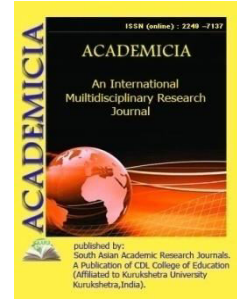




**ACADEMICIA**  
**An International  
 Multidisciplinary  
 Research Journal**  
 (Double Blind Refereed & Peer Reviewed Journal)



**DOI: 10.5958/2249-7137.2021.01838.3**

## CLASSIFICATION OF PILGRIMAGES AND THE PHENOMENON OF HOLINESS (ON THE EXAMPLE OF UZBEKISTAN)

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### ABSTRACT

*This article reflects the concept of shrines, modern research on shrines in Uzbekistan, the classification of shrines, their role in the life of the population, the phenomenon of holiness in shrines, attitudes towards pilgrimage in Islam. The appearance of the shrines was influenced by the religious worldview, customs and traditions, mythological views, as well as the geographical location of the local population. If we look at the history of Islam, in times of ignorance, the Arabs cried loudly when a loved one died, and when they came to visit tomb, they tore their collars and cried. . The word “tomb” (mazar) also comes from Arabic and means a place of pilgrimage. It is also called “kadamjay”, a place where a worthy person has been there. There are places, books, people, days, months, objects, times, numbers, and other similar phenomena that considered to be sacred to members of a particular religion based on their beliefs. During the first years of independence of Uzbekistan, there have been cases of deviating from the original purpose of the pilgrimage and performing various acts which prohibited to Islam. These include going to the graves to pray for the dead, kissing the graves, lighting candles or pilik to summon ghosts, and slaughtering animals in the graves.*

**KEYWORDS:** Shrine (Ziyaratgah), Tomb (Mazar), Kadamjay, Classification Of Shrines, The Phenomenon Of Holiness, Tree, Water, Cult Of Saints, Attitude To Pilgrimage In Islam.

### INTRODUCTION

Shrines play an important role in the social life of the peoples of Central Asia, especially in Uzbekistan, and have religious, national and historical significance. According to the data, the number of shrines in Uzbekistan exceeds ten thousand[1], in particular, modern research has

revealed that there are 64 shrines in Surkhandarya, 35 in Khorezm and more than 250 in Fergana.

Polls conducted in 2020 showed that 1.91 billion (24%)[2] of the world's population and 26.5 million (96.50%)[3] of the population of Uzbekistan believe in Islam. Thus, the article was aimed at studying Muslim shrines in Uzbekistan and the phenomenon of holiness in shrines.

The word pilgrimage (*ziyarah*) comes from the Arabic word for visiting a place or person, visiting holy places, tombs and cemeteries, and performing certain rituals[4]. The shrine is a mix of Arabic and Persian, 1) a sacred place to visit, revered shrine (a mausoleum of saints or a place where they lived or visited). 2) It is a sacred place where many people gather[5]. Usually shrines are associated with the grave of a revered person. The word “tomb” (*mazar*) also comes from Arabic and means a place of pilgrimage. It is also called “kadamjay”, a place where a worthy person has been there. There may also be a well, a tree or an architectural monument built by local residents in the name of this person.

A number of modern studies on shrines in Uzbekistan have been carried out, some of them are: research by N. Abdulakhatov on shrines in the Fergana region, S. Juraeva in the Surkhandarya region, Z. Abidova in the Khorezm region and F. Akchaev in the Jizzakh region, as well as in several volumes of the works “Pilgrimages and places of Uzbekistan” published by the team of authors under the leadership of B. Eraliev gradually investigates the existing shrines and cemeteries.

There are places, books, people, days, months, objects, times, numbers, and other similar phenomena that considered to be sacred to members of a particular religion based on their beliefs. All of them considered to be sacred because they depend on God, because they feel a certain divinity in them, or because they believe that the vision of "Absolute Power" has reached them[6].

Sanctuaries can be divided into local and general types. Local shrines are places of pilgrimage visited by locals who are less familiar to people from other areas. General shrines can be understood as shrines that are known and popular not only for one region, but also for several large regions, republics and etc. For example, for local type we can add the shrines of Hazrat Ukkosha in Tashkent, Cholpon-Ata in Surkhandarya, Shahid-bobo in Khorezm, and for general type the shrines of Zangi-Ota in Tashkent, Hakim Termizi in Surkhandarya, and Pahlavon Mahmud in Khorezm. There are also the following categories of shrines:

1. According to the sign of appearance;
2. According to the prestige among the population;
3. According to its specific function;
4. Sponsored graves of professionals;
5. According to geographical location;
6. According to the method of construction[7].

In his doctoral research, Russian historian V. Ogudin writes that there are two types of shrines in the Fergana region: natural and built. Natural (landscape) shrines are those that represent a

specific place that is sacred, unaltered, or slightly altered. Examples include orographic, hydrological and botanical places of worship. The constructed shrines are a consecrated, fully developed part of the natural landscape, and there may be mosques and tombs of saints, and sometimes a natural object (well, stone, tree)[8].

N. Kislyakov divides the graves into two groups: the first, the graves belonging to the saints; the second included visiting objects - trees or shrubs, rocks, stones, wells - that were not directly related to the saint buried in the tomb.

We would like to promote the classification of shrines as follows:

1. The holy places mentioned in the Qur'an (Mecca, Jerusalem);
2. Prestigious places recognized in the hadith (Madinah);
3. Pilgrimages associated with persons (prophets, companions, followers, saints, martyrs)
4. Shrines associated with various objects (sword, hair fiber).
5. Shrines associated with nature (trees, wells).

Pilgrimages in Uzbekistan are tied to certain organizations. It is these organizations that are responsible for the appearance of the shrines, their all-round development and the condition of buildings. So, according to the binding the shrines to certain organizations:

1. Pilgrimages under the auspices of the Muslim Board of Uzbekistan;
2. Architectural monuments under the Department of Archaeological Monuments Preservation of the Ministry of Culture and Sports of the Republic of Uzbekistan;
3. At the disposal of the regional charity fund "Golden Heritage";
4. Pilgrimages which are at the disposal of the "mahalla" (under the jurisdiction of the citizens' assembly).

Classification of shrines into such types, helps to study the history of shrines, views on them, the purpose of the pilgrimage, the syncretization of pre-Islamic views with Islam and the study of folk myths and legends. Cum it helps to learn the cult of saints, the religious image of pilgrims, in general, we can say that it allows to systematically study information about the history, present days of them and customs of shrines.

It is known from history that shrines were continuously visited by khans, kings and their families, who made the work of repairing or beautifying them as a family tradition. Scholars and poets also made frequent visits to find peace of mind and calm their spirits. For example, Sheralikhan (1842-1845) sacrificed a white horse and a white camel at the Safed Bulon shrine during his accession to the khan's throne[9], the poetess Nodirabegim often visited the shrine "Moymarak" (Blessed Mui) and gave food as a sacrifice to those in need[10], cum Allakulikhan (1794-1842), the son of Khiva khan Muhammad Rahimkhan, also stopped around Pitnak during his travels and visited the graves, and made dua.

The appearance of the shrines was influenced by the religious worldview, customs and traditions, mythological views, as well as the geographical location of the local population. If we look at the history of Islam, in times of ignorance, the Arabs cried loudly when a loved one

died, and when they came to visit tomb, they tore their collars and cried. For this reason, in the early days of Islam, pilgrims were not allowed to visit graves, but after a while, when they realized that these customs were not acceptable and their faith was firmly established in their hearts, they were allowed to visit them. It is appropriate to cite the following hadith in this regard: *“The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, “I prohibited you from visiting graves, but visit them now. Verily, they will weaken your attachment to the world and remind you of the Hereafter.”* After that, Muslims often went to the cemetery so as not to engage only in worldly affairs and to remember the memory of death and Hereafter.

When a religion that originated in one region spreads to another, the religion is accepted or assimilated. That is, the customs and traditions that existed before the introduction of religion and played an important role in the social life of the population, whether national, historical or religious, will not completely lose their significance after the introduction of any religion, but may acquire religious content over the centuries (e.g., *mushkulkushod*, oblation in Wednesday (is *chiqarish*), light a candle or *pilik*[11] etc.). Kh. Karomatov said: *“Over time, religious beliefs may change and rise from the memory of the people, but the ancient rituals are alive among the people and keep the idea and essence of centuries and millennia secret”*[12]. For example, the mythological views of Er Hubbi, the goddess of water, formed the shrines of the saint Hoja Ubbon and Yigit Pirim, while the goddess Umayyad became the "patron" of some women through the image of the mother Umayyad. Opinions about Bibi Mushkulkushod, Bibi Seshanbah, and other “momo”s (grandmother) maybe indicate the Islamization of local cults.

Visiting the graves are of historical and religious importance among the peoples of Central Asia. However, over time, deviations from the original purpose of the visit became apparent. To ask for help from the saint lying in the grave, to kiss his grave, to consecrate the ground on which he lies and the surrounding trees, springs, stones, and some pilgrims also recognize the door of the tomb, its handles, pillars - as sacred objects. Obviously, the consecration of such objects is a relic of animism, fetishism in ancient religious beliefs.

In addition, the consecration of water, plants, stone, wood, or a pillar in a shrine is due to the fact that people think they are miraculous. Probably because water was considered an essential element for human survival, it was prized as a source of healing. But belief in it as influencing the fate of people it is likely to be an element left over from shamanism. For example, pilgrims who visited Sovurbulak (Fergana region) expressed their wishes and threw coins into the source. Among people, there are various legends and myths about such objects, which have been passed down from generation to generation over the years.

There is another work to be done in the shrines, which has been widespread among the population for some time and has almost diminished through explanatory work. It is customary to tie rags to trees. In this case, first of all, the sanctification of the tree, and secondly, the view of the piece of cloth as a means of fulfilling dreams. Researcher N.Abdulhatov says: *“Tie a rag to the tree branches in the sacred tombs is a symbol of the symbolic connection between the pilgrim and the sanctuary, and each pilgrim expressed his wishes and desires by tying a rag”*[13]. Also, throwing a white cloth on the grave reflects dreams, hopes and intentions. Such synchronicity of fetishism, animism, shamanism with Islam can be attributed to the measures taken by the population to continue the ancestral tradition, as well as the lack of religious knowledge.

In Islamic doctrine, no one is considered holy except Allah[14], Prophets, saints (*awliya*), pious people are considered deserving of great respect, special servants of Allah.

During the first years of independence of Uzbekistan, there have been cases of deviating from the original purpose of the pilgrimage and performing various acts which prohibited to Islam. These include going to the graves to pray for the dead, kissing the graves, lighting candles or *pilik* to summon ghosts, and slaughtering animals in the graves. For this reason, a lot of explanatory work has been done among the population on the rules of the pilgrimage, and now you can see that the rules of the *ziyarah* are posted in several languages at the entrance to almost every shrine.

In conclusion, in Islam, pilgrimage is one of the most rewarding deeds. Because this work reminds Muslims of the transience of the world, the need to appreciate life, do more good deeds, and prepare for the Hereafter. The correctness of the visit depends on what the person does during the visit. For this, it is necessary to follow the etiquette of pilgrimage and refrain from “*shirk*” (the deification or worship of anyone or anything besides Allah). At the same time, the improvement of the graves of great people who promoted enlightenment, patriotism, spiritual perfection, the construction of memorial complexes contributes to the spiritual growth of youth, the formation of human values, national identity and many other virtues on them.

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