

## **Sacred Sites of Rishton District**

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**Abstract:** This article discusses the sacred pilgrimage sites of the Rishton district, which is known for its rich cultural and spiritual heritage. The religious and historical significance of these sites is immense, as they are dedicated to revered saints, Islamic scholars, and righteous individuals. Sacred places such as Khoja Ilgor, Mulla Ismatulloh Qori, the Hazrat Khidr site, Yigitpirim, Khoja Rushnoiy, Sohibi Hidayat, and Abdulla Ansori continue to be important pilgrimage destinations for believers today. This article explores the history of these sites and highlights their religious and scholarly importance.

**Keywords:** Rishton, pilgrimage sites, sacred places, historical monuments, religious heritage, Hazrat Khidr, Khoja Ilgor, Sohibi Hidayat, Abdulla Ansari, Islamic values, saints, Sufism, scholarly heritage, Fergana Valley.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Each region of Uzbekistan has its own unique historical, religious, and cultural heritage. For centuries, Islamic knowledge and science have flourished in our land, and many great saints, scholars, and righteous individuals have lived here. In particular, the Rishton district, one of the ancient corners of the Fergana Valley, stands out for its sacred pilgrimage sites and shrines. This land is not only a center of craftsmanship and ceramics but also a place where religious and spiritual values have flourished.

The sacred sites of Rishton are closely connected to religious faith and are recognized as an important part of Islamic history. Most of the shrines located here are dedicated to renowned Islamic scholars, saints, and righteous individuals who are highly revered by the people. These pilgrimage sites attract not only devout Muslims but also historians, researchers, and tourists interested in their historical and cultural significance.

### **METHOD AND METHODOLOGY**

Among these sacred sites, the shrines of Khoja Ilgor, Mulla Ismatulloh Qori, the Hazrat Khidr site, Yigitpirim, Khoja Rushnoiy, Sohibi Hidayat, and Abdulla Ansari hold a special place. Each of them has its own unique history, legends, and religious significance. Some of these pilgrimage sites are associated with the memory of saints, while others are closely linked to the scholarly activities of Islamic scholars. Additionally, in certain locations, deep caves, chillakhonas (spiritual retreat chambers), and ancient hujras (cells) have been preserved, indicating that these places once served as centers of religious education.

This article provides detailed information about the sacred pilgrimage sites of Rishton, their history, religious significance, and the legends associated with them. Each of these shrines has witnessed unique historical events and continues to serve as a blessed place for devout Muslims.

today. The values of these pilgrimage sites, their place in people's hearts, and the traditions linked to them play an important role in the spiritual life of our nation.

Rishton district has many ancient monuments, and one of these pilgrimage sites is the Hazrati Khidr shrine. The Hazrati Khidr pilgrimage site is located in Buston village, Rishton district. This sacred place is revered as the meeting spot of Hazrati Khidr and Ilyas (peace be upon them). This pilgrimage site has been assigned to the "Waqf" charitable community fund under a free-use agreement.

The Yigitpirim pilgrimage site is located in Cho'ng'ara M.F.Y., Rishton district. The name of the person buried at this site is unknown. The site is also referred to as Yigitpirim Eri, Hubbi, or Xubbi Khoja. The presence of a major branch of the Sokh River in this area supports the validity of these claims.

## RESEARCH RESULTS

The Khoja Rushnoiy pilgrimage site is located in the M. Topivoldiyev Mahalla Citizens' Assembly in Rishton district. According to legends, the origin of this site is linked to a great saint who invited people to Islam. After the saint's passing, light was said to emanate from his grave, which is why it was named "Khoja Rushnoiy."

Sohibi Hidoya pilgrimage site is located in the Chinnigaron Mahalla Citizens' Assembly of the Rishton district. This sacred site is associated with one of the renowned scholars of the Islamic world—one of the great masters of fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), Burhanuddin Ali ibn Abduljalil Al-Farg'oni Ar-Roshidoni Al-Marg'inoni (1123–1197).

The Abdulla Ansoriy pilgrimage site is located in the Ariqbo'yi neighborhood of the Rishton district. The name of the pilgrimage site is associated with the Persian Sufi poet Khoja Ansari, Abdullah ibn Muhammad ibn Ismail ibn Abumansur Muhammad (1006–1089). The site consists of a mausoleum, buildings, and verandas built in a national architectural style.

The Chillaxona pilgrimage site is located in the Oq Yer neighborhood community gathering in the Rishton district. The Chillaxona was built in the 19th century. According to legends, three brothers lived there—one was a religious scholar, and another was a healer. There is a cave at the site where the current grave is located. Today, the Chillaxona is well preserved.

The Beshkapa Mosque is located in the village of Beshkapa, Rishton district, and was built between approximately 1890 and 1905 with the sponsorship of Polvonboy from Beshkapa. Calligraphers and decorators were invited from the city of Kokand to adorn the mosque. The local people refer to the mosque as "Dasturkhonchi."

The Khoja Ilgor complex is located in the village of Zarariq, Rishton district. The mosque was built to the north of the Khoja Ilgor cemetery between 1913 and 1915 by order of Shokir Mingboshi, son of Mirzo Qalandar. The construction was led by master Mallaboy Hoji, and craftsmen from Kokand were invited to decorate it with ornaments. The inscriptions on the ceiling of the iwan were written by the calligrapher from Rishton, Akromkhon Bokirkhon To'ra o'g'li. In 1980–1981, master Norinboy, along with Kokand ornamentation artists Murodjon and Muqimjon Kenjayev and their apprentices, restored it. During the years of independence, it was renovated again, with some parts being newly reconstructed. "During the years of independence, a domed gateway was constructed in a national and modern style, with its façade oriented towards the east. The top of the gate and its two wings are symmetrically adorned with tiled panels inscribed with Islamic motifs. The panel above the gate bears the name of the mosque, while the two arch-like panels feature the words 'Allah' and 'Muhammad.' The panels above them contain hadiths and prayers written in Naskh script." In the smaller courtyard on the south side of the complex, there is a mausoleum, tomb, and living quarters. The mausoleum is located in the southern part of the courtyard. Next to it, there is a cave about 2 meters deep, which served as a retreat (chillakhana). To the north and west of the mausoleum, there are living quarters, while in the northwest, there is a library (korikhona). In the north, between the living quarters, there was a

gateway (darvozakhana) connecting to the mosque courtyard. In 1942-1943, the Khoja Ilgor Mausoleum was demolished, and its bricks were used to build a cotton drying device. It remains unknown who was buried in the mausoleum, when it was built, and by whom. During the Soviet era, the mosque building was used as a hay storage and a warehouse for agricultural purposes. In the mid-1970s, it was converted into a museum for the Rishtan Artistic Ceramics Factory. During the years of independence, it was renovated and regained its status as a congregational mosque.

## **DISCUSSION**

The sacred pilgrimage sites of Rishton are an integral part of Uzbekistan's religious and cultural heritage, each with a deep history, strong faith, and the reverence of the people. This article provides a detailed overview of the district's most famous shrines, their history, religious significance, and the legends associated with them. The uniqueness of each shrine and its place among the people demonstrate that these sites are not only places of worship but also centers of historical knowledge and spiritual enlightenment. These sacred sites of Rishton have played a significant role in the rise of Islam, as well as in the development of scholarly and Sufi traditions. Since ancient times, they have served not only as places of worship and pilgrimage but also as centers of religious education, scholarly discussions, and spiritual purification. The presence of chillakhonas (retreat chambers), hujras (study rooms), and caves near these shrines serves as evidence that they were once revered spaces for scholars and righteous individuals. Each of these pilgrimage sites stands out with its unique history and spiritual heritage. These sacred sites still hold great significance for devout Muslims today. Every year, thousands of pilgrims visit these places to offer prayers, purify their hearts, and find inner peace. Additionally, these pilgrimage sites attract great interest from tourists, historians, and researchers. Through them, we gain a deeper understanding not only of our religious history but also of our national values.

The sacred pilgrimage sites of Rishton must be preserved for future generations and given proper attention. These places are living witnesses to our country's rich cultural and spiritual heritage. Their preservation and study not only strengthen our religious beliefs but also enrich our historical memory.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, the shrines of Rishton are not merely religious sites but also centers of Islamic traditions, scholarship, and spirituality. Their values, significance in people's hearts, and the traditions associated with them hold an essential place in our nation's spiritual life. Preserving, studying, and passing down these sacred places to future generations is our sacred duty.

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