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# Shoghk Educational



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♦ **Poon**

**Paregentan**

## St Yeghiche Armenian Church Parish

Reg Charity No 1173403

13b Cranley Garden, Kensington London SW7 3BB, UK

t.020 7373 8133, e. [info@styeghiche.org.uk](mailto:info@styeghiche.org.uk)

w. [www.styeghiche.org.uk](http://www.styeghiche.org.uk) , f. [www.facebook.com/styeghiche](https://www.facebook.com/styeghiche)

## Welcome to Shoghk Educational

### Poon Paregentan (Means good living)

#### *The tradition of Poon Paregentan*

It is the last Sunday before Great Lent. It is composed of two words; Paree-Gentanootioun good living, rejoicing. Poon means the main. This points to the fact that the fasting period following Paregentan is longer than weekly Lents of other feasts, and it is tied to the main event of Christendom, the resurrection of our Lord.

The best explanation of Paregentan is from our Church father, Krigor Datevatzi. According to him, the biblical base is from the Old Testament from the life of Elijah when the Angel of the Lord tells him "Eat and drink because you will be traveling a long road (I King 19:7) In our case this long road is the 40 days of the Great Lent journey.

Paregentan, according to Datevatzi, doesn't stand alone but points to the reality of a period of abstinence. Feasting of Paregentan will lead us into fasting; fun filled days will turn into days of penance. In other words, the zeal and ingenuity we show in the realm of having fun should be put into the work of enriching our spiritual life.

In the past Paregentan was a period of two weeks, from St. Sarkis to Poon Paregentan.

These were fun filled days for everybody. Weddings and engagements took place usually within these two weeks.

In the region of Marash (in Western Armenia), the days of last week of Paregentan had special names. Wednesday was called "Feast of Wolf". Women did not do house chores that day so that their neighborhood could be free of wolves.

The Thursday was called "Tulkhaghir". That day people ate Herissa (Keshgeg) and later played the game of Tulkhaghir. Tulkhaghir was a broomstick, which the women transform into a bride. They even put on it some of their jewelry and took it around from house to house by singing and dancing. Then they would put it in a courtyard and dance around it until evening.

Friday was called "Feast of Mouse". Women did not sew that day so that the mice do not nibble on their clothing.

On Saturday the youth of the town wore masks and were engaged in variety of games. Good food and pigging out was the main event of Paregentan. People ate so much that the day received the nickname of "Poragentan" (Belly-gentan).

Besides the quality, the quantity of food was important as well. As the week progressed, the numbers of casseroles were increased as well. For example on Tuesday, three kinds



of food were on the tables, on Thursday, five; on Saturday, seven; and on Sunday, more than 12 kinds. The traditional food in these days were:

Roasted Lamb stuffed with cracked wheat and seasoning, baked in tonir. Patila, Sroon, Khachil, Deserts, Pukhphig, Dumplings.

The last day of Paregentan, meaning Sunday the fun and eating wais intensified. That day nothing is cooked; people consume and finish all kinds of food prepared by meat and dairy. No trace of fat should remain in the house, because the next day is Great Lent.

Paregentan was a process of chasing away “Oodis Dadig” and inviting “Bass Babig”.

Oodis Dadis was a worn out doll, which the villagers officially threw down from the top of a mountain on the last night of Paregentan. That night after dinner and before going to bed, people ate Madzoon and Gatnaboar. When in bed, they put the whole boiled egg in their mouth by saying “we close our mouth with white egg, may God make us worthy to open our mouth with red egg” (meaning Easter egg).

On the next day of Paregentan was called (Pagla Khoran). It was a chance for housewives to get their kitchen rid of traces of fat. They boiled their utensils, plates, pots and pans.

Along with good food came as well lots of games, masquerade parties and vaudevilles.

## Games and Masquerade parties

After dinner the youngsters of the town would disguise themselves with a variety of costumes and masks and color their faces with flour or charcoal. Boys wearing girls’ clothing and with the company of Daoul Zourna would barge into homes, dance and entertain the residents.

The most common funny play staged on the squares of towns would be the “khnamakhos” the process of asking the hand of one’s daughter.

Even the monks would be at ease on Paregentan and stage vaudeville called “Apeghatogh” (literally means freedom from rigid rules of monastic life).

After dinner, folk dances and processions took place. A master of ceremonies was elected who was attired in funny dress. His comical gesture and expressions provoked laughter. He freely ridiculed everybody and nobody got offended.



Toward the end, a special hymn was sung and the M.C. was carried away for "Burial". The spectators then would say "Lazarus come forth." Like Lazarus, the M.C. then would rise and the audience would flee and retire to their cells.

From Paregentan songs we can remember "Ay Noubar Noubar", "Tamzara", "Zinch ou Zinch", "Dzamteln ee Dzoven", "Ay Ayloughes".

Rev Fr Nerses Manoogian

### **Poon Paregentan Recipes**

#### **Roasted Lamb**

The center piece of Paregentan Carnival food

Stuff the lamb with bulghour and seasoning and roast it in a tonir.

#### **Patila**

(Made by dough)

Roll the dough as thin as can do. Put in on a flat surface. Spread Khavourma or Cheese on it. Cover it with a second layer of identical dough: Roll the edges and bake it on a flat space: After making few stack them on each other in a tray and than with a sharp knife cut little squares after spreading on them melted butter.

#### **Pkhpkhig**

(Is a desert)

Mix the flour with the egg yoke and milk and cut the dough in little pieces, as big as walnut. Cook them in deep oil. Before serving pour on them either grape syrup or honey.

#### **Khashil**

(Flour Halva)

2 cups flour

1 cup semolina or farina

2 sticks sweet margarine

1 cup sugar

2 tablespoons Rose water

1 cup water

1 tablespoon honey

Walnut for decoration, optional

Melt margarine, add flour and semolina, mix well. Place over low heat and stir constantly until the mixture is slightly brown, about 15-20 minutes, until flour smells done. Melt one cup sugar with 2 tablespoon water, make a caramel (golden brown in color). Take off the heat, very carefully and cup water (wearing gloves to protect hands from burning). Melt the honey in the caramel and add the flour mixture. Cover the pan, leave for fifteen minutes. Then knead, making a smooth dough.

Brush a serving pan lightly with butter. put the halva in it and flatten the surface with hands. Prick the edges like that of a pie crust. Cut in decorative way. Serve warm or cold. Decorate with nuts if you like

**"Eat and Drink because you will be traveling a long road"**

**(I King 19:7)**

### **St Yeghiche Armenian Church's Educational Series**

We are pleased to introduce these Educational Series of leaflets which are prepared to inform our Community Members of the various traditions, Customs and Canons of the Armenian Apostolic Church which has been passed over the centuries and preserved to date. To help us expand these Educational and Informative Series we are looking for voluntary contributions towards the printing costs.

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## For Enquiries and Booking:

**Rev Fr Nshan Alaverdyan** is available to visit parishioners in the hospital, nursing homes, or home visitations. He is also available to conduct Home Blessings, administering Holy Communion, consultations and other sacramental needs. Please call the church office at 020 7373 8133 or Fr Nshan at 07548 777 147.

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Reg Charity No 1173403  
13b Cranley Gardens  
Kensington London SW7 3BB  
Phone: 020 7373 8133  
Email : [info@styeghiche.org.uk](mailto:info@styeghiche.org.uk)  
Web: [www.styeghiche.org.uk](http://www.styeghiche.org.uk)  
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## ՏԵՐՈՒՆԱԿԱՆ ԱՂՕԹՔ

Հայր մեր, որ յերկինս ես,  
սուրբ եղիցի անուն քո:  
Եկեսցէ արքայութիւն քո:  
Եղիցին կամք քո որպէս յերկինս և յերկրի:  
Ձեռք մեր հանապազորդ տուր մեզ այսօր:  
Եւ թող մեզ զպարտիս մեր,  
Որպէս եւ մեք թողունք մերոց պարտապանաց:  
Եւ մի տանիր զմեզ ի փորձութիւն  
Այլ փրկեա զմեզ ի չարէ.  
Ձի քո է արքայութիւն եւ զօրութիւն  
Եւ փառք յաւիտեանս. Ամէն:

Hair mer, vor hergins yes,  
Sourp yeghitzi anoon ko.  
Yegestze arkayootioun ko.  
Yeghitzin gamk ko vorbes hergins yev hergri.  
Uzhatz mer hanabazort dour mez aisor.  
Yev togh mez uzbardiz mer,  
Vorbes yev mek toghoumk merotz bardabanats;  
Yev mi danir uzmez ee portzoutiun,  
Ail purgia uzmez ee chareh.  
Zi ko eh arkayootiun yev zorootiun Yev park havidians.  
Amen.