

## Poyamal

*Poyamal* is one of the rare forms of a ritual traditional dances preserved till today in certain regions of the Badakhshan province. It is performed in the mourning period. It can be performed in two specific moments during the mourning periods: first on the funeral day and is performed by the closest kin of the deceased e.g. wife, sister or mother. The performer comes with her hair open and applies soot in her face. The dance is accompanied by a special frame drum rhythm and singing mortuary songs. The relatives and neighbors can join the dance a sign of condolence. The second moment when this is performed is after the funeral prayer finishes during the procession when the body is taken to the cemetery. It is performed in 10-15 meter distance from the house of the deceased and behind the procession till the place where women are allowed to go. Afterwards they return and perform it in the house of the deceased.

In the past this dance was performed by men wearing their headgears and coats inside out. In Bartang valley today some ancient elements of this dance is still preserved.

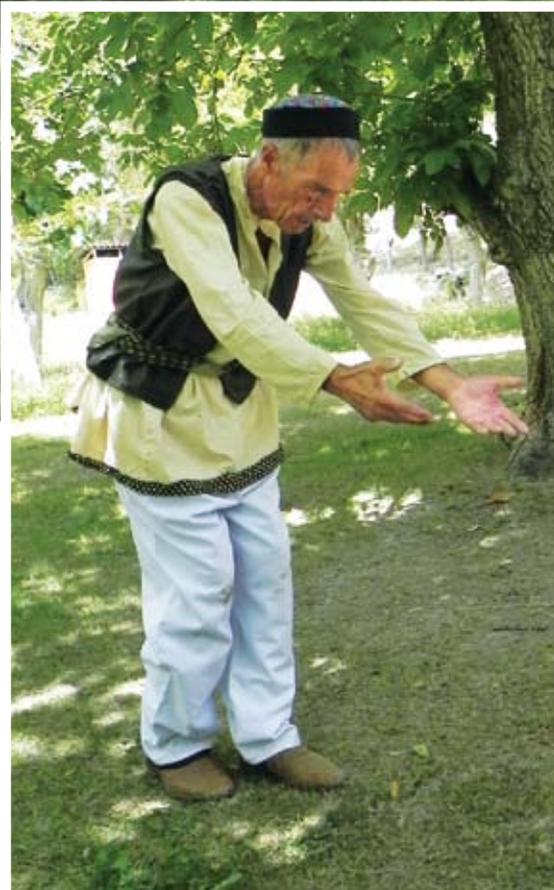
The motions in this dance are very reflective of the inner conditions of the mourning person and cry huge symbolic representation as well. It also has a component of dialogue with God when the mourning person with raised hands towards the sky kneels in the middle of the yard and sing lament song or please a prayer for the deceased e.g. “God accept the spirit of this deceased” etc. afterwards the performer sits on the ground and hits the ground with his or her hands three times, which means “O Earth accept the body of the deceased”. Than follows to perform the anguish and distress of the one who lost a dear person by moving the body parts as it has an acute pain.

During the performance the dancer makes semi circle move while holding one hand over hear heart and another in the hips, which



symbolizes “broken heart and body” in the next round he places his hand liver than heart and in his back meaning “my inner being is burning and back broken”.

The *poyamal* on the funeral day is performed by female siblings and has slow motions and performer let her hair loose and scratches her face with hand movements showing distress.



The performer will wear torn and old clothing as a symbol of grief. In the past, the performer would tear her garment from the neck and would pull her hair.

Today, in the majority of the regions of Badakhshan, the *poymal* has ceased, and the grief is depicted by wearing plain old clothing, and the *khalifa* would pray, and or *maddah* would perform a devotional song.