

An aerial photograph of a city, likely Samarkand, Uzbekistan. The image shows a large, ornate mosque with multiple green domes and minarets on the left. To the right is a tall, brick cathedral with a pointed spire. The city is surrounded by green hills and a white wall in the foreground. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent purple filter. A black rectangular box with a red border is centered in the upper half of the image, containing the text.

**Religious tourism in  
the tourism system.**

## RELIGIOUS TOURISM IN THE TOURISM SYSTEM

### TURISMO RELIGIOSO EN EL SISTEMA TURÍSTICO

#### ABSTRACT

The paper considers the concept of religious tourism. Religious tourism is the departure of a person from a country of residence for a period of no more than six months in order to visit holy places and centers of religion. On the other hand, this concept can be viewed as an activity aimed at providing services to the tourists travelling for religious purposes. One distinguishes the pilgrimage tourism and the religious tourism of excursion - cognitive focus. The difference between these two types is that the religious tourism of excursion - cognitive focus means visiting temples and holy places without the tourists' participation in the religious life of the shrine. The Pilgrimage tourism provides an opportunity to participate in worshipping and praying. The Pilgrimage can also be classified according to the number of participants, i.e. individual, family, group. If one considers the duration of the tour, one can identify long and short pilgrimages. Depending on the location of the shrine, there are domestic and foreign tours. It should be noted that both the religious tourism and the pilgrimage has a number of reasons. At the heart of the pilgrimage is the human being conventional attitude to religion, his conscious activity implies the desire to see the shrines that have significance precisely for him. The definition of tourism as a kind of activity is in no way inferior to the concept and essence of the pilgrimage. Relying on the scientific definition of the pilgrimage and religious tours, it can be said that it applies more to tourism than to human spiritual activity. It gives an evidence to talk about the pilgrimage as a tour.

**KEYWORDS:** tourism, religious tourism, pilgrimage tourism, tourist, pilgrimage.

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#### RESUMEN

El artículo considera el concepto de turismo religioso. El turismo religioso es la salida de una persona de un país de residencia por un período de no más de seis meses para visitar lugares sagrados y centros de religión. Por otro lado, este concepto puede verse como una actividad destinada a proporcionar servicios a los turistas que viajan con fines religiosos. Se distingue el turismo de peregrinación y el turismo religioso de excursión - enfoque cognitivo. La diferencia entre estos dos tipos es que el turismo religioso de excursión - enfoque cognitivo significa visitar templos y lugares sagrados sin la participación de los turistas en la vida religiosa del santuario. El turismo de peregrinación brinda la oportunidad de participar en la adoración y la oración. La peregrinación también se puede clasificar según el número de participantes, es decir, individuo, familia, grupo. Si uno considera la duración del recorrido, uno puede identificar peregrinaciones largas y cortas. Dependiendo de la ubicación del santuario, hay tours nacionales y extranjeros. Cabe señalar que tanto el turismo religioso y la peregrinación tiene una serie de razones. En el corazón de la peregrinación está la actitud convencional del ser humano hacia la religión, su actividad consciente implica el deseo de ver los santuarios que tienen un significado precisamente para él. La definición de turismo como un tipo de actividad no es de ninguna manera inferior al concepto y la esencia de la peregrinación. Confiando en la definición científica de la peregrinación y las visitas religiosas, se puede decir que se aplica más al turismo que a la actividad espiritual humana. Da una evidencia para hablar de la peregrinación como una gira.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** turismo, turismo religioso, turismo de peregrinación, turismo, peregrinación.

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## INTRODUCTION

Religious tourism is the departure of a person from a country of residence for a period of no more than six months in order to visit holy places and centers of religion. On the other hand, this concept can be viewed as an activity aimed at providing services to the tourists travelling for religious purposes [1]. Generally, religious tourism is classified in the following way:

- the pilgrimage tourism;
- the religious tourism of excursion - cognitive focus.

The difference between these types is the religious tourism of excursion - cognitive focus means visiting temples and holy places without the tourists' participation in the religious life of the shrine. The Pilgrimage tourism provides an opportunity to participate in worshipping and praying. The Pilgrimage can also be classified according to the number of participants, i.e. individual, family, group. If one considers the duration of the tour, one can identify long and short pilgrimages. Depending on the location of the shrine, there are domestic and foreign tours. It should be noted that both the religious tourism and the pilgrimage has a number of reasons. They are:

- the desire to be healed of spiritual and physical ailments;
- human need to pray for relatives and himself;
- praying for forgiveness;
- forwardness to demonstrate the devotion to faith;
- the need to attain the life purpose and achieve the spiritual comfort.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

At the heart of the pilgrimage is the human being conventional attitude to religion, his conscious activity implies the desire to see the shrines that have significance precisely for him. The tourist seeks to transform the environment: spend free time, change the social circle and even food to meet his spiritual needs [2]. Intentional readiness to meet with difficulties during the journey, making a sacrifice of the material welfare for the sake of eternal values is the signs of the long-present pilgrim's inner world. But we cannot fail to mention that some pilgrims visit places of worship in order to broaden their horizons, gain knowledge in this sphere, and also to study the nature or resources of the area. Based on the data of the International Institute of Tourism Sciences, the latter category represents about 30% of the total number of tourists on religious itineraries. Taking into account the statistics, one notes that only 1% of believers living in Moscow make religious tours annually. It can be said that at the moment the pilgrimage tourism is not the dominate current of the tourist flow. According to the Federal State Statistics Service, over a period of January-December 2015, the following number of Russians went to world-class pilgrimage centers: Israel – 299,000; Greece – 634,000; Italy – 662,000; Turkey - 3,460,000. By contrast in 2014: Israel – 361,000; Greece - 1,165,000; Italy – 994,000; Turkey - 4,216,000. Undoubtedly, the percentage of those who visited these countries for religious purposes is not the same; it varies from 3-5% in Italy, to 60% in Israel.

From the data given, one can see the decrease by an average of 20% of the total number of travelers during the period of 2014-2015 because of the world community instability and disunity, and the economic crisis. This is due to the fact that the religious factor in the system of international relations has recently become most currently important, and various religious organizations and associations are expanding their influence in society. Despite scientific achievements and progresses in all spheres of knowledge, religion till present has great importance in politics. The development of fundamentalist trends in major world religious denominations creates a number of problems for the extension of world globalization, and in some cases endangers the security [3]. These factors affect the tourist flow to the countries where citizens' lives can be endan-

gered. The resolution of religious conflicts is a complex and lengthy process, therefore the outflow of tourists from such countries can seriously impact the country's economy [4].

However, above all, disunity in religious life affects the society, both the citizens of the country and potential visitors. In this context, religious tourism becomes an instrument of peoples' rapprochement. The irenic nature of religious tourism encourages learning the traditions and customs of other ethnic groups and cultures, promotes the spiritual and patriotic education of the population, and therefore, provides an opportunity to rally people in the effort for peace in the world. Under the circumstances of instability, people need to turn to morally well-established phenomena. These can be shrines or the pilgrimage places. According to the researchers, the importance of religious tourism is growing noticeably in the time of crisis. The Russian Orthodox Church supports the most relevant internal religious tourist destinations. It is done with the aim of developing national pride for the monuments of Russian religion, primarily among the population of the country. In conditions of world globalization, religious tourism does not stay on the sidelines. The Imperial Orthodox Palestine Society and the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation signed an agreement on the development of religious tourism and pilgrimage. "The signing ceremony took place on October 19 in Moscow", the website of the IOPS (Imperial Orthodox Palestine Society) reports. The program is designed for the period of 2015-2020, and is divided into several implementation stages. The first stage (2015-2016) assumes the formation of a legal, financial and organizational base for further activities. The second stage, scheduled for 2017-2018, is intended to open the National Tourist Offices in the regional branches of the IOPS. Their number reaches 28 in Russia and beyond. The third stage happens to be in 2019-2020. According to the official website of the IOPS, "further qualitative boost of activities, monitoring, controlling and evaluation of work effectiveness, implementation of the best Russian and foreign experience to develop of religious tourism and pilgrimage" is planned in these terms. In addition, the program includes setting up the conditions to organize the tourist and pilgrimage tours to the Holy places of Russia and world Orthodoxy, and financing scientific research in this field.

The plans also involve designing the website with the possibility of booking the tours. The organizing of the religious tourism requires thorough preparation of visiting programs and the participants of tours to give them positive atmosphere perception of the attractions visited [5]. In practice, new trends and phenomena and the emerging information opportunities associated with the latest technological achievements should be taken into account.

In the world tourism industry there is a special field that unites travelers who want to go on a trip to holy places [6]. Pilgrims are people who make the decision about the extensive pilgrimage tours, sometimes, not the easiest ones in terms of travel comfort to enrich their own spirit world, to prove their faith devotion, to touch the great shrines of the planet and undertake the honorable mission imposed on every believer by divine postulates. This feature of religious tourism distinguishes it significantly from the usual rest in a seaside resort or visiting ancient monuments [7]. Every religious confession contains traditions providing careful attitude to shrines. This is why more than a million pilgrims go annually on pilgrimage tours to visit the main centers of religious tourism in the world. The concepts of "pilgrims" and "pilgrimage" come from Orthodox Christianity. These definitions have become universal, and these days one can use them in respect to all religions in the world.

It should be noted that traveling representatives of other faiths are called differently: in Catholicism they are "pilgrims", in Islam people commit "hajj", religious tourism in India (and in general among Buddhists) is usually referred to as "kora". There are two main types of religious tourism having their own peculiarities: sightseeing tours to visit monuments, temples, museums; organized pilgrimage tours providing a visit to the world centers of religions, as well as travel to places having the great significance in the genesis and dissemination of a particular religion. In the first case, people seek to pervade their spirit world, broaden their horizons and gain new knowledge about the history of religion. Since the houses of worship in many countries are at the same time their main sights, it becomes obvious the popularity of excursion religious tourism. The second type of tours, most likely, will suit people traveling on spi-

ritual motives, and dreaming to worship shrines [8].

If one plans to go on a pilgrimage tour, one should find out the peculiarities of religious tourism of this kind. One should have in mind that the trip will not always be comfortable. In most cases, the tour route runs through seldom-visited or, conversely, too overcrowded religious centers. Pilgrims have to stop for a night's lodging or to stay in camping sites, encamped for the period of a religious event, or in monastic cells, low-key hotels and resorts. It is not always possible to provide a variety of food, especially if the tour schedule coincides with fasting strictly observed by believers. In especially challenging tours believers can count only on packed meal and water. In this sense, pilgrimage tours and sightseeing tours of religious orientation are different. The tourist excursions organized assume a high level of comfort [9]. Therefore, if you do not feel sure of yourself and your own abilities to withstand all the hardships of pilgrimage, then go on thematic excursions safely. Such excursions are intended visiting religious monuments and comfortable accommodation.

Each of the world religions is characterized by its own specific features of religious tourism, its own routes and shrines scattered throughout the world. The exclusion may be the city which has thousand years history. It is Jerusalem located on the territory of modern Israel. This ancient city can be considered as the cradle of several world religions: Christianity, Judaism and Islam. A huge number of attractions represented by shrines for hundreds of thousands of pilgrims are concentrated here. The representatives of Christianity come to Jerusalem to visit places associated with the biblical events - the Crucifixion and the Resurrection of Christ. Moreover, tourists make excursions to other monuments of antiquity regarded as the Christian shrines. The ancient shrine of the Jews is the Wailing Wall which is the part of the Temple Mount complex. It is the only surviving sector of the ancient fencing of the city. The Jewish pilgrims come here from different parts of the world to worship the shrine and leave messages with their wishes in it. The focus of Muslims attention in Jerusalem is the Dome of the Rock mosque which has the form of an octagon. According to the legend, it was here that the Prophet Mohammed left his feet print, and

there is his beard hair in one of the pillars of the ancient building.

Along with Jerusalem Muslims also commit Hajj to Medina and Mecca to see the Al-Kharam mosque and the Kaaba. Every faithful adept of a prophet should visit these Holy places at least once in his life. The peculiarity of religious tourism among Muslims is that it is necessary to visit the shrines before Kurban-Bayram. Muslims perform all the rituals prescribed by the Koran within 10 days on the eve of a religious event.

Religious tourism in Europe is popular among Christian Catholics. As a rule, they go on pilgrimage tours to European cities to admire the beauty of the Gothic cathedrals survived from the Middle Ages. However, the center of the Catholic religion is the Roman Vatican city. The Orthodox believers of Central and Eastern Europe travel to the Holy places of Russia (Diveevo, Suzdal, Vladimir, Moscow, Solovetsky Islands), Ukraine (Kiev Pechersk Lavra), Bulgaria (Veliko Turnovo), Greece (Athos), Serbia (Vvedensky Monastery) and Montenegro (Cetinsky Monastery). The main centers of Buddhism are Lumbini (Nepal), Kushinagar, Sarnath (India), Lhasa (Tibet), Nara (Japan) and Sri Lanka. In recent years, among the Buddhists, there is a tradition to visit the largest temple complex in Europe located in Kalmykia (Russia). The pilgrimage tourism, including visits to museums, estates, shrines and the study of religion itself, will be perfect for lovers of history, culture, art and holy places. It is a kind of religious tourism consisting of tourist and Orthodox excursions. During the excursions pilgrims can attend divine services, say prayers venerating the relics and famous icons. People who spend most of their time on pilgrimage are called pilgrims. In the ancient world, the pilgrims traveled to see new holy places for them, to pray, to be healed of ailments. Sometimes it took years, but someone became a religious pilgrim entirely, devoting a whole life to it. Currently it is much easier to be a pilgrim. The age of technology allows learning in death the history of holy places, to find out the route, the cost of the tour and accommodation, as well as all other details that will be useful during the trip.

Recently, a separate type of religious and pilgrim tourism has emerged, gaining strengths and becoming popular among the population.


There is a misconception that the pilgrimage is losing its significance. On the contrary, the tourism to holy places is gaining stream, due to the availability and the opportunity not just to travel anywhere in the world, but also with the help of competent tour guides to learn the subtle aspects and features of a particular place. The goals of the tour are different for everyone: someone is just interested in learning more about the religion; someone needs to visit temples in order to attain faith in themselves; and someone even tries to come through fatal diseases, because there is no other hope for healing. It is not necessary to go on tour to the other end of the world for the purpose of pilgrimage. One can start with the vast expanses of our homeland, incredibly rich in churches, historical attractions. Often, tourists travel a thousand kilometers to visit a church in a village with a population of less than a hundred people. Russia has much unique of worldwide fame and attracts even foreigners. The most popular holy places among foreign tourists and pilgrims are Valaam, the Holy Trinity-St. Sergius Lavra and Diveevo. The Holy places are endowed with a certain blessed energy, thanks to the miraculous events taking place there and the holy people lives. Cultural places of religious significance can be churches, monasteries, natural landmarks: for example, lakes, rivers, forests or mountain slopes. It is widely thought that if one says the prayer in a worshipful place, it will gain great strength. Pilgrimage is not an ordinary rest, but an exciting cognitive tour giving the opportunity to plunge into the most sacred and intimate. During the religious tours one can learn many new details from the history of Orthodoxy, gaining faith in God, and also become a participant of church rites. All mentioned above will be incredibly interesting to a curious traveler and a devout believer.

### CONCLUSION

The definition of tourism as a kind of activity is in no way inferior to the concept and essence of pilgrimage [9]. Relying on the scientific definition of pilgrimage and religious tours, it can be said that it applies more to tourism than to human spiritual activity. It gives the evidence to talk safely about the pilgrimage as a tour. In the Federal Law "Concerning the Fundamental Principles of Tourist Activities in the Russian Federation", a tour is defined as: "a complex of services

for accommodation, transportation, tourists food, excursion services, as well as tourist guide services and other services offered depending on the tour purpose." Religious tourism plays an important role not only in the economic sphere, bringing income to both the state and the local population of the visited territories [10]. However, its main goal is to create a favorable atmosphere between the participants of the tourist activity - the host and the visitor. This contributes to overcoming interethnic misunderstanding and intercultural tension in the world. Religious tourism is an integral part of the modern tourism industry. Cathedrals, mosques, hieratic museums and spiritual centers are tourist places that are increasingly in demand, which means that they are a place of direct interaction between people of different nationalities.

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