

Modesty also sets restrictions on men. The area from the knees to the waist must be covered, and at the public, both men must not be seen naked even by other men. This cultural value has caused much distress to Afghan students who have studied abroad and lived in dormitory situations.

Solitude and Privacy

The Afghan family is usually emotionally and physically much closer than its Western counterpart. This is partially due to the fact that a large percentage of families have limited living space. A household organization survey recently completed in Kabul by the Ministry of Planning indicates that of the 1685 households surveyed more than 58% of the families lived in households of one or two rooms.* There is no way of knowing how representative the test sample was, but it seems to be a fairly accurate indication of the size of family dwellings.

This physical closeness is also complemented by an emotional closeness and interdependency. The individual finds most of his social life within the limits of the extended family. The family room provides the center for story-telling, family discussions, etc. The individual who would want to go off and be alone would not be typical. Furthermore, the family would look forward at any of its members who consistently wanted to be alone.

When I took a small house last year and told my friends that I was going to live alone, many of them became very sympathetic and felt that somehow I was making a mistake and should definitely try to find a roommate. It took a long time before I was able to convince them that I would be happy with this arrangement. It is interesting, however, to note that when I assigned a composition to a class at the university on "The thing I most like to do" seven out of twenty-two students indicated some kind of living situation where they could be alone.

*Survey of Property 1959, Research Department of Statistics, Ministry of Planning.
Honor

Possibly the greatest single element in the human dynamics of the Afghan is honor. In Persian and Pashto there are various terms that cover the various aspects of honor that play a role in the Afghan's life. Ghaeyraet indicates pride on one's self and family, bravery in war, a jealous zeal concerning the women of one's family. To call a man be:ghaeyraet is to insult him in a most serious way.

Namue:si is directly related to the purity of the women of a man's family. A man must protect his namue:si with his life, if necessary. To be called be:namue:si (without name) is a grave insult. One of the most serious oaths that a man can make in to swear by his namue:si.

There are other terms to indicate the honor of a man. The reality is something that must always be considered in the individual's inter-relationships with the other members of his society.

While a man's pride in himself, his honor in protecting his wife and daughters, his bravery in war, are all basic human characteristics, the cultural forms and limits that these take vary from culture to culture. A friend in America may tell me that my sister is attractive and intelligent, and may even ask me to arrange a date with her for him. I will be pleased by his compliments, and may even arrange the date. If the same friend, however, indicates that he is interested in sleeping with my sister my reaction would be strongly negative. In the Afghan culture, it is out of place for a man to mention the sister or wife of a friend because this, for most people, indicates some kind of illicit intention.

Due to social and economic changes that are occurring in the Afghan society today, the cultural concept of honor is also undergoing change. Women are working in offices and schools, and while more conservative elements of the society regard this as unsuitable, the more enlightened are beginning to realize the contributions that the female sector of the society can make.
THE FAMILY

As in many other Asian societies, in Afghanistan the family is patriarchal. That is, it is directed in all of its activities by the oldest capable male. Unlike the American family, which is usually composed of two generations, with occasional grandparents or widows, etc., the family in Afghanistan is often made up of people from three or four or even five generations. The traditional pattern is that as sons of a man marry, their wives are brought to live in the father's house and there become members of an extended household. Nuclear (parents with unmarried offspring) families usually live within the extended household, although nuclear households are becoming more common, with the pressures of employment. Inheritance and tribal affiliation are determined by the father's lineage (qaewm). The distinction between the father's family and the mother's is a strong one. While there may be social relations with the mother's side of the family (xeish) one's true allegiance is to the father's relatives. The term, xeish, while used specifically for the mother's side of the family, also has the general meaning of "relative". Xeish o qaewm is a phrase to refer to all of one's relatives. The family in Afghanistan, is, therefore, patriarchal, patrilocal, and patrilinear.

The Afghan family— in general, a model of unity and solidarity. It operates as a unit economically in that the resources of the family are pooled both for the ordinary expenses and also for large capital outlays. Marriage partners are often chosen within the extended family. One's honor is intimately bound up with the name of the family. In short, the family provides its members with food, shelter, employment, and security from cradle to coffin.

This solidarity is evidenced by the fact that the actions of any one member of the family become the responsibility of the whole group. For example, in the case of murder, the surviving members of the family have the right to demand the blood price from the family of the murderer. In less serious cases, the notion of the family's responsibility for the actions of one of its members is still true. In the past the families of political criminals were held to some extent liable.

Within the family each individual plays a role in its economic activities. In general, the major responsibility belongs to the adult males. The children and women, however, also are responsible for milking the animals, carrying water, etc. In some instances the handiwork of the women is a major source of income. In areas where rugs are made, one of the factors determining the value of a woman is her competence at weaving. Girls usually help their mothers with the housework, while boys gradually become proficient in the occupations of their father. Often a great deal of responsibility is given to a boy of thirteen or fourteen. The sense of responsibility that comes with adolescent son's work is always family oriented, and, therefore, does not often lead to a feeling of independence from the family.
The father of the family is the ultimate authority in all matters relating to the activities of the group. He along with his brothers will make all decisions concerning the finances, social relations, and the daily routine. The wife, despite her dependent status, also yields considerable influence. She is manager of the home and in her role as mother is greatly loved by her children. Several Persian proverbs state that a person's admission into heaven depends on his conduct towards his mother.

"The road to Paradise is under the foot steps of the mother." A mother, when angry with one of her children may say, "I will not forgive you the milk from my breast."

The attitude of children for their father is always one of absolute respect. Even after a man is married and has children of his own this respect continues. If a successor is found for his daughter, for example, he will send the person to his father saying, "Ask her grandfather, it's not up to me to make this decision." The greatest evil that a father can do to his son is to disown him.

All that has been said of the nuclear family applies also to the extended family. While the individual nuclear family within the extended household directs some matters relating to it alone, the majority of decisions are still made by the head of the whole household. A married son within such a family might visit a friend without asking permission, but he would not take a trip to the next town.

In the absence of the father and his brothers, the oldest son takes over the running of the family. In this situation, his younger brothers and sisters, and even his mother, must follow his directions in the affairs of the family.

Where a man has several wives living within an extended household, each will have her own room, where she and her children live. The most recent of these wives is referred to as the safed baext; or white luck. Her husband's previous wives are known as si:ra baext. The most recent wife is considered to be the favorite.

Children of a polygamous marriage refer to one another as brothers and sisters, and only when it is necessary for clarity do they use the term beradaer aendäer, half brother. Relations between half brothers and sisters usually depends on the influence of the father and the relationship between the two wives.

Some of the relations between various members of the extended family are traditionally described as cordial or stricted. The personalities of the individuals concerned, however, also plays a large role. Because of inheritance and authority, male paternal first cousin are thought of as rivals.
The term for male paternal first cousin is awedur zadee. One person may say to another, when the second is ready to begin a quarrel, "awedur zadee: m xo ne:sti: ke: kati: mae jaeng koini:" Roughly this means "you're not my paternal cousin, so why are you trying to pick a fight?" Many paternal first cousins, despite the stereotype, are close companions and good friends.

Mothers-in-law and sisters-in-law are also thought to not have an amicable relationship. The new wife often fears both of them. The husband, however, usually gets along well with his wife's sister. Because the wife sometimes may complain to her brothers or father about her husband, his relationship with them is seldom warm.

**Housing Patterns**

The family dwelling is of two general types, one similar to the western style, multi-roomed, single unit; the other, which is 'tradi: mai, is composed of rooms arranged around an open courtyard.

The first floor plan is of a rural fortress style house, called a qaada.

![Housing Pattern Diagram]

The names of the rooms and their functions are as follows:

1. saeraca - a room used for male guests, which has no direct access to the area where women live and work - the haeram saeracy.

2. kaendu xanae - storage room

3. xanae - combined living and bedroom

4. xanae - combined living and bedroom

5. kaews kaen - hallway where shoes are removed

6. xakaendaz - outhouse
7. taendur xanae - room used for cooking and sitting during winter. An underground oven, taendur, is used for making bread. In the corner is a taešnab, or area for bathing.

8. taewae xanae - family room with under-the-floor heating facilities for winter.

9. paes xanae - storage room

10. kadan - food storage for animals

11. taebilae - stable for animals

12. xakaendaz - outhouse

13. xanae

14. so:fae - raised outdoor platform used for sitting outside. Also contains a taendur for summer bread baking.

This house is designed for an extended family composed of three or four nuclear families. The families in this home share common cooking facilities but have separate living and sleeping areas. The construction material is mud brick.

The above is the floor plan of a Kabul western-style house. It is designed for a nuclear family.

1. so:fae - veranda

2. gulxanae - flower room

3. xanae - living and bedroom

4. paes xanae - storage

5. xanae - room

6. taešnab - bathroom for washing
xanae

salun - living room

taewil xanae - storage room

akpae xanae - kitchen

xakaendaz - outhouse

Following is a chart of kinship terminology in Dari:

Mother - Father

Sister - Ego - Brother

Si Son - Si Daughter - Br Son - Br Daughter

Mother madaer (bo·bo) Sister xwar (haemsherae)

Father padaer (babae) Br Son beradaer
deraer zadae

Husband

Wife xonum (zaen) Si Son xwar zadae

Si Dau xwar zadae

Brother barndnor

Father's Lineage

Grandfather - (Grandmother)

Fa Brother - Father - Fa Sister

Fa Br So - Br Dau - Ego - Fa Si So - Fa Si Dau

Son - Daughter

Grandchild

Grandfather padaer kaelan Fa Br Dau doxtaere

Grandmother padaer kaelan kaka

Fa Brother kaka Fa Si Son baeče: aemae

Fa Sister aemae Fa Si Dau doxtaere

Fa Br Son baeče: kaka aemae

Son baečae

Daughter doxtaer

Grandchild naewasae

Great Gr Ch kaewasae

Mother's Lineage

Grandfather - (Grandmother)

Mother's Brother - Mother - Mother's Sister

Mo Br So - Mo Br Dau - Ego - Mo Si So - Mo Si Dau

Mo Br mama Mr Br Dau doxtaere

mama
Mo Si xalae Mo Si So baeč: xalae
Mo Br So baeče: mama Mo Si Dau doxtaere xalae

Marriage Kinship Terms

Hu Fa - Hu Mo
Hu Br - Hu Si - Husband - Ego - Wife - Wi - Wi Si
Husband's Fa xusuːr Wife's Fa xusuːr
Husband's Mo xušuː Wife's Mo xušuː
c:waer Wife's Br xušurboreae
Husband's Si naenu Wife's Si xiyaːsnae
Groom damad Son-in-law damad
Bride arus Dau-in-law arus

Brother's Wife yəngae Sister's Husband yaznae
Brother-in-law's Wife zaene c:waer
e:waer zaen. Two men married to two sisters are each

other's baja. The wives of one man will be
each other's aembaq. Step-brother, step-sister, etc.,
is indicated to be adding aendaer to the original word,
e.g. madear-aendaer (step-mother).

Kinship Terminology in Pashto

Mother-Father

Sister - Ego. - Brother

Si Son - Si Daughter Br Son - Br Daughter
Mother mor(aede:baebō) Sister xoːːr
Father plar(baba) Br Son wrarə
Husband mera Dr. Dau wrerae
Wife sədzə Si Son xorayneyp
Brother wroːːr(lala,for Si Dau xordzae
older brother)

Father's Lineage

Grandfather - (Grandmother)
Fa Brother - Father - Fa Sister
Fa Br Son - Br Dau - Ego Fa Si So - Fa Si Dau
Father's Lineage (cont'd.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Son - Daughter</th>
<th>Grandchild - Grandchild</th>
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<td>Grandfather</td>
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<td>Grandmother</td>
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<td>Fa Brother</td>
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<td>dɔaækə zoy Daughter</td>
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<td>kaerwɔsaey (female)</td>
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Mother's Lineage

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Marriage Kinship Terms

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<td>Hu Br - Hu - Husband Ego</td>
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<td>Groom</td>
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<td>Br in law's Wife yo:r</td>
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Two men married to two sisters are each other's bajæ. The wives of one man will be each other's naeæ.ay.
THE LIFE CYCLE

The term life cycle implies a source or beginning phase of a living being, its intermediate developments, and finally its return to the starting position or source. For the biologist or physicist this is usually expressed in terms of metabolic change or the conservation of mass or energy. To the historian there is a universal significance in the repetition of the process of birth, growth, and eventual death, both of individuals and civilizations. To the religious man, it is the completion of man's coming from God, his period of trial on earth, and his eventual return to his creator for judgement.

The Afghan is a truly religious man, and he views most of his experiences ultimately in terms of eternity. This is not to say that he is a saint, but it does mean that the raison d'être of the Afghan derives its strength from his conviction and faith that there is an extra-material force that makes claims on man and judges man's responsiveness to these religious claims. The major events in the human life cycle—birth, marriage, and death—are therefore marked by religious rites and observances, some of which are orthodox Islam, while others find their source in the rich folk religion of the Afghans.

Birth, marriage and death are likewise the events of greatest societal and individual significance. As man's prestige, for example, is enhanced by the number of children that he has, marriage reinforces family ties and aligns tribal groups to achieve greater unity of power; and death means not only the end of man's religious trial on earth, but also the passage of authority from father to son and the transfer of wealth from the older to the younger generation.

It is within this religious and societal context that the human life cycle will be discussed.

BIRTH

Where does man come from? Islam teaches that on the first day of creation, ROZE ANSÄEL, the souls of all humans were created and on each of these souls was written its eventual and inevitable future, taqüd, qimsät, or saerma núust.* The soul then awaits its appointed time to be infused into the body of a child. This period of waiting is a kind of death... death being defined as the separation of a body from its soul. Then there is a period of life, human life on earth, followed by death, which on the judgement day becomes a state of everlasting life. In the Qur'an, Surah II, 23 states: "How do you disbelieve in Allah when you were dead and he gave life unto you? Then he will give you death, then life again, and then to him you will return." So, religiously speaking, man comes from God.

The material contribution is made by the parent, and the educated Afghan, like his counterparts in other countries, is aware of the biological source of "man. The uneducated, however, believe what folk biology teaches on conception, birth, etc. There are variations in these principles as well as areas where modern medicine and folk medicine meet and blend.

* Within Islam today the controversy on predestination is a much discussed issue, and the discussion appears to be similar to that within the Christian sects, which hold to one form of predestination or another, i.e., God's foreknowledge of man's fate versus God's predestination of man's fate.
It may safely be said that the majority of uneducated people believe that the major contribution is made by the man, in that he provides the egg which the woman nurtures in her womb. The belief further is that the period of pregnancy is nine months and nine days, although people usually speak only of the nine-month period.

The conception of child then is a process in which the man and woman make the material contribution and God the spiritual one. The option is actually God's, and man cooperates with Him in this work of human creation.

Children

In the marriage ceremony, a section of the Quran quotes the prophet Mohammad as saying enjoiningly: "Get married and multiply, as I shall take pride in the number of my followers in comparison with those of other nations." As in Christianity, the primary purpose of marriage in Islam is procreation. Since God has given this as a commandment, the belief is that he will also provide the necessary means to support the children. All governmental efforts at the dissemination of birth control information have been cautious and guarded.

The Quran also states that "Money and children are the joys of this life." The Afghan generally believes that many children are a blessing from God, and, as such, are equal to other forms of wealth. Children are also thought of as a spiritual legacy because it is a person's children who keep his memory alive after death, as well as perform all of the rites and ceremonies that will aid him in finding peace in the next world.

Socially and economically, children, and especially sons, are highly valued. The number of sons in a family is often a strong factor in establishing a man's prestige. Sons also work beside their father in the field or in some profession and, there, are economic assets. Daughters, likewise, work with their mothers and are taught from an early age to do all of the household work from washing dishes to preparing a full meal.

All children serve as a source of joy for the mother since the husband usually spends most of his time outside of the home and his interests are seldom shared by his wife. Children are taught that: "It is better to sit with your mother in ashes rather than with your father in wealth."

It was mentioned above that sons are preferred to daughters. The reason for this are complex and to attribute this attitude to the male centeredness of the Afghan society would be simplistic. One of the most important reasons for the lower appreciation of girls is that a daughter by sexual misconduct can bring shame on her family more easily than a son. As has been stated before gheyraet, or honor, is a strong cultural value among the Afghan and it pertains primarily to protecting the name of a family by defending the purity and virtue of the women of that
family. Another possible cause of the lower valuation of daughters is that they eventually leave their families and live within another household, while sons usually stay within the extended household of their father.

However, the fact that the girl does become a member of another household sometimes gives her extreme importance because family and tribal ties are often strengthened by intergroup marriages. Another factor in the valuation of a daughter is the bride-price, and although this will be considered in detail in a later section on marriage, it should be pointed out here that while some families may view the bride-price as a purchase or selling price, this is not the rule; and a person who would attempt to "sell" his daughter at a high price would be called a doxzaer faw~s, or daughter-seller, a very unflattering term.

Childlessness

Children mean security for their parents in old age, and prestige and power during their lifetime. For a man they are the symbols of his manhood and for a woman the most important single factor in her finding a secure position with her husband and his family. If it is determined that the woman cannot bear children, the husband has the right to divorce her, and likewise, if the husband is infertile or impotent, the wife, by law, may divorce him. In practice, however, the man will usually take a second wife, and it is next to impossible for a woman to obtain a divorce.

Since conception is the result of both God's creative will and the material contribution made by the husband and wife, the causes of childlessness are to be found either in the spiritual realm or in the material. Two years without conception is usually the limit before some type of cause is looked for. The methods used are a combination of folk medicine, religious divination and magic.

While educated people often consult a medical doctor, the majority of people first have recourse to a religious person. The religious person who is often a sayyid—or descendent of the prophet Mohammad, will be asked to look at the future fortune of the woman to see if there is a child as part of it. The sayyid, in practice, usually says that there is and give some sort of charm—or amulet, tawil:z, to bring about the pregnancy.

One such amulet is as follows:

"If a woman does not conceive a child the following is to be written and put around her thigh."

The words are symbols and do not have literal meaning.

There are many such amulets which may be written to bring about conception.
The woman will also go to a shrine and pray, that through the intercession of the saint, God will bring about pregnancy. The woman may also make a vow that if a child is born to her, she will carry out some act of devotion in honor of the saint. She may, for example, promise to distribute food to the poor or to leave a tuft of hair at the back of her child's head to indicate that the child has come through the special grace of God.*

There is a special shrine in Go:da, a large public cemetery near Bala Hissar in Kabul. Women tie small stones to this shrine, zinaeret se:a:gur padda, as a sign of their vow.

If religious remedies are not efficacious the woman or possibly her husband will consult an herbal doctor, haekim, or haekim:mjii:. The haekim may first try to ascertain whether the inability to conceive is the fault of the husband or of the wife. One method used is that the haekim will have the husband and the wife each plant a squash seed in his and her own name. Each then urinates on one of the seeds, and the person whose seed does not grow or grows poorly is thought to be at fault. It should be noted here that it is commonly assumed that the woman is at fault, and this assumption is held until the husband marries a second wife and she also does not conceive a child.

If the haekim determines that one of the two is responsible, he will then dispense a drug or prescribe a remedy. The remedies are numerous and the following is just a random example.

"The woman is to drink a large amount of water early in the morning and then to refrain from water for the rest of the day. That night she is to have intercourse with her husband, and conception will occur."

The woman may also consult a midwife, daeyi:, who through experience may suggest some remedy.

In the event that no children are born to a couple, adoption, while relatively rare, is possible. Adoption, faerzaendi: geretaen, often takes place within the extended family. Parents do not usually give up their children because of financial difficulties although in extreme circumstances a child may be left at a mosque where someone in the community will take the child as his own.

Pregnancy

Since pregnancy and child birth are among the most culturally significant events in the life of a woman, the symptoms of pregnancy are well known. When a woman is certain that she is pregnant, she will first tell her female relatives—her mother, her sisters, her mother-in-law and her sisters-in-law. The women will try to determine the approximate date of the birth and the preparation of the layette begins.

*This custom is said to go back to the time of the Patriarch Joseph, whose brother lowered him into a well with a rope tied to a tuft of hair in the back of his head.
A woman's pregnancy is not ordinarily discussed outside the family. Especially with the first child, a new baby, there is nervous anticipation and the woman makes many pilgrimages to local shrines to insure the health and safety of herself and the unborn child. Both the mother and the child are thought to be especially susceptible to the evil influence of the jinns during this period.

There are several beliefs concerning the pregnant woman and the unborn child. One that is particularly significant is that a woman cannot be harmed by the sting of a scorpion and that, if she sees a scorpion, she can control it at a distance.

Another belief concerns eclipses, during which a pregnant woman should not touch any part of her body lest the corresponding part of the baby's body be in some way marked.

Women also have cravings for unusual foods during pregnancy. Her husband and neighbors must try to satisfy them if at all possible. Pickles rate high among the favorite foods of pregnant women, as also do fruits that are out of season. If a woman sees something she would like to eat, and does not get some, it is said that "her eye remained"ocosmos mars, and consequently the eye will get red. Some also believe that if a woman is frustrated in her food cravings, her child's eyes will be sahag (actually green, but equivalent to blue for eyes). Women also crave galé merisu, a kind of clay used as a shampoo. This may be connected with the craving of American women for starch during pregnancy.

The woman has her day, as it were, during pregnancy. She is often adamant in her demands for food and complains about excessive work, and in a "male-centered society" there is a kind of poetic justice thus achieved.

In the fifth month the pregnancy usually becomes obvious, and after this time a woman's female relatives begin to help her with her heavier work.

The Midwife

The midwife is usually brought in around the 7th month. Like doctors, midwives are chosen on the basis of experience and reputation, and a family will usually patronize the same midwife for each of its children. In the cities and provincial capitals, some women use the hospital facilities, but, for the most part, only in difficult cases or when complications occur. The government also trains some midwives, who are potentially, at least, a channel for both modern delivery practices and hygiene and nutrition education.

Traditionally, the midwife is at the bottom of the status ladder because she is in contact with the birth process which renders even the mother ritually unclean for 40 days. Her responsibilities include examining the pregnant woman before birth to determine the position of the baby as well as massaging the abdomen to ease delivery at the time of birth. One of the substances used by the midwife is colza oil — extracted from cabbage and turnip seeds — in which rose petals are placed for 7 months. This is rubbed on the thighs and lower abdomen of the pregnant woman to ease delivery.

Other pre-birth measures to ease delivery are of a religious nature. One, possibly of particular interest to foreigners, requires that a bowl of water be blessed by a mullah and
into this blessed water, āwaw daem kaardæ, be immersed a branch, which reportedly when immersed in water opens into the form of a hand and is called paenje; bibbimæria:æm, or "the hand of Mary," the mother of Jesus. Possibly because of the virgin birth, it is believed that if this water is drunk the delivery will be easy.

Delivery

When a woman goes into labor, her female relatives and the midwife are called. The delivery takes place in a room which no one but the woman, her female relatives, and the midwife is allowed to enter. In preparation, an inverted wash tub (on which the pregnant woman will sit) will be placed on the floor; in front of this will be a pillow or a mound of flour or, among the poor, a mound of dirt or ashes onto which the baby will first be placed.

The woman bears down and the midwife exerts pressure, while the other women help hold the delivering woman. In some instances vomiting is induced to hasten delivery or the expulsion of the placenta.

After the baby is born the midwife cuts the umbilical cord with great care not to allow any of the veins to "slip." Among certain groups of people stomach and intestinal ailments are attributed to a poor cutting of the umbilical cord at birth, and cauterizations are performed as a remedy.

The afterbirth, jurææ, and the umbilical cord are buried under the floor of the house or in the yard near the house. There is no explanation given for this, but in other cultures the practice has the function to magically insure the faithfulness to the household of the person whose jurææ, or "pair," has been buried in the house.

Post Natal Care

Immediately after birth the child is washed and wrapped in the swaddling cloth. Nearest to the baby is a piece of cloth, ṭsuææ, intended as a diaper; next to this is the swaddling cloth, gondak, which is wrapped tightly around the baby; and finally a narrow strip of cloth, barbaend, is wound around the swaddling cloth. An amulet, cæsm morææ, a round piece of blue ceramic tile that is pitted with many holes, is often attached to the swaddling cloth. All of the above are given as gifts by the family of the mother.

The child's eyes will then be lined with antimony, sormææ, which, while it may have some medicinal properties, is used for religious reasons. It is believed that, when Moses ascended Mt. Sinaææ, the top of the mountain turned to antimony as God appeared. Putting the antimony into the child's eyes thus expresses the hope that the child may one day be blessed with the vision of God.

The mother has been attended to in the meantime, and the child is placed at her side. Beside the child is placed a stone or piece of wood. The purpose of this is explained in two ways; one, that the child be as strong as a rock, keiaææ o sœææt biyææ, the other, that the child sleep like a rock on piece of wood.

The midwife, her duties completed, is paid according to the custom of the area with a small trinket.
of cooking oil, soap, sugar, or a shadery or some article of clothing in addition to a sum of money, ranging from twenty to five hundred Afghanis. The payment tends to be higher with a first child and with male children.

Because the parturient mother and the newborn child are thought to be in great danger of jinns and evil spirits, special precautions are taken. Among the Hazaras it is the custom to draw a stick man on the wall near the door of the room where the mother and child are staying. The stick man is drawn with indigo dye — a color particularly effective in repelling evil spirits — and the only details are the nose and two fingered hands. Above the place where the child sleeps, a bisected arc is drawn with the same colored dye. No interpretation of the bisected arc has been found.

Almost all of the people burn the seed of wild rue, espadeful, mixed with the aromatic root of a plant called boori. The smoke produced is believed to ward off evil spirits. Because of the danger of evil spirits near the house of the newborn child, people who are particularly sensitive to the spirits, tawizi, or jindi, do not go there to visit.

The parturient mother, zaacae, is almost invariably given one of several drugs. It is believed in Afghan folk medicine that the human constitution is either warm or cold, and that certain sicknesses are caused by warmth or cold. The parturient mother is thought to be cold if she has given birth to a son and warm if to a daughter. Accordingly, she is given a drug to counteract each of these conditions. In addition she is given a drug, jaewani o badian, which contains galis and is used in general for intestinal distress.

Her diet consists of soake, a well-cooked sweet rice dish; litti, a food made of flour, sugar and oil, which is eaten like soup,FAAAA, a spice tea made from ginger and walnuts. Eggs and chicken are also thought to be ideal foods for the mother.

The woman should abstain from leeks, ordinary thin-grained rice, berinj mayin, and carrots, which are thought to be harmful to the nursing child. Foods harmful to the woman herself are pickles, yoghurt, curds, and turnips.

The newborn infant is given oil mixed with hyssop, suuf. This serves as a laxative, thought necessary because newborn children are often constipated.

The diet of the infant is primarily mother’s milk. This milk provides the child with character and personality; according to popular belief and the Quran, a woman should breastfeed her children up 'to two years of age, when possible. One of the most powerful threats a mother can make is to tell her child, "I will not forgive you the milk of my breast."

If the woman's milk ducts become obstructed there are several folk cures for this. One 'cure, a type of sympathetic magic, is that the woman should take a comb and stroke her breast three times. This is based on the belief that there are hairs in the milk ducts and should these tangle, the milk stops flowing and the breast swells.

Another belief is that if a woman is frightened, her milk will dry up, sirraes gose; sod (lit. her milk has knotted). There are several cures for this, one of which requires that a woman insert her breast into the opening of a water jug and...
When a woman cannot nurse her child, another woman in the family, who is nursing, may feed both her own child and also the other. In such a case, the children nursed by the same woman may not marry. In some cases cows' milk or goats' milk may be fed to the child. Sheep's milk which is considered "harmful" will not usually be used. In the larger towns and cities, powdered milk is available, and this is sometimes substituted for mother's milk.

Birth Defects

Birth defects are thought to be either punishment for sin or the effect of evil spirits. A hydrocephalic child, kaelae kaetae, was born to a woman whose relatives, looking for a cause, remembered that she had not fulfilled a vow made by her. Other congenital defects are likewise viewed as God's punishment.

If a child dies within a few days after birth, it is commonly believed that either the child was killed or "hit" by a jinn, zaecae sad, or that the mother was possessed by a jinn, post napak. In the latter case, the remedy is that the woman go out and find a litter of newborn kittens, which she gathers up in her dress and then kills. A woman thought to be post napak should not visit other pregnant women.

Naming

On either the third or the seventh day after the birth, a mullah or some other respected religious person comes to the house where the newborn child is, zaecae xanae. The call to prayer, aezan, is recited in the child's ear, to remind him that he is a Moslem. This is not equivalent to baptism because Islam teaches that every child born of a Moslem father is automatically a Moslem. At the same time a name is usually given to the child. The name is often selected from the Qur'an, although there are also traditionally non-Qur'anic, as well as modern names, that are given. The traditional and Qur'anic names are preferred by the majority of people, who view the modern names as secular and irre- ligious. Sometimes an astrologer, monajem, is consulted to find the child's star. The information given by the astrologer is sometimes used in selecting a name that will correspond to the personality of the child.

An older relative's name is seldom given to a child, because this would imply a lack of respect for the older person. An attempt is made to match the child's name with the father's in form and cadence. For example, a father's name is Mohd. Asof, and his six sons' names are as follows: Mohd. Yasin, Mohd. Hamin, Mohd. Hakim, Mohd. Rahim, and Mohd. Karim. The father's name is made up of two parts: Mohammad, and a second two syllable name. The same is true of each of his son's names.

At the naming ceremony, nam gozari, some sugar-covered nuts, noqael, will be blessed by the mullah and kept for the celebration on the sixth night after birth. If there is no formal celebration, the noqael will be sent to the homes of relatives and neighbors.

The Birth Celebration

The six days following the birth of a child are particularly dangerous both to the mother and the child, and for this reason the woman is kept in bed.
a celebration, zaewe saes, is often held — especially in the
case of a first-born child or a son.

Anyone who comes to see the child brings a small gift,
called si:ali:. Small amounts of money and sugar cubes are
common gifts. These are shown publicly at the birth cele-
bration, and the names of the persons who gave them are an-
nounced.

Most of the entertainment, consisting of music and dan-
cing is provided by the female members of the family, with
the exception of the brother and husband of the new mother,
who sometimes also perform.

A kind of sweet rice dish, kiorinwolbae, is tradition-
ally served.

On the following day the child will be named, if this
was not done on the third day after birth. A sheep is often
sacrificed on this day, and the meat is distributed to the
poor.

Among some groups of people, it is customary to either
shave the head of the child or have small amounts of the
hair cut by seven women. The first custom is called saar
In either case the hair of the child is carefully put in
a safe place.

The Mother

The forty day period following birth is a special one
for the parturient woman. Her relatives usually help her
with her work for at least 20 days.

A special party, bist gore:zi: may be held at this
time or, as is more common on the fortieth day, when it is
called caale fore:zi. Both parties are opportunities for
the new mother to visit with her relatives and friends.

Because the woman is considered ritually unclean until
40 days after the birth, a special ceremony is sometimes
held at which the midwife officiates (after this period).
The woman is ritually washed with 40 bowls of water into
which have been dropped 40 kernels of blessed wheat.

Among some groups of people a kind of round loaf of
sweet bread, ro:t, is baked, and this is sent to the homes
of relatives.

The woman visits her family for several days following
this party, and she is entertained by her relatives. With
these celebrations, the ceremonies surrounding birth end,
and the woman resumes her normal duties as wife and mother.
MARRIAGE

In Afghanistan, marriage is the most important event of social significance. It is through marriage that families are united, and when the marriage is within the extended family the unit as a whole is strengthened.

The girl from childhood is prepared by her mother to eventually assume the responsibilities of running a household, and marriage is, therefore, the culmination of years of anticipation and preparation. For the young male, it is the beginning of his own distinct identity as a husband and the head of a family. An unmarried male of sixteen will still be considered a boy while a married male of the same age is called a man.

The Obligation to Marry

Calitacy is not a cultural value among the Afghans, and the unmarried person is in general socially unacceptable. The traditional attitude is that a boy or girl should be married off as soon after adolescence as possible. If a man remains a bachelor it is believed that he is incapable of marriage and is important. Bachelorhood is also objectionable because a single man is always considered a potential threat to the purity of single girls and to the faithfulness of married women.

A girl, likewise, is bound to marry, and if she does not there is much gossip, and the suspicion that she has some fault or imperfection that makes her undesirable.

The religious obligation to marry is likewise great, in that the purpose of marriage is to propagate and fill the world with true Moslem believers in God. A story is told of a young mystic who was tempted by a dancing girl and out of remorse mutilated himself so that he would not be bothered by sins of the flesh. His teacher told him that since he could not marry he should in some other way do good for mankind by digging seven irrigation ditches to provide water for the farmers. Singlehandedly the young man dug ditches, completing the work in ten years. His teacher then admonished him that despite all the good that would come because of these ditches it would have been more virtuous if he had not mutilated himself and instead had married and had one deaf and blind daughter, who would once in her life have prayed the creed: "There is no God but God and Mohammad is his prophet."

The Marriage Partners

The age when it is considered desirable for young people to marry varies according to class, with the lower classes generally marrying younger and the upper class usually older. Among the lower classes it is not unusual for a girl of 14 or a boy of 16 to marry, while the upper classes often marry between 18 and 24. One notable exception to this is that in rural areas the wealth is often married off their children at an early age.

In addition to age, several other factors are taken into consideration in choosing a marriage partner. One of the most important is that the boy and girl should be of comparable social and economic rank. There is some mobility, however, which has been introduced because of rise in status due to higher education. Because of this a girl of a higher class might marry an educated boy of a lower class.
Ethnic barriers also exist, although among Pashtoos and Tajiks in urban areas some intermarriage does occur. One of the ethnic barriers also constitutes a religious one. The Hazaras, who are the survivors of the Mongol invasions and migrations from the north, are also Shites. The Shites and the Sunnis do not usually intermarry, with the slight exception of the Qizilbash Shites, who are of Turkic origin and were brought to Afghanistan in the 16th century as soldiers in the army of Nader Afshar. Although marriages among Sunnis and Shites are not religiously forbidden, certain religious restrictions do prevent marriage between Moslems and idolators or atheists. The Moslem man may, therefore, marry only a Moslem, a Jew or a Christian. Certain degrees of kinship also are impediments to marriage. These impediments are of two types:

1. Permanent: A man may never marry his paternal or maternal grandmother; daughter or grand-daughter; sister (whether natural or foster, i.e., where one or both parents are the same); niece (whether daughter of brother or sister); maternal and paternal aunt; daughter-in-law; mother-in-law; foster mother; or a woman who has committed fornication with her father.

2. Temporary: A man can't marry two sisters at the same time; a maternal or paternal aunt of a wife; nor a daughter of a wife's sister or brother. He also may not marry a woman who has been divorced by himself three times until the woman has been remarried and divorced or widowed by another man. A man may not marry a pregnant woman if the pregnancy occurred within marriage, as in the case of a widow. On the other hand, a woman who has become pregnant because of illicit fornication, may be married. For a man who has four living wives, the marriage of a fifth is forbidden.

All of the preceding also applies to women, but in reverse, i.e., a woman may not marry her uncle, whereas a man may not marry his aunt. The notable exceptions, however, are that a woman may not marry more than one man, and a woman must marry a Moslem.

Mate Selection

There is much variation in the mate-selection process as it occurs in various areas and social classes of Afghanistan. The traditional pattern and its variations will be described first, followed by an explanation of more recent innovations.

Marriages are traditionally arranged by the families of the boy and girl, and the formal initiative is almost always taken by the boy's family. As mentioned above, it is considered ideal that marriage takes place as soon as possible after the arrival of adolescence. At this time the mother of the young man begins to look for a suitable mate for her son. She also takes into consideration the skills of the girl, who will be her helpmate in the household.

Paternal first cousins are considered ideal marriage partners, and often an attempt is made by the boy's mother to arrange her son's marriage to his paternal cousin. If no

2. DENYAT (Religion); published by the Afghan Ministry of Education Press.
The percentage of first cousin marriages is unknown, but an estimate of 40% does not seem excessively high. There are several proverbs in Persian that express the idealness of first cousin marriages. One states "The marriage of paternal first cousins is contracted in heaven."

In the event that the prospective bride is not related to the groom, the mother of the young man goes to the girl's house on some pretext, other than that of asking for the girl for her son. Pretexts such as looking for a house to rent or asking for a glass of water are common. The woman who goes to a relative's home, likewise, does not initially state her real reason for visiting.

The purpose soon becomes apparent, however, when the boy's mother begins to inquire about the woman's daughter and to extol the virtues of her own son.

On the first visit the inquiries should be such that the boy's mother does not openly request that the girl be given as a bride for her son.

Before the second visit the girl's mother will make inquiries about the boy's family and his potential as a provider and husband. If for some reason the girl's family decides against the match, the girl's mother will indirectly inform the boy's mother of this during the second visit.

In the event that the match looks favorable the girl's mother may still demurely hesitate and not give a definite answer. The boy's mother formally requests that the girl's family "accept our son as a slave." When the girl's family finally accedes, tea and sweets are given to the boy's mother, and a formal date is set when the men and women of the boy's family are to come for gay dagaaq, or the "giving of tea."

This party is sometimes called the girlin-xorixoxorixord, or the "small sweet eating" party, sweets being given to indicate the agreement of the girl's family.

There are several other ways in which the arrangements for a marriage are made. Infant betrothals are traditionally respected, and the motivation behind such an arrangement is often the close friendship or relationship between the two men who promise their children to one another. To describe an infant betrothal it is said that they have "tied their umbilical cords;" naferan naa estaa xuedaa.

In some instances a girl from one family or clan may be given to another to settle a feud, or make restitution for some crime committed or an injury inflicted. The rationale is that the woman will serve as a link between the two groups and that the injury will be assuaged by the giving of the girl.

Exchange marriages, naa estaa xuedaa, also take place to settle quarrels or feuds. They also occur where close families or clansmen exchange sons and daughters because of financial necessity. This type of marriage is not generally thought highly of.

Among the Pashtoons a young man who takes a fancy to a particular girl can, if the usual channels fail, go to her house and fire a rifle shot into the air. The male relatives of the girl are bound by honor and custom to either begin a
feud with the boy and his family or to give their daughter to the boy. In the event that the girl is given to the boy the bride price is often exorbitant.

Girls, likewise, may go to the house of the boy they want to marry. This custom, saeda kaedaen, is considered shameful both for the boy's and the girl's families. Where there is some freedom for contact between young men and women, the young men often live in fear of the possibility that a casual girlfriend might "call on" him.

Within certain liberal families dating is accepted, and these young people often decide on marriage partners. Although this is relatively rare, it is becoming more common in the capital, Kabul.

The Wedding Expenses

The wedding expenses are borne entirely by the boy or his family. The money and goods given or promised may be divided into three kinds: the toyanaa, or wedding money, or goods, is given by the boy and his family to the girl's family. The amount of money varies in individual cases, but is rarely less than his $10,000 (about $120) and seldom exceeds As. 100,000 ($1,200). This money is supposed to pay for the cost of the engagement party, sirini xori, which is customarily given by the girl's family, as well as for the wedding expenses, including the bride's trousseau and jewelry. This money is given either in two installments, one before the sirini xori, and the other before the toy or wedding party; or in one lump sum before the wedding.

The sum of money is sometimes thought of as a bride price, and for a percentage of people this is true. When an exorbitant amount of money is demanded as the toyanaa, or there is a large discrepancy between the amount of money received and the amount spent by the girl's family, the remainder belongs to the girl's father, who is then considered a miserly man and a doxnaa fasira or "daughter-seller."

The toyanaa is not Islamic in origin, but has great cultural significance. As mentioned above, the man who demands an exorbitant amount of money before giving his daughter in marriage, is looked down on. Likewise it is generally culturally unacceptable if no money is given to the girl's father. A folk tale illustrates the value of giving the toyanaa.

A man once gave his daughter to a fellow tribesman without the toyanaa. When the groom's party was returning to their village with the new bride, they arrived at a river that was swollen by a flash flood. No one knew where the best place to ford the river would be. The groom's father selected his new daughter-in-law to go ahead on horseback into the dangerous waters.

When the girl's father learned of the plan he went out to the river bank and retrieved his daughter, telling the groom's family that he had been foolish to give his daughter to them without the toyanaa. For that reason she was worthless to them. He returned to the village with his daughter, and the groom's party returned the next day asking for the girl to be given to them. This time the girl's father demanded a large amount of money, which in turn was given to him.

The story goes on to recount the unlikely incident of a second flash flood, where this time the groom's father sends
the groom himself into the river to determine the best place to ford. Moral of the story: If it's free, it has no value.

In addition to the toyanae some families provide the actual trousseau, including jewelry, as well as the food for the wedding party. I have seen a detailed list of required items, which was presented by the bride-to-be's father to the groom's family. The list included meat, rice, oil, wood, matches and even tobacco for the guests to smoke.

The third expense is the mang, which is the amount of money to be paid to the girl herself after the consummation of the marriage. This will be discussed in detail below.

The Engagement

After it has been mutually agreed that a particular young man and woman will marry, and the toyanae has been determined, the date for the engagement is set.

The sirimini xorii, or engagement party, is customarily given by the girl's family. The party itself may range from an afternoon tea given for immediate friends and family to a large catered party at one of Kabul's hotels or clubs. In either event the sirimini xorii is the official announcement that the two people are engaged and marriage will occur. Engagements are taken very seriously and are seldom broken.

At the engagement party various kinds of candy as well as sir caey, tea mixed with milk and cardamon, are usually served. Handkerchiefs and napkin are given to the male relatives of the man engaged.

Following the engagement party the young man visits the home of his bride-to-be and in some cases is allowed to meet with her. In some parts of the country the boy, sometimes with the aid of his future mother-in-law, is able to see the girl privately. This practice, called namaz basi; or "fiancée, play", provides an opportunity for the two to get to know one another before marriage.

On the major holidays between the engagement and the wedding, the boy sends gifts to his fiancée. These include jewelry, food, clothing. It is considered a disgrace if the boy does not send these things and, because of the cost involved, the boy's family tries to have the wedding take place as soon as possible.

Preparations for the Marriage

The family of the bride prepares the trousseau and all the women relatives contribute something. The giving of gifts in situations such as this has a "social security" aspect in that the giver is entitled to a gift of equal value, in a similar situation. The gifts are each held up and shown to everyone; the name of the giver is mentioned; and comments are made as to the worth of the item.

It is also customary before the marriage that the bride-to-be and her female relatives go to the public bath for a day of bathing, gossip and merry-making. This day is called rozie haamam.

Another traditional festivity is a party given separately by the groom's family and by the bride's. This celebration, ris xorii, is held before the wedding.
The Marriage

The wedding has two basic parts. The first is the religious ceremony, nekah, at which the marriage contract, nekah mast, is signed and witnessed.

The laws concerning this contract are very explicit. The following is a translation of the ordinances regarding the marriage contract:

1. The conditions of the contract concern the matters external to the actual contract:
   a. At the time of the making of the contract two men who are free, sane, mature, and Moslem must be present. In the place of one of these men, two women may serve as witnesses.
   b. The witnesses, in addition to being present, must also clearly hear and understand the marriage contract being contracted.

2. The requirements for the marriage contract concern these matters intrinsic to the contract:
   a. The contractors of the contract are those two people who make the statement of the contract and indicate acceptance of it.
      1.) The statement of the contract is defined as the first statement, whether made on behalf of the men or the woman. The acceptance is defined as the answer given to the statement of the contract, whether made on behalf of the man or woman.
      2.) The initiator of the contract may be either the woman or the man, or their guardian or representative.
   b. The contract is only binding when the two contractors are present.
   c. The contract is not valid if the form of the statement or the acceptance are in the future tense. For example, if the woman states that she is giving herself to the man and he replies that he will accept her, the contract is not valid.
   d. If the two contractors are present in the same place the marriage contract cannot lawfully be contracted by only a written contract. If, however, the two contractors are not present in the same place the contract is valid on the following two conditions:
      1.) If the woman receives a letter from the man stating that he wants her to give herself to him in lawful marriage, and the woman repeats this letter in the presence of witnesses and then states that she gives herself to him, the marriage is contracted validly.
2.) If the woman receives the above letter and informs the witnesses of the man's request, and then in the presence of the witnesses states that she gives herself to him, the marriage is validly contracted.

e. The statement of the contract and its acceptance must be made with the second following the first with no interval of time.

f. The form of the statement and the form of the acceptance must conform in content. For example, if a man states that he has accepted the woman in return for a settlement of Afs. 1000, then the woman must answer that she has accepted the man and his Afs. 1000.

g. The two contractors must hear and understand the contract, and in the case that one of the contractors does not understand the contract word for word, he must at least understand the essence of it. This would apply in the situation where one of the contractors was mute or deaf.

From the above it can be seen that the bride and groom need not be present. In practice the groom usually is, and the bride often chooses a representative, paedna waekil, for herself. The paedna waekil and the witnesses go into the room where the girl is sitting and ask her three times whom she chooses as her representative. She indicates her choice, and then the representative and the witnesses return to where the groom and mullah are waiting. The marriage is then contracted in the presence of the mullah and a government representative. The mullah then recites a prayer, and the religious ceremony is completed.

One of the most important parts of the marriage contract is the section where the maehr, a fixed sum of money or goods, to be paid to the bride on demand, is determined. This sum of money is an Islamic tradition and in effect is the money paid to the woman for the use of her procreative powers. The maehr was, at the time of the Prophet, set at 30 dinars. Today the amount is usually much higher and often reaches thousands of dollars, or the equivalent in property. In practice this settlement is actually given to the wife. One major exception is in the case of divorce, which is mentioned below. Then both contracting parties are usually at odds concerning the amount of the maehr. After some haggling a sum considered adequate by both sides is determined.

The festivities following the nekah are called either the arusi or toy. The form that these festivities takes varies greatly in various parts of the country. In general, there are two basic arrangements. The wedding parties can be held in the same place, or the bride's family and the groom's family may celebrate separately, with the ceremonies taking place after the groom has taken the bride-to-be to his house. When the party is held jointly the men and women of both families may be together, or they may be in different rooms of the same building. The more liberal families usually rent club or hotel facilities, and the men and women relatives of both families are in the same room or area. The
first account is of an urban marriage, where all of the guests are together in the same area.

Throughout the evening there is music and dancing to entertain the guests, and since marriages are an opportunity for friends and relatives to gather and exchange news and gossip, conversation is the way that most weddings are enjoyed.

The evening meal is served late and following this the bride and groom come into the main party area for the non-religious marriage ceremonies. Until this time the bride has been in another room with the women of her family.

When the bride and groom enter, everyone stands out of respect for the Quran which is carried above their heads. A traditional song, haystha bora, is sung. There is a double throne set up for the newlyweds, and when they reach it, there is often a contest to see who can make the other sit first, the belief being that the weaker of the two will sit and the one who remains standing will dominate in the family.

Next there is a ceremony called cynam mosaf, meaning "clean mirror." A shawl is thrown over the heads of the newlyweds, and a Quran is opened in front of them under the shawl. Next they look into the mirror, and, at least theoretically, see one another for the first time.

Henna dye, xinga, or hena, is then put on the palms of the hands of the bride and groom. One theory explaining this custom is that it symbolizes the old Aryan custom of the mingling of the blood of the marriage partners. A cloth, xinga peic is tied around the hand to hold the dye-paste in place.

Next the groom feeds the bride fruit juice, saerbaet, and malinda, a sweet crumb mixture.

The bride and groom reign during the rest of the party, and friends and relatives of the bride and groom dance.

At the end of the party, often early in the morning, the married couple and their friends and relatives travel around the city with some musicians, bajee xanne. The trip around the city, called sar geest, ends at the groom's house, where the young wife begins her married life.

The above was a description of an urban wedding. The more traditional wedding usually begins with separate parties in both the bride's and groom's houses. Toward the end of the evening a delegation of women accompany the groom to the bride's house, where the above mentioned ceremonies take place. The bride is then taken to the groom's house where she is set on a throne, made of cushions. The women of the family sit around her until late into the night, when finally they leave, and the bride and groom retire for the evening.

Virginity is expected of the bride, and if a girl is not a virgin she may be sent back to her family in disgrace. Such instances are very uncommon, due to both the strict supervision that parents exercise over their daughters, and the girl's own fear of repercussions.

During the day, immediately following the marriage, friends and relatives come to visit, and on the third day following the wedding there is a special party for the women
of both families. This party, called taswir jami, signifies the satisfaction of both families and the new marriage.

Polygamy

According to Islamic law and the Quran, a man is allowed to take up to four wives at one time. The Quran stipulates that he must be able to treat them all fairly, and if he is not, he should only marry one.

In practice a man usually takes a second, third or fourth wife for one of several reasons. If a man's first wife cannot conceive a child, or if she has not produced a son, the husband may take a second wife. Also, if a man was given a wife in an arranged marriage and later takes a fancy to another, he might also marry a second woman.

In my limited experience I would say that most men who take second wives usually do so when they are in their late forties and derive consolation from having a second and younger wife. A comparison might be made between this type of marriage and the flirtations of middle-aged men in America.

One type of polygamous marriage is almost mandatory among certain groups of Pashtuns. If a man dies, leaving a widow, the brothers of the man feel obliged by honor to keep this woman within the family. Similar to the levirate of Judaism, one of the brothers will marry his brother's widow. If there is an unmarried brother, the widow would be given to him as a wife.

The institution of polygamy sounds extremely offensive to Western women. While most Afghan women share this feeling, there are instances of very happy polygamous marriages where the co-wives, hazm bari, live well together. It should be mentioned that this is not the case, and hazm bari is almost synonymous with enemy and rival. In conclusion, I should state that polygamy is relatively uncommon because of economic reasons.

Divorce

Divorce is permitted in Islam, but it is among the things that "God most detests and yet permits." There is great social stigma attached to divorce, and it is considered shameful for both the husband and the wife. The mahr, or marriage price, is the economic factor that dissuades hasty or inappropriate divorces. When a man divorces his wife he is obliged in most circumstances to give her all or part of the mahr.

The right to divorce, under Islamic law, belongs solely to the man. A woman may, but rarely does, get a lawyer who will try to obtain a divorce for her. A man may simply say to his wife "I divorce you," and she is divorced.

There are complex and explicit laws concerning divorce and inheritance, but these are not of major concern here. As mentioned above, the social stigma of divorce extends to both the husband and the wife. People are at times inclined to give their daughters to men who have divorced their wives because they believe the man was at fault. Likewise, women who have been divorced are usually thought to be poor material for remarriage.
DEATH

The time of death, according to Islamic belief, as well as the day of birth, was determined by God on the seassael, or the first day of time. Islamic mythology indicates that there is a tree in heaven on which every man has a leaf. As death approaches the leaf yellow, and at death it falls. Many people believe that if the leaf hits another on its way down, a buzzing sound occurs in the ear of the person whose leaf was hit. For this reason, a person who has a ringing sound in his ear will often recite a prayer, recalling that every man will die.

The Nature of Death

Because Islam teaches that the moment of death of each individual has been determined by God since the beginning of time, there are no real primary or exigent causes of death in the material world. In other words, illness, old age, or accidents are not the real cause of death.

According to Moslem belief, the angel, Israel, was commissioned by God to be the Angel of Death, i.e., to be responsible for extolling the soul, nafe, from the body of every man. According to a popular tradition, Israel complained to God that he, because of his function, would be the most despised and hated of all of God's creatures. God, taking pity on Israel, told him that he would create the diseases which mankind would then consider to be the cause of death. Old age, sickness, and accidents cannot, therefore, be considered the real causes of death. A proverb states: "One bow (symbolic of a bent old man) buries a hundred arrows (straight young men) in the earth."

There are different kinds of death, each with its own significance. Sudden death, or maerbe mofajat, is thought to be a sign of God's anger because a person who dies suddenly does not have a chance to prepare himself, through prayer, for death.

It is believed that death is easy for the old because they have had the time to prepare for it. Many people also are convinced that when an old person dies, many other deaths may also occur.

"Dying in youth, or jowane maerg, is the worst type of death, and it is the common prayer of adults for young people that 'God not let them die during youth.'"

Attitudes Toward Death

It seems that most Afghans have a much more realistic attitude toward death than many people in the West. This is possibly due to their strong faith in Islam, which teaches them that death is the beginning of another kind of life, salama baerzaer, which, after the day of judgement, roise qoyomast, will be transformed into an immortal life of complete happiness. Because the elders in Afghan society are held in respect as the perpetuators of wisdom, old people are not disregarded or forgotten. Most people, therefore, age gracefully and prepare themselves for death.

An individual's attitude toward his own death, as described above, differs radically from his attitude toward the death of others. Because families are close and bonds between friends are strong, the death of a friend or close relative is viewed as a soul-rending calamity.
Death is not a common or accepted topic of conversation, and this may be due to the attitude that a discussion of something bad may, in fact, cause the evil to occur. In gathering material for this section, I often asked the question "Well, if I were dead, how would you...?" The question was always interrupted by "May God not do that."

When a person hears of the death of someone, he recites a section of the Quran which says: "In truth, we came from God, and, in truth, we return to God."

Euphemisms concerning death abound. When talking about an old man who is thought to be near death, the phrase "His sun has rested on the mountain," asfæwaas saaer kor sodae, is used. To announce someone's death it is said that so and so "gave his life for you," c'ârre xodæ baareye suima baaxxiiad. The answer to this announcement, or an expression of condolence, is "May you have life," zendaqii saeratn basae (literally, may life be on you).

Preparations for Death

Preparation for death, according to Moslem belief, continues all through life. A saying attributed to the Prophet Mohammad states, "In material things live as if you will never die; in spiritual things, live as if you will die this moment."

As in many cultures, so also in the Afghan culture, age and the nearness of death tend to make people more religious. Old people often talk of religion and are usually very faithful to their prayers and acts of devotion.

Some specific preparations are made for death. For example, if a man can afford it, he may have his grave dug well in advance and yearly fill it with wheat, which is then distributed to the poor.

A woman should distribute certain items to the poor and especially to widows. She should give, according to her means, from one to seven outfits of clothing to widows. This offering is called the juræ: birbi. This also includes seven packages of needles, seven spools of thread, seven combs, and seven thimbles. It is believed that since a woman borrows these items often, she might owe someone something, and by giving these items, she cancels out this type of debt.

A woman should also give a'st teagare: birbi, or the "seven trays of the just woman." Again, according to her means, a woman must give from one to seven trays holding seven handkerchiefs, five pounds of rice, seven bowls each of yoghurt, spinach, and sugar. If a woman has released her husband from the obligation of giving her the maehr, or marriage settlement, then the husband must give these gifts on behalf of his wife.

Death

If a person has a lingering illness and feels that he is near death, he calls together his immediate family and gives them his blessing and asks them to take care of one another.

The family gathers and someone chants the section of the Quran known as the Yasin. During this time no crying or wailing is permitted because of the belief that the soul cannot easily leave the body if there is crying. The difficulty of death is illustrated in a tradition concerning the death of the Prophet Mohammad.
When the Prophet Mohammad was lying on his deathbed, his followers gathered around him. He heard a commotion outside and asked what it was. They told him that a common shepherd was trying to force his way in. The Prophet told the group that this man was not a shepherd but the one that has made a thousand women widows and a thousand children orphans. He told them that it was the Angel of Death, Israel. The angel was admitted, and the Prophet told the angel that he would be permitted to take out his soul on the condition that it be returned once before final death. After his soul had been taken out and returned, his followers asked the Prophet how difficult it was. He said that it was as difficult as extracting a hair from dough, but that for ordinary men it would be as difficult as passing a fifty-year-old oak tree through the eye of a needle. Before the Prophet died he prayed that God would lessen this pain for his followers.

Death is determined by the cessation of life-signs, and a mirror is placed in front of the nostrils as a final check. When it has been determined that death has taken place, the crying and wailing begin. Someone is sent to inform the neighbors and other relatives, and to bring the body washer, mordae suil. A grave digger, gaεhr kaεn, is procured to dig the grave.

Preparations for Burial

Immediately following death the eyes of the corpse are closed, if they had remained open. The jaw is tied closed, and the two big toes and ankles are tied together. The head of the corpse is placed in the direction of the door with the face toward Mecca.

Material for a shroud, kaεfaεon, is brought and preparations for washing the body begin. The mordae suil is of very low status due to the nature of his or her work. When a professional body washer is not available, a member of the immediate family washes and prepares the body. The body is washed outside of the house. A special board usually kept at the mosque is brought, and the body is placed on this board. First the ablutions, suγui, are performed on the body, i.e., the face, head and feet, and all body orifices are washed. Then the whole body is washed with soapy water. The nails are cut, and everything artificial is removed from the body. There is a special well near Mecca, called saem saem, and the Hajis, or pilgrims, bring back water from this well. If any of this water is available it is sprinkled on the body before it is wrapped in the shroud.

The Funeral

In Islam it is required that a body be buried as soon after death as possible. The body is placed on a pallet or bed and is carried first out of the house. All of the male relatives take turns carrying the corpse to either the mosque or a place for prayer near the cemetery. Care is taken not to jostle the corpse because there is still some feeling left in the dead body.

At the mosque or cemetery the funeral service, or jenazae, is held. The participants are permitted to perform their ablutions for prayer with dust instead of water, and there are no prostrations in the prayer.

On the way to the grave, money is distributed to people on the way, and these gifts, egwa, are believed to lessen the suffering of the dead person.
The Burial

The grave is usually about 3 or 4 feet deep, and care is taken that the grave not be too narrow, as this would create discomfort for the corpse. It is desirable that as large a number of people as possible be present. Only men are permitted in the cemetery for the funeral, and the women either follow the procession at a distance, or, as is more common, remain at home.

The participants are expected to praise the virtues of the dead person. The Mullah also gives a short sermon concerning death. After the body is placed in the grave large flat stones or planks are placed immediately over the body, and the dirt is then thrown onto the rocks or boards. Tombstones as such are not common, and usually only the wealthy have these. Common people have a stone placed at the head, which is always north, and at the feet. For men, the stones are straight, following the line of the body. For a woman, the stones are parallel and perpendicular to the body.

Haelwa, a sweet rice dish, is sent to the graveyard for the participants and the poor who gather there.

After everyone has left the grave, it is believed that the Questioning Angels, Munker and Nakir, come to the grave to interrogate the person, who has regained consciousness in the grave. The questions concern the person's belief in God, and whether he was a follower of the Prophet Mohammad. If the person has led a good life as a Moslem he is able to answer and is rewarded by having a vision of heaven that continues until the Day of Judgement. If, however, the person has not led a good life he suffers every imaginable pain in the grave until Judgement Day.

It is believed that people who die and are buried during Ramazan or during any Thursday noon to Friday noon period will not suffer the interrogation in the grave.

Mourning

The period of mourning lasts for forty days. Many of the participants in the funeral stay at the house of the bereaved family for several nights. At the mosque the men gather for the prayers for the dead, fatiha. The women usually pray at home. A reciter of the Quran, who is blind, is often taken to the house to chant the Quran for the women.

During the first few days relatives and neighbors provide the food for the bereaved family and their guests. Every Thursday night for the next forty days the family cooks haelwa and relatives gather. On the fifteenth day after death, clothes are washed and the official mourning is finished. On the fortieth night haelwa is again prepared, and all relatives and friends gather to end the unofficial period of mourning. Such gatherings are held in the belief that the soul of the dead person comes near his previous home and is relieved if he sees his family and friends together.

Because of the danger of evil spirits, esfand, or wild rue, is burned near the house to keep these spirits at a distance. People who are thought to be particularly susceptible do not visit a house where a person has recently died.

Families often go to the cemetery to pray at the graves of their dead. This is done on feast days and Thursdays and on anniversaries of the death. On the tenth of Moharram
people go to the cemeteries and pour water on the graves and scatter millet seed, or aergaen. It is believed that after the sufferings in the grave the ants help the corpse, and aergaen is scattered as food for the ants.