

Pilgrimage Etiquette In Shrines: Harmony Between Tradition, Faith and Modernity

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Abstract: This study explores the evolving etiquette of pilgrimage to shrines in the context of tradition, faith, and modernity. It examines how historical customs, religious beliefs, and contemporary influences intersect and shape appropriate behavior within these sacred spaces, aiming to understand how pilgrimage can remain meaningful and respectful in the modern world. This article aims to study the rules of etiquette around shrines, their factors of formation and their state in modern times. The article also examines the behavior at the time of the pilgrimage, forms of blessing and prayer, from the entrance to the shrine, as well as some of the social trends of modern pilgrimage culture. The study was conducted mainly on the basis of ethnographic observations, oral narratives and written sources.

Keywords: Shrine, Pilgrimage Etiquette, Ethnographic Practice, Folk Custom, Religious Rituals, Sharia Norms, Holy Places, Islamic Tradition, Spiritual Culture.

Introduction

Existing shrines on the territory of Uzbekistan are historically important centers of religious, cultural and social life. Consequently, shrines have also embodied original examples of our long-standing values and traditional national customs [1. B. 5].

Pilgrimage, a practice woven deeply into the fabric of human spirituality, finds a particularly vibrant expression in the veneration of shrines. These sacred spaces serve as focal points for tradition, faith, and communal identity.

However, as societies evolve and modernity exerts its influence, the etiquette and practices surrounding pilgrimage to shrines face both challenges and opportunities. By examining the interplay of these forces, we aim to understand how pilgrimage to shrines can remain a meaningful and relevant experience for contemporary pilgrims while respecting the sanctity of these sacred sites.

Methodology

These holy places are closely connected in the minds of the people with practices such as spiritual purification, the expression of Dreams, the wish of healing. The standards of etiquette to go on a pilgrimage and be followed in the process are a harmonious expression of folk thought, religious beliefs and cultural values. Nowadays, going on a pilgrimage is

an integral aspect of the everyday life and worldview of the Uzbek people. This tradition took shape over the centuries and gave rise to a distinctive pilgrimage etiquette. The word "pilgrimage" is used in the dictionary to mean swearing, visiting, visiting. Its conquering meaning also does not detract from its lexical meaning, and a pilgrimage in urf means going to a place or to an individual. For example, going to holy places, cemeteries and cemeteries to follow certain steps.

And the etiquette of pilgrimage is understood as the Customs and moral rules in the process of visiting cemeteries and mausoleums, where sacred masques, Saints, pirumurshids, sheikhs and Islamic scribes lie. The implementation of pilgrimage practice consists of certain stages, the process from the beginning to the end of which is regulated by traditional norms and rules. The formation of these norms is, above all, closely related to the Sharia requirements of the Islamic religion, but, on the other hand, is also inextricably linked with the socio-cultural traditions, customs and national mentality of the Uzbek people, which has formed over the centuries.

The practice of pilgrimage is a multi-stage process of symbolic – religious content-classified in such a way that it consists of the stages of preparation for the pilgrimage, entry into the place of pilgrimage and full-fledged observance of the pilgrimage. There are religious, moral and cultural norms that must be followed in this, which form the basis of pilgrimage etiquette. Although the preparatory process, which is carried out before going to the Shrine, looks seemingly simple, in fact it is considered an important stage for an individual to prepare himself mentally, morally and religiously. The first condition for pilgrimage in Islamic sources in particular is unbiased intention. The teachings on the purity of intention are based on the Quran in Karim and The Messenger of Allah (PBUH).a.v.) are repeatedly emphasized in the hadiths of "all deeds are worthy of intent..." [2. p. 1]. Pilgrims usually take ablution before going to the shrine, as ablution implies, along with physical purity, inner purity (Begmatov).

According to local ethnographic observations, in many cases, among visitors, women try to wear white clothes — a condition that is assessed as a symbol of purity and simplicity. It is common among women to wear a headscarf or scarf, and in men to wear a headdress and a long-sleeved shirt (Yozuvlari, 2025).

The standards of etiquette practiced when entering the shrine were the result of the harmonization of religious teachings with folk customs. According to popular views among the Uzbek people, pilgrims try to be in a light movement around the shrine, calm when greeting each other, and refrain from telephone or loud conversation. In addition, greeting, loud laughter, speaking, or hearing music are restricted when passing through holy places.

Also today, some drivers, as they pass by the shrine and cemetery, turn off the sound of music and bless those who have passed (Yozuvlari, 2025). And the stage of performing the pilgrimage is the most basic stage. The process involves reciting the Quran, reciting prayers, giving alms to the spirit of the deceased, maintaining quiet, and strictly observing the rules of etiquette. The pilgrim must maintain peace, reverence and purity in each of his actions, behave in a way that suits the spiritual-cultural environment of the place.

Result and Discussion

Special standards for the conduct of pilgrims are set at the entrance to and from the territory of many shrines in Namangan province, which are usually quoted in writing at the entrance of the shrine, in a way that attracts the attention of all visitors, on counters or on separate plaques. Also, in these places, the responsible persons designated by the shrine's administration regularly issue a warning in order to alert pilgrims to acts contrary to the pilgrim culture. For example, a special banner at the Abdurahman ibn Avf shrine, located in the Citizens' Assembly of the shallow mahalla of the Chust District of Namangan region, cites a list of behaviors forbidden during the pilgrimage, which serves to explain pilgrims to treat the sanctuary with respect. First of all, at the entrance to the shrine, it is recommended to walk calmly and calmly, in an offensive manner; loud speaking, hoarseness or actions that interfere with the prayer of those around you are considered undesirable.

The maintenance of intersex boundaries is also important in pilgrimage ceremonies, with women and men entering in a separate order. It is advisable for women to visit the pilgrimage in clothes that do not attract attention, as much as possible. Saluting at the entrance to the shrine, the recitation of the Quran and the recitation of prayers to the deceased spirit is obscene.

At the same time, certain customs that are found among the people—such as kissing, stroking or rubbing gravestones on the face, turning around the grave, making a penance, tying rags to trees, activating candles—are recommended to refrain from them, since they are not found permissible in Islamic sources. It is also inappropriate to take pictures, laugh, or have a loud conversation near the grave. The person being visited is a servant of God, through whom asking for salvation, wishing him a need, or slaughtering a soul for him is one of the cases leading to severe error and shirk from the point of view of the Islamic faith. When the pilgrimage is over, it will be necessary to leave the territory in a quiet way, not to bow to the grave. And such situations as eating around the mausoleum, listening to music, resting or sleeping do not correspond to the honor of the sanctuary. At the same time, it is considered necessary to ensure the cleanliness of the territory of the shrine, especially to approach responsibly so that young children do not interfere with the prayer of other pilgrims (Yozuvlari, 2025).

Among the people, there are a number of historically formed customs related to the practice of Pilgrimage, The Roots of which go back to the religious-philosophical visions that preceded the Islamic doctrine. Rituals including "activating", "lighting candles", "tying cloth", "stroking stone or soil" were considered as a form of finding specific religious needs or spiritual comfort in time. However, as a result of modern religious and educational activities, in particular an in-depth study of the foundations of Islam and extensive propaganda work, such practices are today evaluated as "shirk" from the point of view of faith.

As a result of the continuous vigilance of the administrations of religious offices, scribes and shrines, these practices have been significantly reduced and are almost out of

practice (Yozuvlari, 2025). At the moment, pilgrimage tourism is also developing rapidly within the framework of the large-scale reforms carried out in our country. In the process, trading stalls placed around shrines are also seen as an important economic and social phenomenon. The rosary prepared by local masters, the Quran, religious literature, images of holy places and other religious products trade are a clear expression of the modernization and integration of pilgrimage culture with tourism. At the same time, the excessive expansion of trade activities is causing some problems.

In particular, in some shrines it is observed that trade Rastas block access corridors, even climbing up to the main road traffic, is an obstacle to free movement of pilgrims. Although this situation is regularly warned by the shrine administration, in practice it still remains relevant (Yozuvlari, 2025). This can negatively affect the peaceful, calm, and religious spirit of the pilgrimage.

As a result, the regulation of the environment around the shrines, ensuring a balance of religious-religious values and economic interests remain one of the important issues on the way to the harmonious development of pilgrimage culture. In this regard, the preservation of the atmosphere in shrines corresponding to religious values and the convenience of pilgrims should prevail over any organizational and economic activity.

Conclusion

As a conclusion, shrines on the territory of Uzbekistan play an important role not only in religious-ecclesiastical, but also in cultural-spiritual and social life. They have been expressing respect and reverence for sacred places through centuries of pilgrimage etiquette formed in the harmony of folk customs, Islamic doctrine and national thought.

Each stage of the practice of pilgrimage – from preparation to etiquette, which should be kept in a sacred place – is based on specific religious and moral standards. In recent years, the expansion of socio-economic activity around shrines has also shown a negative impact on the quiet and ecclesiastical environment of shrines in some cases, along with the modernisation of pilgrimage culture.

Therefore, maintaining a stable balance between religious values, cultural memory and modern needs remains an important strategic task in organizing the activities of shrines.

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