

## COVID-19 AND THE TRADITIONAL CULTURE OF THE UDMURTS

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**Abstract:** The article discusses the spring rites and summer prayers of the Eastern (Trans-Kama) Udmurt and the Udmurts' festivals (*Bydzh'yn nunal, Akashka, Paskha, tulys kis'ton, Gurt /-en vös', and Mör vös'*) during the quarantine period related to COVID-19, as well as comic songs and chastushkas (ditties) on the topic of quarantine and self-isolation. It is the first attempt to describe and characterize the consequences of the global pandemic as reflected through the traditional culture of the Udmurt people. Materials used for the analysis were internet posts, data from informants, articles from district newspapers, and the observations of the authors. The presented materials allow us to speak about changes in the form of the Udmurt traditional ritual events and people's ability to adapt to a crisis situation. Self-isolation has caused concern among many villagers because of the inability to hold festivals in real time and space. A study of internet posts has shown that the Udmurts willingly share their preparations for the festivals and send greetings to each other that reflect both joyful and sad emotions. Udmurt songs and chastushkas with humorous content uploaded on websites help them to overcome the difficult situation caused by the coronavirus.

**Keywords:** chastushkas (ditties), comic songs, COVID-19, Internet posts, rituals and festivals, self-isolation, traditional culture, Udmurts, virtual space

The complex epidemic situation due to COVID-19 has affected the way traditional cultures practice national customs and rituals. The way national rites and customs are performed has changed significantly and in some cases these

had to be completely abandoned (see, e.g., Coronavirus 2020; Manichkin 2020; Japanese 2020; Amelina 2020; Prange & Zhukov 2020; Kulichenko 2020). On the other hand, they have also found ways to overcome the crisis situation through adaptation (Volodina 2020; Traditional medicine 2020; Korovina 2020).

Due to the outbreak of the coronavirus in all regions of Russia, from March 30, 2020 the state decided to impose quarantine and to follow a regime of self-isolation, which meant that people had to stay at home and avoid events where groups of people gather.

It should be noted that before the events of early 2020, external factors had had a gradual impact on the traditional culture of the Udmurts. However, the conditions of quarantine and self-isolation have put the Udmurts in a difficult situation, which asks them to abandon the established customs and behavioral patterns, and to find compromises and adapt to the current reality instead.

In this study, we analyze the practice of the spring rites of the Udmurts in the context of the pandemic (the ritual cycle *Bydzh'yn nunal / Bydzh'ym nunal / Bydzh'yinnal / Bydzh'ymnal*<sup>1</sup> ('the Great Day'); *Akashka* ('the Feast of the Plow'), which marks the beginning of the year according to the national calendar and the beginning of spring field work,<sup>2</sup> Orthodox Easter, and *tulys kis'ton* 'spring commemorations') as well as the summer prayers of the Udmurts of Bashkortostan. The choice is justified by the fact that these particular rites and festivals coincided with the quarantine in Russia. The article also discusses how the phenomenon of writing songs and chastushkas devoted to the theme of the coronavirus and self-isolation is a creative reaction of a society to extraordinary life events.

The nationwide COVID-19 crisis has caused some informants' extreme anxiety, as it is possible that the extinction of traditional rituals may cause people to completely abandon them in the following years. As the informants noted, the collective participation and consolidation of the kin and community were threatened in favor of individualism, as the mentioned festivals imply the participation of a large number of people visiting the houses of relatives and holy places as well as communal discussions and meals. For instance, the Southern Udmurts' ritual visits to their relatives' houses in the patrilineal group *vös'nerge* ('the ceremonial guesthood by the family'), performed on the day of the *Bydzh'yn nunal* celebration, have gradually faded in recent years. Locally, some families separated from the lineage group and stopped participating in *vös'nerge*. In several ethnographic groups, the ritual visits during the spring memorials – *tulys kis'ton* – had completely disappeared by the beginning of the twenty-first century. This practice can be found only in separate local traditions or in single families.

During the pandemic, mass gatherings of people and visits to cemeteries were also prohibited, as was reported in the news or via public information campaigns. In some areas, members of police teams that monitored quarantine adherence were at the entrance to the cemetery. Villagers also had to refrain from visiting sacred places in groups and participating in public ceremonies. At the same time, people have become quite active in the internet space, primarily in social networks: for example, on Vkontakte, Facebook, Odnoklassniki, and Instagram.

Thus, the authors of this article chose to rely actively on online methods and to adopt virtual ethnographic approaches, as it was too complicated to make full-fledged fieldwork. A whole range of published studies (e.g., Markham 2004 [1997]; Hine 2000; Sergeyeva 2010) about research in the digital milieu allowed us to turn towards this kind of experience. In this regard, the main sources of research were various posts by the Udmurts on social networks concerning our topic, online interviews and communication with the Udmurts from different local groups, and the personal observations of the authors.

It should be noted that today the Internet has significantly influenced the modern life not only of city-dwellers, but also of villagers, due to its availability and its increasing use in daily life. The quarantine of the rural population has led to all live public festivals and rituals being moved to the virtual space. In order to diversify the leisure activities of the residents, rural cultural centers, like other cultural institutions, one of the main tasks of which is to hold events with mass gatherings of people, also found a new format for the pandemic: for example, videos made by specialists of cultural institutions in the form of various actions, flash mobs, online concerts, etc. As a result, on the one hand, people are physically isolated, but, on the other hand, the virtual world has become a tool to unite people from different strata and professions.

In some cases, at the request of the informants, information about the source is anonymized. In other cases, informants agreed to have their name published.

## **TRADITIONAL UDMURT CULTURE ON THE INTERNET AND IN DAILY LIFE**


The internet posts studied can be conventionally divided into several categories: preparation for the festival, the festival itself, ritual dishes, greetings, and information about the rite. According to the available internet materials, it appears clearly that some Udmurt Christians use both Christian and folk symbols and terminology for rituals in their posts; for others who profess Orthodoxy more

actively, pre-Christian elements are rare or absent. The practitioners of traditional Udmurt beliefs do not use Christian symbols. The posts were published in both Udmurt and Russian.

Below we briefly review each thematic block.

## Preparing for the festival

Since the quarantine of the population has given people the opportunity to spend more time at home and, in particular, on the Internet, people began to post on various social networks how they prepared for the festival. Most people posted photographs of their festive meals and laid table with a text message about their readiness for the rite (Example 1). They also shared recipes for cakes and posted images of colored or decorated eggs. One post contained information about the choice of attire for the upcoming rite of *Bydzh'ym nunal* (Example 2). An Eastern Udmurt posted on Instagram about the custom of putting on new clothes and leaving gifts and colored eggs for children on the windowsill, which were allegedly left by the character *Töd'y tush babay* ('White-Bearded Grandfather') on the Great Day (Example 3). In addition, the Bagrash-Bigra municipality in Malaya Purga District, Udmurtia, mobilized people on Easter Eve with the hashtag #окнаПасхи (Easter windows), which encouraged the audience to put a burning icon lamp on the windowsill at midnight and, if desired, post photographs on Vkontakte with this hashtag (Example 4). As noted by the

 **Ольга Перевозчикова** 🌸  
18 апр в 21:35 📍

Христос воскрес! Христос воскрес! Христос воскрес!  
Великтэмлы дась))) Нырысьсэ пыжи куличъёс)))  
К Пасхе готова))) Первый раз пекала куличи)))  
#Пасха2020



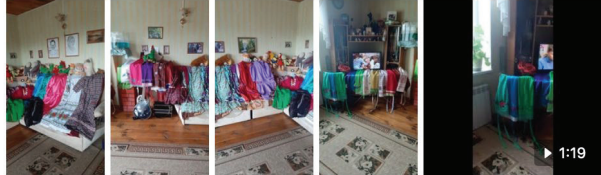
organizers, the purpose of this mobilization was to give people the opportunity to share Easter joy with others. But it is clear from the general text that uniting people with one action is an attempt to relieve tension. Note that Bagrash-Bigra village was closed in April for a sixteen-day quarantine due to a local resident having caught COVID-19.

**Example 1.** Source: [https://vk.com/feed?w=wall62160647\\_7686](https://vk.com/feed?w=wall62160647_7686), last accessed on 1 December 2020.

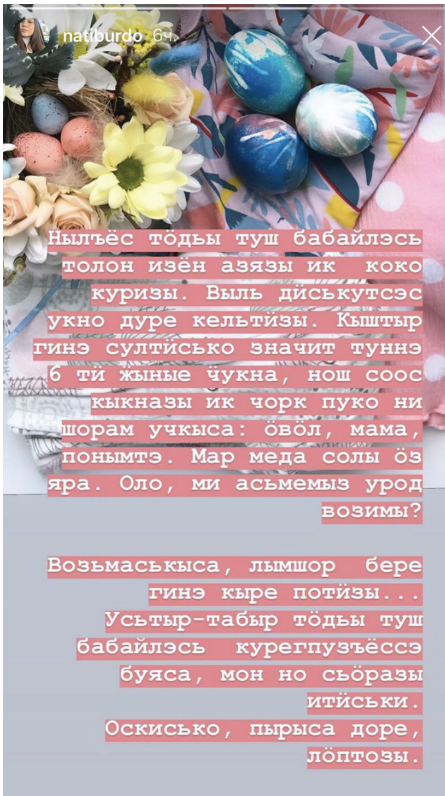


Наталья Матвеева  
18 апр в 21:52

Дорын умой, чуказе Быдз:ым нунал понна кыче меда дэремме дисялом ай малпай но. Кутски бугыръяськыны шифанерын, а отын...коня вьлэм соос ( может трос но овол дыр кин ке понна). Нош тиялд вань а удмурт дэремды но коня, мон чотай али, но мынам потиз 13. Весь уг на тыры ко:ты, адямиослэсь адзиско, яке басма чеберзэ син азям йо:те ке, одно вуритэме потэ. Разбирала шкаф и оказывается у меня столько ( а может и нет) национальных удмуртских платъев. А мне хочется ещё.



**Example 2.** Source: [https://vk.com/feed?w=wall78392984\\_1912](https://vk.com/feed?w=wall78392984_1912), last accessed on 1 December 2020.



**Example 3.** Source: <https://instagram.com/natiburdo?igshid=vakfekw744bk>, last accessed on 1 December 2020.



МО "Баграш-Бигринское"  
18 апр в 20:04

Интересная акция! Может поддержим?!

✓ В нынешнем году из-за пандемии коронавирусной инфекции миллионы верующих вынуждены встречать Пасху дома. Люди напуганы, но мы можем исправить ситуацию. Давайте сообщим миру весть, побеждающую страх: Христос воскрес!

✓ Сегодня в полночь зажгите масляную или неугасимую лампаду и поставьте ее на подоконник примерно на один час. Можете сфотографировать ее, а затем разместить снимок в социальных сетях, сопроводив хештегом #окнаПасхи.

✓ Делитесь друг с другом пасхальной радостью. Пусть все знают, что там, где Бог, всегда есть место надежде. В Евангелии сказано: «И свет во тьме светит, и тьма не объяла его».

⚠ Соблюдайте меры пожарной безопасности. Не размещайте лампы вблизи штор и легковоспламеняющихся веществ и предметов. Исключите доступ детей и домашних животных к источникам открытого огня. Не оставляйте зажженные лампы без присмотра.

✓ Друзья, акция «Окна Пасхи» — не замена богослужения. Она не заменит пасхальный крестный ход и церковные Таинства. Цель этой акции — дать людям возможность поделиться с окружающими пасхальной радостью.



**Example 4.** Source: [https://vk.com/mobagrashbigra?w=wall-165541235\\_4326](https://vk.com/mobagrashbigra?w=wall-165541235_4326), last accessed on 1 December 2020.

## Holding the festival

As the materials show, people often shared how they celebrated the festival at home. Irina Samigulova shared information about how she performed the rite of the Great Day, offered holiday greetings, and attached photographs of 2020 in her posts (Example 5). It is noteworthy that Anatoly Galikhanov, an Udmurt sacrificial priest from Altaevo village, Burayevo District, Bashkiria, immediately reacted to this post and tried to explain the rules of behavior on this day and the observance of the ritual via his comments. In particular, the priest writes that on *Bydzh'yn nunal*, you must bring water from the spring, using a shoulder yoke resting only on your right shoulder, and in no case should this water be put on the ground. Alcohol can be consumed only in the afternoon, after the family prayer and a taste of the consecrated porridge. Instagram user Valera Sabanchin from Malaya Balzuga village in the Tatyshly District, Bashkiria, posted a photograph of his father's prayer address with his son with the hashtag *#нашиитрадиции* (our traditions) (Example 6). In order for the festival activities during the quarantine period not to get out of control, some representatives of district organizations had to participate in raids. As an example, we can mention the post of Natalia Antonova, head of the Department of Culture of the Alnashi District, Udmurtia (Example 7). Apparently, it was not possible to maintain quarantine measures in all villages. According to another VKontakte post, children participated in the collection of painted eggs and Easter gifts, as the tradition had an important intergenerational meaning for the users (Example 8). In the Vkontakte group of the Udmurt-language newspaper of the Kukmor District of Tatarstan, *Vamysh* (Step), an anonymous survey about the ritual collection of eggs was conducted, which contained one question "*Tunne nylpiosty potizy-a kuregpuz bich'any?*" ('Did your children go out to collect chicken eggs today?') with three response options: "*potizy buskel'e*" ('went to the neighbors'), "*öz pote*" ('didn't go out'), "*bydes gurtez ortch'izy*" ('went around the whole village'). The results of the survey were as follows: 22.5 percent (9 people) went to their neighbors, 72.5 percent (29 people) did not participate in egg collection, and only 5 percent (2 people) went around the whole village. In comments to the survey, Vladimir Zhukov said that despite the prohibition of officials, he and his son went to the neighbors for eggs, which caused disapproval of some users. Natalia Matveeva, a resident of Varkled-Bodya village in the Agryz District of Tatarstan, published on her Vkontakte page a video greeting on *Bydzh'yn nunal* and performed the ritual chants in honor of the *Akashka* festival (*akashka gur*) with her mother. During the expedition of 2017, Nikolai Anisimov recorded the performance of this chant during the feast with a group of relatives in the patrilineal group (see Toulouze & Anisimov 2018: 81). In Udmurt culture, the performance of a ritual chant or a part of it during

the ritual is important as a guarantee of the success of sacred actions and for structuring the mystical order of the world. This is probably why, despite the failure to perform the traditional scenario of the rite, the performance of the ritual chant served as a symbol of a special day and its completion.

**Example 5.** Source: [https://vk.com/feed?w=wall22919365\\_12005](https://vk.com/feed?w=wall22919365_12005), last accessed on 1 December 2020.



Ирина Самигулова  
19 апр в 18:52

Сегодня у закамских удмуртов «Быдзынал» (Великий день), совпадающий по срокам с православной Пасхой. Заранее иду за родниковой водой. Ведь и каша и чай должны быть приготовлены на родниковой воде. В обед начинаю варить ритуальную кашу на мясном бульоне. После обеда приготовления заканчиваются, и на стол стелю белую скатерть, кладу специально испеченный в этот день хлеб, ставлю солонку с солью, миску крашенных яиц, кумышку, табани и кашу.

Счастья, мира, благополучия, здоровья любимым детям и семье, близким и друзьям, родственникам, пусть у всех все будет хорошо!

Мира и добра Всем!

Быдзынал праздникин ваньдэс но!

Сюльмысь курыськыса жук сиймы.



**Example 6.** Source: <https://instagram.com/valera.sabanchin?igshid=1prluiaho9jcu>, last accessed on 1 December 2020.



Наталья Антонова  
19 апр в 13:01

Недавно пришла домой с рейда (в рамках карантина). Замерзла 😓. Теперь можно и побаловать себя праздничным обедом! 😊 Христос воскрес всем! Будьте здоровы! Берегите друг друга! ❤️  
#СветлаяПасха  
#Оставайтесьдома



**Example 7.** Source: [https://vk.com/feed?w=wall187813714\\_2144](https://vk.com/feed?w=wall187813714_2144), last accessed on 1 December 2020.



Алевтина Федорова  
28 минут назад

А вот и наша Пасха! 😊 Когда то мы тоже ходили по домам и было очень весело и круто, в детстве очень ждали этот праздник, а теперь наши дети. И конечно же как без маминых любимых ватрушек с творогом 😊



**Example 8.** Source: [https://vk.com/feed?w=wall142962886\\_1592](https://vk.com/feed?w=wall142962886_1592), last accessed on 1 December 2020.





**Example 9.** Source: [https://vk.com/id161457323?w=wall161457323\\_550](https://vk.com/id161457323?w=wall161457323_550), last accessed on 1 December 2020.

Another example is the video on the Vkontakte page of a resident of Bobya-Ucha village of the Malaya Purga District, Udmurtia, Olga Sil'vestrova, in which her mother-in-law Maria Nikolaevna Sil'vestrova (born in 1938) performs *Pas'ka n'erge vetlon gur* (the visitation chant [of houses of the kin] on Easter) of the *Мыняк bölyak*<sup>3</sup> (Example 9). The name of the chant clearly indicates its functional meaning. Perhaps that is why the daughter-in-law asks her mother-in-law to perform this ritual chant during the quarantine on Easter Day. The video shows an elderly woman singing a song at the table with children, which symbolically already serves as a festival feast. Since this type of tune is rarely performed nowadays, and is disappearing, below are the lyrics of the song:

<i>Ар(ы)мисьогполлыктылэ(й)ук Быдэзын</i>	Once a year there is a holiday
<i>нунал юондыр,</i>	of the Great Day,
<i>Ой(ы)долэ но шул(ы)дыр(ы) карыса,</i>	Let's have some fun and sing songs,
<i>кыр(ы)заса пукоме.</i>	sit.
<i>Ой(ы)долэ но шул(ы)дыр(ы) карыса,</i>	Let's have some fun and sing songs,
<i>кыр(ы)заса пукоме.</i>	sit.

<i>“Осто” гынэ шу(в)имы ке, Инь(ы) мар кабыл(ы) мед кароз. Кырым(ы) тыр(ы) гынэ (й)асьмиёс, мусо гынэ кайёсы. Кырым(ы) тыр(ы) гынэ (й)асьмиёс, мусо гынэ кайёсы.</i>	As soon as we say “Oste <sup>4</sup> ”, let Inmar <sup>5</sup> hear. There are few of us – just a handful, my loves. There are few of us – just a handful, my loves.
<i>Кизьылэм но ю-няньёсмы сйзьылозь мед кисьмалоз, Ужась гынэ адямиеслы тазалыкзэс мед сётоз. Ужась гынэ адямиеслы тазалыкзэс мед сётоз.</i>	Let our sown seeds ripen until fall, kies'maloz, For working people, let [God] give health. For working people, let [God] give health.
<i>Ой, тау улэ, тау улэ (й)ук, мусо гынэ кайёсы, Талэсь но бон(ы) бадзынь(ы)ёссэ шодьтыса но(й) улэлэ. Талэсь но бон(ы) бадзынь(ы)ёссэ шодьтыса но улэлэ.</i>	Oh, thank you, thank you, my dear, Finding more than this [wealth] live. Finding more than this [wealth] live.
<i>Тау карыса (й)ум(ы) кошкиське, нош но вуомы (й)али, Тау карыса (й)ум(ы) кошкиське, нош но вуомы али.</i>	Thanking don't leave, again, come again. Thanking don't leave, again, come again.

(Source: [https://vk.com/id161457323?w=wall161457323\\_550](https://vk.com/id161457323?w=wall161457323_550), last accessed on 1 December 2020)

The ethnomarathon *Daur shykys* (‘Chest of the Century’), dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the statehood of Udmurtia and marked by the hashtags of #культураУдмуртии (culture of Udmurtia), #этомы (It’s us), #АлнашскийРДК (Alnashi community center), #сидимдома (stay at home), and #100летУдмуртия (100 years of Udmurtia), was announced in the group Alnashi RDK. The aim of the project was “to increase interest in the traditions and customs of the Udmurt people and the preservation of intangible cultural heritage”.<sup>6</sup> The first category of the ethnomarathon was announced as *Anai-atai gur’esmy* (‘Chants of our fathers-mothers’), where it was suggested to record ritual chants of *Bydzh’yn nunal*, *Akashka*, and *vös’nerge* festivals as they exist in the family, clan or village. Ten home videos of ritual tunes were attached to the post. Most of the participants were natives of the Alnashi District of Udmurtia, and one video was from Vyazovka village of the Tatyshly District of Bashkiria.

During the writing of the article, informants also reported that in one of the Udmurt settlements of Tatarstan, despite the quarantine, the annual tradition of the spring rites was not interrupted. The rites were held according to the established canons and with the participation of almost all the villagers. Due to the quarantine, only those former villagers who went to live in other districts and towns and are no longer permanent residents of the village could not attend the ceremonies. The decision to hold it was made by the majority of the villagers. As one informant jokingly shared: “We are doing disinfection for the coronavirus” (anonymous, oral message, 2020), meaning they were consuming alcohol. It should be noted that here the tradition was never interrupted, even during the years of Soviet atheism and religious persecution. Moreover, scientists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries noted the zealous observance and preservation of customs by these Udmurts. On this basis, it is possible to understand their choice in favor of their faith and traditions, even during the global pandemic of the early twenty-first century.

Orthodox Udmurts also found themselves in difficult circumstances. Due to the coronavirus, parishioners and pilgrims were forbidden to visit churches (Example 10). Instead, representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church invited them to watch a live broadcast of the divine service. In addition, the dangerous global COVID-19 situation has become an occasion for increasing anxiety and worry about the descent of the Holy Fire in Jerusalem. As stated, if this fire does not descend to Earth, it will mean the beginning of the end of time. Almost all the media, bloggers and Internet users were talking about the possibility of the end of the world, which created even more panic and anxiety among the population. However, divine services were held in churches, but only a small number of people participated: priests, singers, helpers. So, in the Udmurt parish of Izhevsk, singers could visit the temple to participate in divine services (oral report by Irina Pchelovodova, 2020). Thus, services in churches were held and even broadcast on television and social networks. For example, Galina Shushakova’s post indicates that holding the Udmurt divine service is important, for which she thanks Father Pavel and Father Mikhail, as well as the singers (Example 11). During the Easter service, some stood at home in front of the TV, lit candles and prayed as if they were present in the temple during the service. Others consulted with priests and, depending on their circumstances, prayed alone or with their families. Many asked for protection from disaster in their prayers. However, these forced conditions, as noted by informants, did not bring much joy and created a sense of solemnity in the celebration of Easter. Perhaps this was due to, for example, the abolition of collective participation in the festival, the lack of spiritual unity during the important event, and the inability to be present at church as a place of worship. Pre-Easter and post-Easter days are

considered great days in Orthodoxy, so the divine services on these days are special for parishioners. In this regard, because of the prohibition of going to church, many Udmurts tried to find ways to transmit notes about health and about relief from stress to be read by priests during the liturgy: for example, those who knew Father Pavel personally called him directly; others contacted him through the singers. As a whole, the peculiarities of the Udmurt Orthodox religious services are very close to other ceremonial practices in other regions of Russia (see, e.g., Soldatov 2020; Kuznetsova 2020; Radchenko 2020).

The special conditions also included the conclusion of the *tulys kis'ton* (spring commemorations), which are usually held a week after the *Bydzh'ym nunal* celebration. It should be noted that the spring commemoration also includes a visit to the cemetery on May 9. Initially, this day was dedicated to the memory of those who died during the Great Patriotic War. It later became the day of commemoration of all the dead. In the case of the Easter celebration, people were not allowed to hold a commemoration ceremony with a large number of attendants or to visit the cemetery. In this regard, in some traditions in which relatives' homes are still visited, the spring commemorations were held with the participation of the closest relatives only (Example 12).



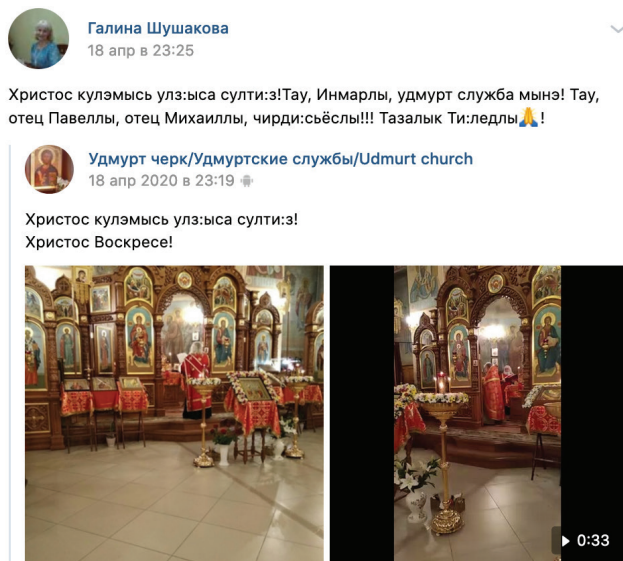
МОЯ УДМУРТИЯ. ИВОРЬЁС

18 апр в 8:15

🏠 Шаерамы черкъёсын вöсяськисьёсты доразы пукыны куро. 17-тй оштолзысын коронавире инфекциез алон выльсь черкъёсы но храмёсы пыраны уг яра. Службаос калыктэк ортчылозы. #МынамУдмуртие телерадиокомпания туннэ 23 час 30 минутысен меёак эфирын возьматоз Ижкарись Михайло - Архангеллэн кафедральной соборыстыз праздниклы сйзем службаез. Учкыны луоз Удмуртия телеканалысь но [myudm.ru](http://myudm.ru) сайтысь. Озы ик чёлскетъёс луозы мерлыко герзетьёсы пыр. Уте асьтэды, матысь адымиостэс! Пуке дорады!



**Example 10.** Source: [https://vk.com/myudm?w=wall-25185834\\_24314](https://vk.com/myudm?w=wall-25185834_24314), last accessed on 1 December 2020.



**Example 11.** Source: [https://vk.com/feed?w=wall55651469\\_1753](https://vk.com/feed?w=wall55651469_1753), last accessed on 1 December 2020.



**Example 12.** Source: [https://vk.com/shaislamova15?w=wall160459663\\_7557](https://vk.com/shaislamova15?w=wall160459663_7557), last accessed on 1 December 2020.

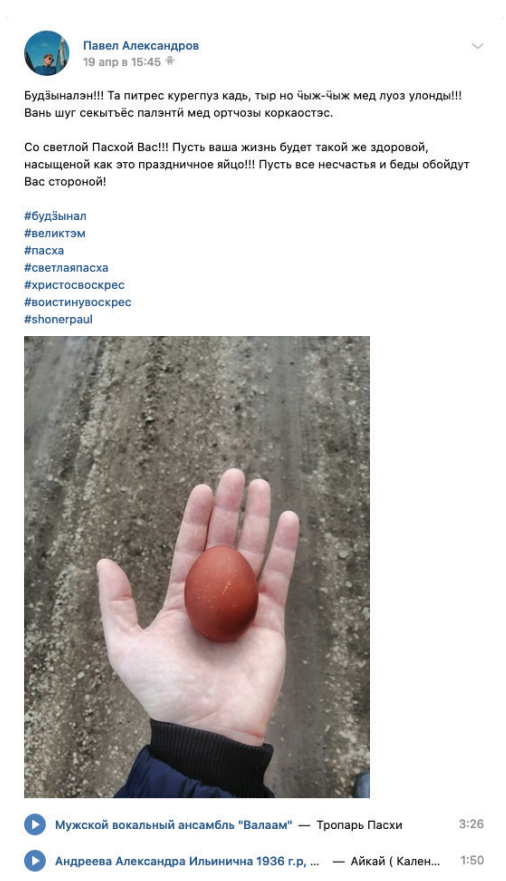
In another case, the commemorations were held within the family circle. According to informants, a certain paradox arose in one of the Bashkortostan districts: despite the mentioned prohibitions, it was ordered to do Saturday community work to clean up local cemeteries. Part of the population followed self-isolation measures, held a commemoration ceremony in a narrow family circle and did not visit the graves of their dead. But according to informants, most people still took part in the traditional visit to the cemetery. “The cemetery was like *Sabantuy*,” said one of the informants (anonymous, oral report, 2020). In some cases, safety precautions and social distancing were disregarded. For example, according to tradition, when remembering their dead, many did not wear masks and drank from the same glass (anonymous, oral message, 2020). Also, at the spring commemorations and on May 9, villagers who had left for other districts and cities came to pay respects to their deceased ancestors. It should be noted that in some areas (e.g. Izhevsk) by this time there were no strong restrictions or special warnings about visiting cemeteries, but the risk of infection remained. When remembering their dead, people also asked for their protection from the spreading pandemic. Moreover, the informants reported that in one district of Udmurtia, a large number of people gathered for a funeral to pay their respects to a deceased woman in one case and a deceased man in another. At the same time, none of the funeral participants felt in danger of getting seriously ill. Tradition was stronger than the newly announced rules of behavior. These examples show a special attitude towards deceased ancestors and a steady belief in their help and protection. As our informants note, spring commemorations and May 9 are considered the festival of the dead who wait for their living relatives. It is believed that not observing the simplest ritual actions (not visiting the graves of the deceased relatives or not remembering them) can lead to various problems.

## Greetings

Many posts were dedicated to holiday greetings in both the Udmurt and Russian languages, sometimes with various hashtags reflecting the message content: for example, #будзынал, #великтэм, #пасха (all meaning Easter). Some contained a short greeting, while others were expanded with various wishes, often protection and keeping disease at bay. Here are some examples:

*Будзыналэн!!! Та питрес кюрегнуз кадь, тыр но чыж-чыж мед луоз улонды!!! Вань шуг секытёс палэнтй мед ортчозы коркаостэс.*  
Happy Easter to You!!! Let your life be as healthy and full as this festive egg!!! Let all misfortunes and troubles pass you by! (Example 13)

**Example 13.** Source: [https://vk.com/shonerpaul?w=wall44496167\\_8688](https://vk.com/shonerpaul?w=wall44496167_8688), last accessed on 1 December 2020.




Павел Александров  
19 апр в 15:45

Будзынал!!! Та питрес курегпуз кадь, тыр но чыж-чыж мед луоз улонды!!!  
Вань шуг секытьёс палантй мед ортчозы коркаостэс.

Со светлой Пасхой Вас!!! Пусть ваша жизнь будет такой же здоровой,  
насыщенной как это праздничное яйцо!!! Пусть все несчастья и беды обойдут  
Вас стороной!

#будзынал  
#великтэм  
#пасха  
#светлаяпасха  
#христосвоскрес  
#воистинувоскрес  
#shonerpaul



▶ Мужской вокальный ансамбль "Валаам" — Тропарь Пасхи 3:26  
▶ Андреева Александра Ильинична 1936 г.р. ... — Айкай ( Кален... 1:50

*ХРИСТОС УЛЪЫСА СУЛТЭМ! ЗЭМ НО УЛЪЫСА СУЛТЭМ! ЮГЫТ  
АКАШКА НУНАЛЭН ТИЛЕДЫЗ! АРМЫ КАПЧИЕН, ШУЛДЫР  
УЖЪЁСЫН МЕД ОРТЧОЗ! ТАЗАЛЫК, ТУПАСА УЛОН, ШУДБУР,  
КАНЬЫЛЛЫК МЕД ЛУОЗ КОТЬКУД КОРКАН!*

Christ is risen! Indeed he is risen! Happy *Akashka* day to you! Let our year pass easily with joyful works! Let health, sympathy, happiness, and ease be in every home!<sup>8</sup>

*Ваньдэсты Быдзым Паскаен! Котькуд семьяе мед пыроз Яратон,  
Тазалык, Шудбур, вань висенъес палэнэти мед кошказы! Чагыр инбам  
но яркыт шунды котьку мед луоз!*

Happy Easter to all! Let Love, Health, and Happiness come to every family, let all diseases be avoided! Let there always be a blue sky and a bright sun!<sup>9</sup>



МОЯ УДМУРТИЯ. ИВОРЬЁС

19 апр в 10:08

Ӗчкыласьком Быдӓым нуналэн!  
Великтӓмен! Акашкаен! Быдӓынналэн!  
Сюлэмӓсьмес мед шунтоз ӓчезлы оскон!  
Уте асьтӓды, котырьс адымиостӓс, эн ыштӓ саклыктӓс!  
Тазалько луэ!!!

#МынамУдмуртие #МояУдмуртия #Иворьёс



04-19-10.33.48

2 239 просмотров

**Example 14.** Source: [https://vk.com/myudm?w=wall-25185834\\_24321](https://vk.com/myudm?w=wall-25185834_24321),  
last accessed on 1 December 2020.



Ольга Замараева-Антипина

19 апр в 6:41

Как жаль, что мой кулич не подарить, яйцо по интернету не отправить...  
Осталось лишь «ХРИСТОС ВОСКРЕС!» сказать и луч тепла в душе у вас  
оставить!!!

Со светлым праздником Пасхи, друзья! 🐣



**Example 15.** Source: [https://vk.com/id455362247?w=wall455362247\\_1418](https://vk.com/id455362247?w=wall455362247_1418),  
last accessed on 1 December 2020.



*Ӝечкыласьком Быдӟым нуналэн! Великтэмен! Акашкаен!  
Быдӟынналэн! Сюлэмӟесмес мед шунтоз ӟечезлы оскон! Уте асьтэды,  
котырысь адымиостэс, эн ыштэ саклыктэс! Тазалыко луэ!!!*

Greetings on the Great Day! Happy Great Day! With *Akashka*! Happy Great Day! Let our hearts be warmed by faith in the good! Take care of yourself and your loved ones, do not lose vigilance! Be healthy! (Example 14)

*Как жаль, что мой кулич не подарить, яйцо по интернету не отправить... Осталось лишь "ХРИСТОС ВОСКРЕС!" сказать и луч тепла в душе у вас оставить!!! Со светлым праздником Пасхи, друзья!*

What a pity that my cake is not a gift, an egg on the Internet is not sent... It remains only to say, 'CHRIST HAS RISEN!' and leave a ray of warmth in your soul!!! Happy Easter holiday, friends! (Example 15)

*Югыт Пасхаен! Быдӟынналэн! Ваньмыз умой мед луоз!*  
Happy Easter! Happy Great Day! Let everything be fine!<sup>10</sup>

*Ӝечкыласьком Акашкаен!*

Congratulations on *Akashka*!

*Чылкыт малпанӟёсын  
Тырмытом улонмес.  
Ӝечезлы осконэн  
Юнматом сюлэммес  
(Example 16)*

With pure thoughts  
we'll fill our lives.  
With faith in the good  
we'll strengthen our hearts



Людмила Филиппова  
18 апр в 5:43



**Example 16.** [https://vk.com/feed?w=wall128050325\\_1070](https://vk.com/feed?w=wall128050325_1070), last accessed on 1 December 2020.

On his Vkontakte wall, the Udmurt priest Anatoly Galikhanov even published prayers. One prayer is for the kin, to which a photograph of a summer ceremony in the sacred grove is attached. The other is in honor of *Bydzh'yinnal* festival to which a photograph of *taban*<sup>11</sup> (as an important ritual dish) is attached, and an audio recording of a prayer by the sacrificial priest Islam Armanshin, preserved since 1973:

*ШУДО БУРО МЕД ЛУОЗ БЫДЖЫНАЛМЫ!!! Тани нош улон сюрэслэсьлэсь ог зоззэ ортчим. Куриськемъёсмы Инмар Бабыкаймы доры мед вуоз. Куриськеммэс кабыл мед кароз, мед басьтоз. Омин! Happy be our Great Day! Here again, one period of the road of life has passed. May our prayers reach our elder Inmar. Let him hear and accept our prayers. Amen!*<sup>12</sup>

*ВЫЖЫ ПОННА КУРИСЬКОН*

PRAYER FOR THE KIN

*Югыт но мусо Инмаре-Кылчинэ,  
Азьпалан улонын милемлы Тон  
юртты!*

My bright and sweet Creator Inmar,  
In the future, you will help us!

*Выжымес шудбурен, зечлыкен  
юнматы.*

Strengthen our kin with happiness  
and kindness.

*Кутскем ужъёсмес пумозяз вуттыны  
Кужымдэ но визьдэ сёты Тон, Инмаре!*

To complete the work started  
Give us strength and intelligence,  
you, my Inmar!

*Янгыш сюрэслэсь утыы Тон выжымес,  
Азвесь кенерен котырты дышмонлэсь.*

From a wrong path save you our kin,  
With a silver fence surround from  
the enemy.

*Через", кыльдэез" тузонэн Тон пазьгы,  
Андан-азвесен тазалык Тон сёты,  
Мамык кыиныйд вешалля нылпимес,  
Югыт Шундыен шунты та улонмес!  
Ванен но бурен, тыр шудэн но зечен,  
Гид тырос пудоен, бакча емышен,  
Нянен но вёен, мушен-чечыен,  
Нылын но пиен, семьяен, туганэн,*

The disease, infection you turn to dust,  
give you [like] steel-silver health,  
Smooth our children with a gentle hand,  
Warm our life with the bright Sun!  
Prosperity, full of happiness and good,  
Full of cattle and vegetables,  
Bread and butter, honeybees,  
To daughters and sons, family,  
relatives,

*Калыкен огкылысь улондэ сёты Тон,  
Инмаре!*

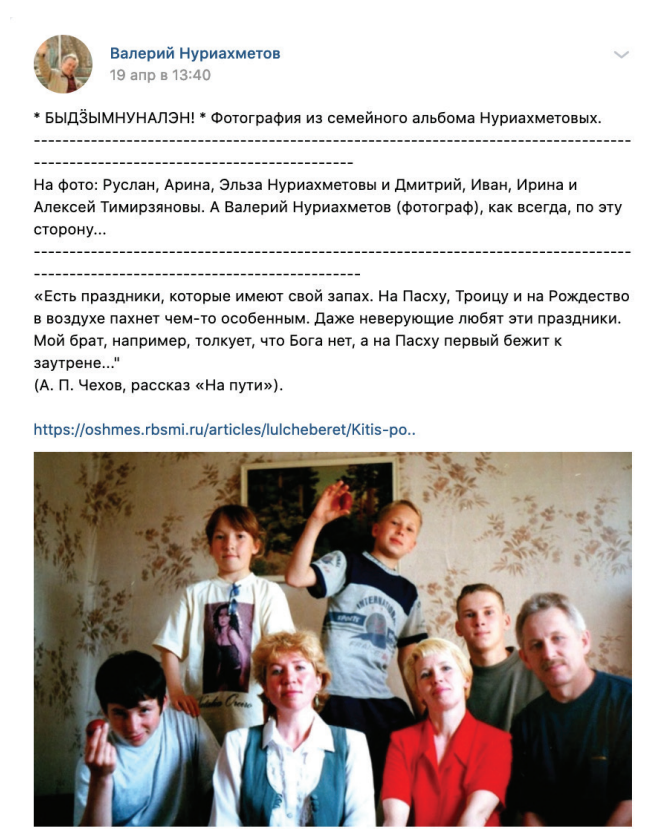
In harmony with the people give you  
life, my Inmar!


*Кабыл но басьты куреммес милесьтым,  
Югыт но мусо, Инмаре-Кылчинэ!  
Омин! Омин! Омин!*<sup>13</sup>

Accept our prayers,  
Bright and sweet, my Inmar-Kylchin!  
Amen! Amen! Amen!

On his Vkontakte wall, Valery Nuriakhmetov posted with greetings a photograph from the family archive, where his children show painted chicken eggs (Example 17). This example shows how people turn towards the family album as the guardian of family history, and reveals the virtual call upon the family, as well as publicizes the importance of the emotional unity of relatives during festivals, which they were deprived of due to self-isolation.

Public organizations and public figures post their greetings and focus on the need to stay in self-isolation and follow precautionary measures. Special importance in such posts is given to illustrations and photographs that highlight a festive table, decorations, and ritual dishes, various attributes that symbolize the festival (e.g., the willow, candles, flowers, or new clothes for children of the Eastern Udmurts (Example 18)).



 Валерий Нуриахметов  
19 апр в 13:40

\* БыДЪЫМНУНАЛЭН! \* Фотография из семейного альбома Нуриахметовых.


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На фото: Руслан, Арина, Эльза Нуриахметовы и Дмитрий, Иван, Ирина и Алексей Тимирзяновы. А Валерий Нуриахметов (фотограф), как всегда, по эту сторону...

-----

«Есть праздники, которые имеют свой запах. На Пасху, Троицу и на Рождество в воздухе пахнет чем-то особенным. Даже неверующие любят эти праздники. Мой брат, например, толкует, что Бога нет, а на Пасху первый бежит к заутрене...»  
(А. П. Чехов, рассказ «На пути»).

<https://oshmes.rbsmi.ru/articles/lulcheberet/Kitis-po..>



**Example 17.** Source: [https://vk.com/feed?w=wall135609259\\_99037](https://vk.com/feed?w=wall135609259_99037), last accessed on 1 December 2020.



**Example 18.** Source: [https://vk.com/feed?w=wall262345748\\_1048](https://vk.com/feed?w=wall262345748_1048), last accessed on 1 December 2020.

## Explanatory notes

During this period, it was also possible to notice posts in social networks explaining, for instance, what to do during this or that holiday, what actions to perform or, on the contrary, what is prohibited, or what dishes to cook. For example, the Udmurt sacrificial priest Anatoly Galikhanov in his Vkontakte post described the traditional celebration of *Bydzh'yinnal*. He wrote that during this holiday at first the guests were invited by the relatives living in the part of the village located at the lower reaches of the river;<sup>15</sup> during *Bydzh'yinnal kel'yan* ('taking leave of the Great Day') they were already visiting relatives whose house was located at the upper reaches of the river; the indispensable dish of these rites was porridge with goose meat. It is also noted that during the commemoration, relatives whose house was on the upper reaches of the river were invited to come over and eat soup, and then the houses of others on the lower reaches of the river were visited. On the Vkontakte social network, the district newspaper of the Kukmor District of Tatarstan *Vamysh* ('Step') posted a photograph of colored eggs with a short message about the actions that are performed during the *Bydzh'yinnal* and *Akashka* festivals. Liliya Garaeva, a connoisseur of Udmurt traditions and the wife of the sacrificial priest of Aribashevo village in the Tatyshly District of Bashkortostan, published an article under the heading "*Vös' ortch'yton esep'yos*" ('Rules of prayer') in the public-political, social, cultural, and educational newspaper of the Bashkortostan Udmurts *Oshmes*

(‘Source’), in which she wrote about the prohibition against the participation of a large number of people in the traditional summer prayers of the Eastern Udmurts, and appealed to the readers, explaining the importance of following the rules of behavior at the ceremony and the “dress code” during the ritual (Garaeva 2020: 2).

**Example 19.** Source: [https://vk.com/feed?w=wall82757120\\_1445](https://vk.com/feed?w=wall82757120_1445), last accessed on 1 December 2020.



Анатолий Галиханов  
20 апр в 12:45

Азьло , Бдзыналэ, пересьёс вань дыря, кужмазы дыря отчаськиськом вал. Нырысь отё шурлэн улланы палаз улысь туганъёс, собере Бдзынал келяку шурлен выллапалаз улысь дорын кунояло вал. Обязательно заезг силен жук сиём вал. Али вань на меда сычёос? кылэм ёвёл. Нош кисьён дыря пось шыд сиыны отчасько вылланысен улланы.



**Example 20 (below).** Source: [https://vk.com/vamysh\\_kukmor?w=wall-108797331\\_3361](https://vk.com/vamysh_kukmor?w=wall-108797331_3361), last accessed on 1 December 2020.



"ВАМЫШ"  
19 апр в 17:05

### Быдзымнал, Акашка (Пасха)



Начало нового земледельческого цикла сопровождалось обрядами изгнания Шайтана, чтобы не испортил праздника. В этот день красили яйца и складывали их в лукошко вместе с зерном. Эти яйца вместе с зерном разбрасывали по полю и просили у бога хорошего урожая, зерен величиной с яйцо.



## COVID-19 AND THE TRADITIONAL SUMMER PRAYERS OF THE EASTERN UDMURTS

The Eastern Udmurts are a special ethnographic group of peripheral Udmurts, who avoided Christianization and have practiced their religion to this day. This year, the traditional summer prayers of the Eastern Udmurts were held in special conditions. For instance, in the Tatyshly District of Bashkortostan, during the quarantine period, the population discussed the possibility of broadcasting ceremonies online via the Internet, as was organized for the services in Orthodox churches or, for example, for the traditional ceremonies of the Mari (Agavairem-online 2020). However, broadcasts of Udmurt ceremonies did not take place. In the same district, in the ritual group of Novye Tatyshly (Udm. Vil'gurt)<sup>16</sup>, the council of sacrificial priests and elders preliminarily discussed the conditions for holding ceremonies with the head of the Novye Tatyshly Village Council. The head gave instructions to the participants of the ceremony to wear protective masks and take precautionary measures. The organizers of the ceremony were informed that during the ceremony there may be an inspection. It was planned that only priests and a few helpers would participate in the ritual event, *Gurt/-en vös'* ('village ceremony') would be held, but there would not be a collective ceremony with the participation of several district villages – *Mör vös'* ('district ceremony') (Baidullina 2020). Further, based on the data from the Internet and online interviews, we will briefly consider the characteristics of the ceremonies of the Eastern Udmurts in COVID-19 conditions.

In Urazgil'dy village of the Tatyshly District of Bashkortostan, *Gurt/-en vös'* (village ceremony) was held on Thursday, June 4, although ceremonies are traditionally performed on Fridays. The informants felt that the ceremony should be held before the full moon, that is, on Thursday, because the full moon coincided with Friday. Two days before the prayer, specially appointed people (nine women) collected money for the ceremony *vös' dun* and grain for porridge from the villagers, but with the mandatory "dress code" of protective masks and gloves (Fig. 1). The day before the ceremony, the holy place was cleaned and prepared for the upcoming ritual. The ritual itself began on Thursday, at 8 am. This year, the prayer was attended by a sacrificial priest *kuris'kis'*, male helpers, and some female helpers who had the task of cleaning the entrails of the sacrificial animal. The overseer of the holy place *vös' kuz'o* distributed protective masks for the ceremony participants. In their prayers, both the priest and the ceremony participants also asked for protection from the dangerous disease that had taken over the world. After the end of the prayer, several participants were treated to *kumyshka* (moonshine) behind the fence of the holy place. Other villagers were forbidden to participate in the ceremony at the

sacred place. They received their portion of consecrated porridge only in the evening after the ceremony, after 4 pm. On the evening of the same day, each family gathered at the same table and tasted the consecrated porridge with a prayer addressed to the gods (oral message, anonymous, 2020).

In Malaya Balzuga village in the Tatyshly District of Bashkortostan, also only a sacrificial priest and a few helpers participated in the *Gurt/-en vös'* prayer. While in the past years the grain for the ceremony was collected by children, this year the grain and money *vös' dun* for the ceremony were collected by seven adult helpers. The ceremony itself was held on Friday. Unlike the previous example, the local priest listened to the advice of Liliya Garayeva from Aribashevo, a connoisseur of Udmurt traditions, who referred to the fact that the full moon began only on Friday evening and lasted until Saturday. The same example was followed by the priests of Novye Tatyshly, who held a ceremony on Friday. Afterwards, the consecrated porridge was brought to the village, and seven helpers distributed it to the villagers. In previous years, people received the ritual dish directly at the sacred place (oral message, anonymous, 2020).

In Asavka village in the neighboring Baltachevo District of Bashkiria, almost all the traditional summer ceremonies – *Gurt/-en vös'* and *Mör vös'* – were held.



**Figure 1.** Collecting grain and money *vös' dun* for the ceremony. Urazgil'dy, Tatyshly District, Bashkiria. Photograph by Anna Baidullina, June 2, 2020.



**Figure 2.** Prayer address by priest Ralif Garayev. Urazgil'dy village, Tatyshly District, Bashkiria. Photograph by Anna Baidullina, June 4, 2020.

**Figure 3 (below).** Participants of the Gurt /-en vös' ceremony. Urazgil'dy, Tatyshly District, Bashkiria. Photograph by Anna Baidullina, June 4, 2020.





**Figure 4.** Participants in the prayer in Asavka village, Baltachevo District, Bashkiria. Photograph by Victoria Kiryanova 2020.



According to the sacrificial priest, this year they could not hold a ceremony in honor of *Mukylchin*, the deity of the land, because the village did not have a suitable sacrifice – a black ram/sheep. According to the village priest, before the ceremonies he called the priests of the Tatyshly District and consulted with them on how they had planned to hold the ceremonies in the current conditions. In the end, he decided to hold all the ceremonies, but with the use of personal protective equipment and disinfection (masks, gloves, alcohol solution). The ritual was attended only by those villagers who expressed their desire, mostly elderly people. It is curious that the Tatars living in this village supported the ceremonies of the Udmurt by donating money. This year, several Tatar families donated money in denominations of fifty and one hundred rubles. In his prayer, in addition to obligatory requests, the priest asked for assistance in protection against diseases, referring to this year's pandemic. Together with two elders, he prayed on his knees and consecrated the porridge, which was then distributed to all present. The priest noted that upon the declaration of

quarantine on the streets of the village, a local police officer drove around in a car and announced to the local residents through a loudspeaker that it was forbidden for elderly people to walk on the street. After the *Gurt /-en vös'*, a small informational article was published in the Udmurt-language newspaper of the Bashkortostan Udmurt, *Oshmes* ('Source'), with the title "*Vös'as'kemzy kabył med luoz*" ('Let their prayers be heard/accepted [by God]') (Kiryanova 2020). The article describes the specifics of the ceremony, emphasizes the small number of participants, and expresses the hope that, despite the current situation, *Inmar-Kylchin* will hear/accept the prayers of the villagers (*ibid.*).



**Figure 5.** *Cooking the ritual porridge. Asavka village, Baltachevo District, Bashkiria. Photograph by Victoria Kiryanova 2020.*

## SONGS AND CHASTUSHKAS ABOUT THE CORONAVIRUS AND SELF-ISOLATION

During this period, a curious phenomenon appeared in Udmurt culture. People began to compose songs and chastushkas dedicated to the theme of coronavirus and self-isolation. It is known that in the folklore of any people humorous songs and chastushkas (ditties) belong to the lyrical kind of poetry, so their main purpose is not to describe events, but express and transmit feelings, thoughts, and moods. As a rule, the messages reveal that the lyrics of songs come from the performer, and music can be both a folk tune or the performer's. It should be noted that writing musical texts on this topic has gained a wide scale (see, e.g., Chastushkas from Kuzmich 2020; Chastushkas about coronavirus 2020; Competition 2020; Italian 2020; Music video 2020; Kakha video 2020). Interesting examples were also found in the modern culture of the Udmurts. Here are the lyrics of the songs at our disposal, most of which are based on humor.

### *Example 1.*

<i>Везде кипишь, везде шок, Киттокын но тоже шок. Та вирусэз маин виёд, Рецептсэ кытысь шедьтод? Та вирусэз маин виёд, Рецептсэ кытысь шедьтод?</i>	Everywhere turmoil, everyone in shock, And so is China, too, in shock. How to kill this virus, Where to find the scheme? How to kill this virus, Where to find the scheme?
<i>Ураме потса учки вал, Огкин но өвёл, паймод! Доре прыса киме миськи, Курыт вуэн чушиськи. Доре прыса киме миськи, Курыт вуэн чушиськи.</i>	I went outside to look, There is no one, what a surprise! I got home, washed my hands, And wiped myself with alcohol. I got home, washed my hands, And wiped myself with alcohol.
<i>Сиса адзем вал чеснок, Зыныз потэ, ой, чоньдод! Собере нош курыт вуэн Чыртыме гылтй кык пол. Собере нош курыт вуэн Чыртыме гылтй кык пол.</i>	I tried eating garlic, The smell is, oh, you'll perish! Then again with alcohol I Gargled twice. Then again with alcohol I Gargled twice.
<i>Кытын чырты, отын гылён, Кошкиз, кошкиз гань-гань!</i>	Where's a neck, there's a throat, It's going, going smoothly!

*Вот табере мон валай,  
Айбат “дару” принимай!  
Вот табере мон валай,  
Айбат “дару” принимай!*

Now I understand,  
Take good “medicine”!  
Now I understand,  
Take good “medicine”!

(Performer anonymous, Bashkortostan 2020)

### **Example 2.**

*Ужтэмлэсь уж луоз али –  
Вина пöзьтыны пуктй.  
Ужтэмлэсь уж луоз али –  
Вина пöзьтыны пуктй.  
Гажано туган-еишдёсын  
Юны мед гожтоз али.  
Гажано туган-еишдёсын  
Юны мед гожтоз али.*

Idling will become working –  
I started to cook kumyshka.  
Idling will become working –  
I started to cook kumyshka.  
With dear relatives and friends  
Let it be fated to celebrate.  
With dear relatives and friends  
Let it be fated to celebrate.

*Ай, три-дари та-там,  
Вай, три-дари та-там.  
Ай, три-дари та-там,  
Вай, три-дари та-там.*

Ay, tri-dari ta-tam,  
Wai, tri-dari ta-tam.  
Ay, tri-dari ta-tam,  
Wai, tri-dari ta-tam.

*“Коронавирус” шуыса  
Доржёсамы пукиськом.  
“Коронавирус” шуыса  
Доржёсамы пукиськом.  
Оскисько чержёс ортчыса,  
Жоген чошен пумиськом.  
Оскисько чержёс ортчыса,  
Жоген чошен пумиськом.*

Saying “Coronavirus”  
We are sitting in our homes.  
Saying “Coronavirus”  
We are sitting in our homes.  
I believe when the disease passes  
We'll meet again soon.  
I believe when the disease passes  
We'll meet again soon.

*Ай, три-дари та-там,  
Вай, три-дари та-там.  
Ай, три-дари та-там,  
Вай, три-дари та-там.*

Ay, tri-dari ta-tam,  
Wai, tri-dari ta-tam.  
Ay, tri-dari ta-tam,  
Wai, tri-dari ta-tam.

*Тазалык, шудбур сйзъыса,  
Чаркамес шукком али.  
Тазалык, шудбур сйзъыса,  
Чаркамес шукком али.  
Пуком удмурт гур кисьтыса,*

Wishing health and happiness  
Let's clink our cups.  
Wishing health and happiness  
Let's clink our cups.  
Udmurt melody performing, we'll sit,

<i>Эктыса но шудыса.</i>	Dancing and playing.
<i>Пуком удмурт гур кисьтыса,</i>	Udmurt melody performing, we'll sit
<i>Эктыса но шудыса.</i>	Dancing and playing.
<i>Ай, три-дари та-там,</i>	Ay, tri-dari ta-tam,
<i>Вай, три-дари та-там.</i>	Wai, tri-dari ta-tam.
<i>Ай, три-дари та-там,</i>	Ay, tri-dari ta-tam,
<i>Вай, три-дари та-там.</i>	Wai, tri-dari ta-tam.
<i>Ой, эсьмаса, эсьмаса,</i>	Oh, so yes, at least
<i>Сйзъыл палзъ кисьмаса.</i>	With ripening rowanberries in the fall it would be.
<i>Ой, эсьмаса, эсьмаса,</i>	Oh, so yes, at least
<i>Сйзъыл палзъ кисьмаса.</i>	With ripening rowanberries in the fall it would be.
<i>Лыктэлэ вал тй, ешзёсы,</i>	Would you come, friends,
<i>Чошен юом эсьмаса.</i>	We'd celebrate together.
<i>Лыктэлэ вал тй, ешзёсы,</i>	Would you come, friends,
<i>Чошен юом эсьмаса.</i>	We'd celebrate together.
<i>Ай, три-дари та-там,</i>	Ay, tri-dari ta-tam,
<i>Вай, три-дари та-там.</i>	Wai, tri-dari ta-tam.
<i>Ай, три-дари та-там,</i>	Ay, tri-dari ta-tam,
<i>Вай, три-дари та-там.</i>	Wai, tri-dari ta-tam.
<i>Лыктэлэ вал тй, ешзёсы,</i>	Would you come, friends,
<i>Чошен юом эсьмаса.</i>	We'd celebrate together.
<i>Лыктэлэ вал тй, ешзёсы,</i>	Would you come, friends,
<i>Чошен юом эсьмаса.</i>	We'd celebrate together.
<i>Коронавирусэз вормыса!</i>	Defeating the coronavirus!

(Performer Minliaskarova Irina, born in 1959. Starokalmiyarovo village, Tatyshly District, Bashkortostan, 2020)

**Example 3.**

<i>Мар пукиськод али дорад?</i>	Why are you staying at home?
<i>Мар карыса кыллиськод?</i>	What are you doing?
<i>“Коронавирус” шуыса,</i>	Saying “Coronavirus”
<i>“Коронавирус” шуыса,</i>	Saying “Coronavirus”
<i>Пумиськытэк кыллиськом.</i>	We live without meeting.

<i>Мон азбаре потай али,</i>	Well, I went out into the yard,
<i>Юрт котырез тазартыны.</i>	To clean around the house.
<i>Мон азбаре потай али,</i>	Well, I went out into the yard,
<i>Юрт котырез тазартыны.</i>	To clean around the house.
<i>Курег басьтыса шашлык лэсьтй,</i>	I bought chicken, soaked shashlik,
<i>Настроениез жутыны.</i>	[To] cheer up.
<i>Курег басьтыса шашлык лэсьтй,</i>	I bought chicken, soaked shashlik,
<i>Настроениез жутыны.</i>	[To] cheer up.

(Anonymous, town of Chernushka, Perm region, 2020)

#### **Example 4.**

<i>Вирус вуэм Алнаше!</i>	The virus has reached Alnashi!
<i>Вирус вуэм Алнаше,</i>	The virus has reached Alnashi,
<i>Калык урамысь ыше.</i>	There were no more people on the streets.
<i>Ветло урамтй “эшъёс”,</i>	“Friends” are walking down the street,
<i>Ваньзэс улляло соос.</i>	and making everyone turn away.
<i>Вася бертыны потэм,</i>	Vasya left for home,
<i>Алнаш пала ни вуэм,</i>	and has already arrived at Alnashi,
<i>Дугдытэм сое патруль,</i>	A patrol stopped him,
<i>Поворачивай, пе, руль.</i>	Said to turn the steering wheel.
<i>“Едь туда, откуда сам”,</i>	“Go where you came from,”
<i>Но пырон сюрес ворсам.</i>	And blocked the road.
<i>“Как же так?” – шуэ Васи,</i>	“How so?” – says Vasya,
<i>“Я же местный Ёатча ни”.</i>	“I’m a local guy from Varzi-Yatchi.”
<i>“Как же так?” – шуэ Васи,</i>	“How so?” – says Vasya,
<i>“Я же местный Ёатча ни.</i>	“I’m a local guy from Varzi-Yatchi.
<i>Лэзе тй монэ гуртам,</i>	Let me go home,
<i>Сю манет за это дам”.</i>	I’ll give you a hundred rubles for this.”
<i>“Уксёда тон ват бордад,</i>	“Keep your money,
<i>Со уксен ветлы в продмаг,</i>	With this money go to the grocery store,
<i>Ну, а маска ке кузьмад,</i>	Well, if you give us a mask,
<i>Может, ми лэзём гуртад”.</i>	Maybe we’ll let [you] go home.”
<i>Василэн синмыз долказ,</i>	Vasya stares surprised,
<i>Дас маска бардачоказ,</i>	There are ten masks in his glovebox,
<i>“Мелэ, ваньзэ сётйсько,</i>	“Take it, I’ll give you everything,
<i>Тйледлы мон окисько”.</i>	I trust you.”

<i>Баи на баи ужа Алнаш,</i>	Alnashi works tit for tat,
<i>Васи тот ещѣ торгоаш,</i>	Vasya is such a tradesman,
<i>Со тодѣ таре секрет,</i>	Now he knows the secret,
<i>Кыѣ ценится манет.</i>	How the ruble is valued.
<i>Со тодѣ таре секрет,</i>	Now he knows the secret,
<i>Кыѣ ценится манет.</i>	How the ruble is valued.
<i>Кызьы можно бертыны,</i>	How he can go home,
<i>Алнаше но пырыны.</i>	And stop by Alnashi.
<i>Алнаше но пырыны.</i>	And stop by Alnashi.

(Once again 2020)

The following example is related to the *Ektonika* (from the noun *ekton* ‘a dance, hopping’) project initiative as presented by Vladislav Gorzhak. One of the project’s participants, a young poet Bogdan Anfinogenov, wrote the Udmurt-Russian text, and Vladislav Gorzhak composed an arrangement based on a wedding melody of the Western (Trans-Vyatka) Udmurts. The result was the recording of a song and shooting of a video for the song “*Kosh tatys’, koronavirus*” (‘Get out of here, coronavirus’) with the participation of people famous in Udmurtia and all those wishing to take part in the action (Ektonika 2020). The video was marked with the hashtags #ЛучшеДома, #ДорынУмойгес (better at home), #ОставайтесьДома (stay at home), #КоронаВирус (Coronavirus), #МояУдмуртия (My Udmurtia<sup>17</sup>), #КылзэДорын (listen at home), #StayatHome, #Удмурты (Udmurts), #Удмуртия (Udmurtia).

### Example 5.

<i>Я сижу на карантине,</i>	I’m in quarantine,
<i>Я сижу на карантине,</i>	I’m in quarantine,
<i>Убираться нет уж силы,</i>	I’m exhausted from tidying up,
<i>Нет уж силы!</i>	I’m exhausted!
<i>Укно миськи, выж но миськи,</i>	I washed the window and the floors,
<i>Оти миськи, тати миськи,</i>	I washed it there, I washed it here,
<i>Нош ик куать час бере сиськи,</i>	I ate again after six o’clock,
<i>Куать час бере!</i>	After six o’clock!
<i>Астэ ачид нимаз висъян,</i>	Self-isolation,
<i>Астэ ачид нимаз висъян,</i>	Self-isolation,
<i>Карантин та акыльтйз ни,</i>	I’m tired of this quarantine,
<i>Карантин та!</i>	This quarantine!
<i>Кош татысь, коронавирус,</i>	Get out of here, coronavirus,

<i>Кош татысь, коронавирус, Эн ветлы татй тон, изьвер! Эн, эн ветлы!</i>	Get out of here, coronavirus, Don't walk here, you wild beast! No, don't go!
<i>Ой, ты, порушка-пораня, Ой, ты, эктоника родная, Зачем я опять встал рано, Очень рано! Я за то люблю диваны, Ой, я за то люблю диваны, Поваляться с книжкой славно, Можно славно!</i>	Oh, you, porushka-poranya, Oh, you, darling Ektonika, Why did I get up early again, Very early! I love sofas for that, Oh, I love sofas for that, It's nice to lie around with a book, It's nice!
<i>Астэ ачид нимаз висъян, Астэ ачид нимаз висъян, Карантин та акыльтйз ни, Карантин та! Кош татысь, коронавирус, Кош татысь, коронавирус, Эн ветлы татй тон, изьвер! Эн, эн ветлы!</i>	Self-isolation, Self-isolation, I'm tired of this quarantine, This quarantine! Get out of here, coronavirus, Get out of here, coronavirus, Don't walk here, you wild beast! No, don't go!
<i>За продуктами я вышел, Мусор выкинул не слышно, А погодка прям по кайфу, Прям по кайфу! Ку уни чорыгало мон, Сцена вылын кырзало но, Одно ик вормом эшдэс ми, Одно вормом!</i>	I went out to get food, I threw out the garbage quietly, And the weather is so-so nice, So-so nice! When will I go fishing And sing on stage again? We will definitely win, friends, Win!
<i>Астэ ачид нимаз висъян, Астэ ачид нимаз висъян, Карантин та акыльтйз ни, Карантин та! Кош татысь, коронавирус, Кош татысь, коронавирус, Эн ветлы татй тон, изьвер! Эн, эн ветлы!</i>	Self-isolation, Self-isolation, I'm tired of this quarantine, This quarantine! Get out of here, coronavirus, Get out of here, coronavirus, Don't walk here, you beast! No, don't go!



<i>Массовый движ избегаю,</i>	I avoid mass events,
<i>Массовый движ избегаю,</i>	I avoid mass events,
<i>На балконе занимаюсь,</i>	On the balcony I take exercise,
<i>Я качаюсь!</i>	I pump iron!
<i>На гармошке разминаюсь,</i>	I warm up on the harmonica,
<i>На гитаре я лабаю,</i>	I play the guitar,
<i>И чтобы не заразиться</i>	And in order not to get infected,
<i>Распеваюсь!</i>	I sing!
<i>Астэ ачид нимаз висъян,</i>	Self-isolation,
<i>Астэ ачид нимаз висъян,</i>	Self-isolation,
<i>Карантин та акыльтйз ни,</i>	I'm tired of this quarantine,
<i>Карантин та!</i>	This quarantine!
<i>Кош татысь, коронавирус,</i>	Get out of here, coronavirus,
<i>Кош татысь, коронавирус,</i>	Get out of here, coronavirus,
<i>Эн ветлы татй тон, изьвер!</i>	Don't walk here, you wild beast!
<i>Эн, эн ветлы!<sup>18</sup></i>	No, don't go!

The difference of this example from the previous ones is that this song has a didactic function, was widely promoted in the Internet space and is a pre-planned action. In the first four cases, the initiative was spontaneous and was not aimed at a widespread distribution but was rather a creative expression of a person's will. Recordings of these songs "from the people" are not always available in the public domain and are mainly sent only to one's friends and acquaintances via social networks or messengers. These recordings are later distributed through these friends further to others. The main theme is the fight against the virus and the description of life in self-isolation. These examples are a kind of reaction of society / creative individuals to extraordinary events taking place in the country and around the world. In this respect, musical language is a good way for people to express themselves and to relieve psychological tension. Because such songs contain plenty of humor, they evoke a smile or even laughter from the listener, which most likely also helps to relieve anxiety in the face of the pandemic. The same can be seen in various comments and a positive feedback from listeners, although there are those who disagree, saying: "*Что за шужи кырзан*" ('What a stupid song') (Ektonika 2020).

## CONCLUSIONS

This study allowed us to briefly highlight the most striking aspects of the existence of traditional culture of the Udmurts under the quarantine and self-isolation declared in Russia in connection with COVID-19. These examples show various effects of COVID-19 on the traditional ritual culture of the Udmurt people. There are several factors that characterize the behavior of people in this situation: 1) following quarantine and performing rituals in the family circle or by a limited number of people; 2) activity on social networks through posts and discussion of photographs and videos showing the preparation for and the performance of rituals; 3) performing traditional rituals as usual in some rural areas. Apparently, it is not appropriate to talk about the villagers' disregard of the state decree. The action of local authorities played an important role: measures were taken in a timely manner to quarantine villages and cities in Udmurtia and nearby regions, so during the pandemic the coronavirus had little opportunity to spread in the villages. In this regard, the situation with COVID-19 likely did not cause much panic among the villagers. On the contrary, they performed their rites in a calm atmosphere.

Of special interest were chastushkas and songs that were composed during this period as a kind of creative reaction to the circumstances and as a way to relieve stress.

The prohibition of mass gatherings forced people to look for alternative ways of communication. This was the case with the Internet. In the virtual space, there is an opportunity to share life in the pandemic context with friends, relatives, and the world. It should be noted that the Internet has become a valuable source not only of the behavior and occupations of the population in the conditions of self-isolation, but also of the study of the current state of traditions and their existence in a crisis situation.

In addition, the materials above showed the importance of emotional communication between people and the need for spiritual unity in the moments of celebration of rites and festivals. Despite the various options offered instead of ritual ceremonies, people could not fully feel and receive those feelings, and therefore expressed their frustration and bitterness. At the same time, according to Internet posts, the Udmurts tried to support each other in this difficult life situation. The lyrics of songs are a good example of this.

Today it is difficult to talk about the serious impact of the coronavirus on the traditional culture of the Udmurts. Doing so will take time and require further observation. However, this study is valuable because it has recorded information, facts, and phenomena from this period as well as people's comments on this issue. In the future, such information will allow us to trace the subsequent possible changes caused by COVID-19 in Udmurt culture.

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## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> The name of the festival is used in different forms in different regions of Udmurtia.
- <sup>2</sup> Currently, these holidays are timed to coincide with Orthodox Easter. Usually, *Akashka* is held on the eve of Easter, and *Bydzh'yn nunal* is seen as Easter, so it is celebrated on Sunday, Easter Day. In 2020, Easter was celebrated on April 19.
- <sup>3</sup> The *bölyak* is a smaller kin group consisting of some families in the patrilinear line.
- <sup>4</sup> Prayerful address similar to the Russian “Oh, Lord!”.
- <sup>5</sup> Theonym of the supreme celestial god in the Udmurt pantheon.
- <sup>6</sup> See [https://vk.com/alnashiclub145006838?w=wall-145006838\\_2653](https://vk.com/alnashiclub145006838?w=wall-145006838_2653), last accessed on 1 December 2020.
- <sup>7</sup> The agrarian festival of the end of spring field work.
- <sup>8</sup> Source: [https://instagram.com/y mia\\_library?igshid=torhnvtvzlv](https://instagram.com/y mia_library?igshid=torhnvtvzlv), no more available.
- <sup>9</sup> Source: [https://vk.com/feed?w=wall251706873\\_893](https://vk.com/feed?w=wall251706873_893), last accessed on 1 December 2020.
- <sup>10</sup> Source: [https://vk.com/feed?w=wall10544255\\_2116](https://vk.com/feed?w=wall10544255_2116), last accessed on 1 December 2020.
- <sup>11</sup> A variety of pancakes made of sour yeast dough.
- <sup>12</sup> Source: [https://vk.com/id82757120?w=wall82757120\\_1447](https://vk.com/id82757120?w=wall82757120_1447), last accessed on 1 December 2020.
- <sup>13</sup> Source: [https://vk.com/id82757120?w=wall82757120\\_1440](https://vk.com/id82757120?w=wall82757120_1440), last accessed on 1 December 2020.
- <sup>14</sup> *Kylchin* = ‘angel’. An ordinary way to address God.
- <sup>15</sup> The fact is that in the Udmurt tradition, it is still strictly observed from which end of the village, from the house of which relative, to start visiting yards. The ritual visits of houses on calendar holidays (*vös'nerge*) began at the head of the river or upstream (*Shur vyllan' vetlyny*, ‘to go/walk to the head of the [river] upstream’); the ritual visits of houses during the memorial days (*kis'ton*) began downstream (*Shur ullan' vetlyny*, ‘to walk/go to the lower [river] downstream’) (Vladykina & Glukhova 2011: 146).
- <sup>16</sup> In the Tatyshly District, researchers have identified two ritual groups. Each group has its own traditions and features of holding prayers, but together they form a single, well-functioning system. The Novye Tatyshly (Vil'gurt) group got its name from the ritual center in the village of Novye Tatyshly (for more details see Toulouze & Niglas 2014: 111).
- <sup>17</sup> A radio and television channel in the Udmurt language.
- <sup>18</sup> The text provided by Vladislav Gorzhak is given with the original punctuation and spelling preserved.

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