

## **PILGRIMAGE SITES AND THEIR CLASSIFICATION**

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### **Abstract**

This article provides information about the potential of pilgrimage tourism in Uzbekistan, the ongoing reforms in this field, and the historical background of pilgrimage sites located in the region. It also addresses issues related to their classification.

**Keywords.** Pilgrimage tourism, Uzbekistan, Bukhara, classification of pilgrimage objects, halal tourism, pilgrimage sites.

### **Introduction**

Today, along with reforming every sector, elevating them to a new stage of development is considered one of the main goals of the ongoing reforms in our country. These reforms serve to enhance the national economy, improve the population's standard of living, and strengthen Uzbekistan's reputation on the international stage. One such field undergoing significant transformation is pilgrimage tourism.

### **Literature review**

Like in all Muslim countries, pilgrimage has long been one of the forms of travel in Central Asia, including Uzbekistan. Since ancient times, visiting sacred sites to honor the memory of great ancestors has become a customary practice. Therefore, pilgrimage is not a new phenomenon for us, but rather a long-standing motivational factor for travel. It is traditionally regarded as one of the oldest forms of non-economic travel.

Although modern tourism, its related industries, and practical applications have been widely studied, religious tourism remains one of the least explored areas in research. This becomes especially evident when compared to other aspects of tourism and their associated markets. This is surprising, considering that religion

has played a central role in shaping how people have spent their leisure time for centuries, as well as influencing their choices in how that time is used [1:67]. Nowadays, researchers and scholars, as well as government bodies and travel agencies, have turned their attention to the growing number of travelers undertaking pilgrimage-based journeys. Alongside the overall growth of the tourism industry, the increase in visits to sacred sites has also been studied. This interest has largely been driven by the economic potential of pilgrims. As a result, sacred sites are increasingly being viewed as valuable sources for pilgrimage tourism.

Various studies have been conducted to explore the intersection of religion and tourism as a unified phenomenon. One such study is presented in Vukonić's book *Tourism and Religion*, in which the author documents his observations and reflections on the topic. In addition, European scholars Svatos and Tomasy compiled a collection of sources focusing on the transition from medieval pilgrimage to modern tourism. A special edition of their research was dedicated to spiritual journeys, religious tourism, and pilgrimage studies.

Scholars studying religious travel have primarily focused on whether there is a distinction between "tourists" and "pilgrims." In much of the literature, tourists and pilgrims are approached from two different perspectives. The first and most common view is that while tourists and pilgrims may not be the same, they share similarities; however, the destinations they visit differ in nature. There are also arguments suggesting that there is no real difference between pilgrims and tourists, or between pilgrimage and tourism. [1:24]. On the contrary, pilgrimage is often regarded as a form of tourism, as it shares common features with tourism in terms of modes of travel, the use of transportation, services, and infrastructure. Another opposing perspective, however, argues that pilgrims are not tourists at all, but rather individuals whose journeys are based on spiritual or religious belief.

This topic has been addressed in numerous foreign and local sources. In particular, Uzbekistan's laws and presidential decrees and resolutions related to the development of pilgrimage tourism have discussed this matter. Additionally, a wide range of researchers have conducted studies in this area, including local scholars such as Shaykh Muhammad Sodiq Muhammad Yusuf, Shaykh Abdulaziz Mansur, A. Khudoyarov, R. Komiljon, E. Zayniddinov, N. Abdulahatov, T. G'oziyev, M. Makhsudova, S. Usmonova, Sh. Khoshimov, M. Mirzayev, and M. Aliyev.

Among international researchers, notable contributions have been made by Bona Kim, J. Dallen Timothy, Daniel H. Olsen, Ömer Akgün Tekin, Zakia, Samori, Tomas, and Zahra Moaven. Furthermore, the Strategic Roadmap for Development of Islamic Tourism, published by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), also addresses this subject in detail.

### **Research Methodology**

According to Crescent Rating, one of the world's leading organizations specializing in halal tourism, by 2026 the number of travelers undertaking pilgrimage journeys is projected to reach 230 million. This suggests that in the near future, pilgrimage tourism may become one of the leading sectors of global tourism, and also represents a promising direction for Uzbekistan.

Classifying pilgrimage sites located across the territory of Uzbekistan is considered an important task. It should be emphasized that experienced guides must ensure the historical accuracy and scientific validity of the information provided to both tourists and pilgrims. The classification of pilgrimage sites in the region can be approached in the following ways:

- By geographical location (e.g., by provinces);
- By historical period (e.g., monuments dating back to the 16th century);
- By original function or structure (e.g., madrasahs, mausoleums, minarets, etc.);
- By dynastic era (e.g., sites related to the Timurid or Ashtarkhanid periods);
- By religious significance (e.g., sites associated with Islam, or Buddhist heritage sites);
- and other relevant criteria.

This classification can also be applied on a provincial level. For example, the Bukhara region can be categorized as follows:

- Mausoleums located in the region;
- Minarets in Bukhara province;
- Madrasahs within the region;
- Architectural monuments and complexes.

### **Analysis and Results**

In the past, alongside works that provided various levels of information about the graves of prominent and well-known figures in Central Asia, specific texts

dedicated to pilgrimage to such sites were also produced. Among these are: Al-Qand fi zikr ‘ulama-i Samarqand (“The Sugar on the Scholars of Samarqand”) by Abu Hafs Umar al-Nasafi (1070–1142), Tarikh-i Mullozada (“The History of Mullozada”) by Mu’in al-Fuqara (late 14th – mid-15th century), Dahmai Shahon (“The Royal Tomb”) by Sadiq Munshi Jandari (1758–1820), Samariya by Abu Tahirkhoja Samarqandi (d. 1874), Ismhoi buzurgoni Bukhoro-i Sharif (“The Names of the Greats of Noble Bukhara”) by Hakim Nuratoy (1900), and Tuhfat az-Zo’irin (“A Gift for Pilgrims”) by Nosiriddin To’ra Bukhari (1906). These works not only record the burial places of esteemed individuals but also emphasize the practice of visiting such sacred sites as part of spiritual tradition and reverence. [5:10]. The works of notable scholars such as Imam Bukhari’s Al-Jami’ as-Sahih, Imam Tirmidhi’s Sunan, Abu Mansur al-Maturidi’s Tawhid, Abu Mu’in an-Nasafi’s Tabsiratul Adilla, Abu Hafs Umar an-Nasafi’s Aqaa'id, Abu Lays as-Samarqandi’s Bahru-l-'Ulum, Mahmud al-Zamakhshari’s Kashshaf an-Aqaiq al-Tanzil, Abu Hafs al-Kabir Bukhari’s Fatawa, and Burhanuddin al-Margani’s Hidaya are invaluable and significant works in the development of Islamic thought. The fact that the sacred sites of these scholars are located within the territory of Uzbekistan underscores the importance of this subject [3:3].

he role of historical and cultural heritage sites in the development of pilgrimage tourism is significant. In this regard, pilgrimage tourism can also be referred to as cultural and spiritual tourism. Specifically, "cultural tourism" provides travelers with the opportunity to explore the history, traditions, economic activities, culture, customs, and other aspects of a country. Visits to such places contribute to the elevation of individuals' spirituality and the expansion of their worldview.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Central Asia, particularly Mawarannahr, has contributed significantly to the development of Islamic civilization, serving as one of the key centers for spreading knowledge. Many religious and secular scholars and notable figures have emerged from this region. Their final resting places have become pilgrimage sites today. Our sacred land, which has produced thousands of scholars for the Islamic world, is also renowned as a land of hundreds of pilgrimage sites and sacred landmarks.

In the past, several works were created about the graves of notable and famous individuals in Central Asia. Among them, Tarikh-i Mullozada by Muin al-Fuqara

(late 14th – mid-15th century) holds a special place. This work not only provides information about the sacred pilgrimage sites in Bukhara but also outlines the Islamic rules, procedures, and etiquette for pilgrimage, organizing them systematically.

Located in the heart of ancient Turan, Uzbekistan is famous for its world-renowned historical cities, rich cultural and historical heritage, and unique architectural monuments. Our sacred land, which has produced thousands of scholars for the Islamic world, is also renowned as a land of pilgrimage sites and sacred landmarks. Today, Uzbekistan possesses sufficient potential for the development of pilgrimage tourism. Taking into account the points mentioned above, it is indeed appropriate to pursue this goal.

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