

## **Qom Town, One of the Most Important Religious, Recreational and Tourism Poles of Islamic Republic of Iran**

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### ***Abstract***

*Studies indicate that willingness to travel is basically blended in the man's nature and tourism while lustering the man's spirit and mind, it is itself a great field of taking an example of ancient history and could emerged the works and remnants of ancient people through the world like Ancient Iran, Roma, Greece. There has been stressed particularly in Qoran for travel. Religious, pilgrimage and tourism travels all are sings of the god by which people can seek for the truth and attaining to the peerless and eternal being of God. In our country, there are more than 8919 religious sites left Iran with a special validity. Ancient, religious and pilgrimage monuments in Iran indicate the capabilities of strong tourism and lasting capital in Iran. Along with, Qom, due to the presence of shrine of majesty Fatemeh Masoumeh and Jamkaran mosque and 93 Islamic holy places and 594 mosques and 260 religious theaters and tens of other valuable and natural historical monuments may be considered as a main religious tourism and income from it can be spent for prosperity and development of this holy town as well as safety and welfare of its citizens and it can add the size of travels and number of tourists day to day.*

***Keywords: Qom, Religious Tourism, Tourism Pole, Fatemeh Masoumeh, Jamkaran Mosque***

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### **Methodology**

Magnificence and glory of majesty Masoumeh as well as holy Jamkaran mosque and more than 950 religious, historical, natural and tourism buildings and monuments required field and library studies as well as applying descriptive- analytic methodology.

### **Introduction**

Our Islamic country based on its various climates, specific geographical conditions and its civilization with several millenniums is one of the exclusive countries in different fields of tourism particularly religious tourism. Therefore, it is necessary to recognize different tourism regions particularly religious tourism to take action for better using and operating it by knowing different capabilities of tourism through various regions through Iran. Along with, Qom enjoys a prominent situation and is accounted for as one of the tourism, pilgrimage and religious regions of Iran and is one of the great poles for development of religious tourism through Iran and the world. Because empyreal court of majesty Masoumeh, daughter of Imam Mousa Ibn Jafar as well as holy Jamkaran mosque and Qom seminary have been emerged as the station for privilege of Islamic thoughts and education of prophet's household, and is one of the biggest scientific- cultural centers of Shiite world, they left Qom with a religious feature. All such glories can be indicated besides other works such as: Salt Lake, Desert places and historical and cultural works that are able to attract thousands of domestic and foreign tourists toward a special tourism pole, particularly religious and pilgrimage ones.

### **Expressions and Definitions of Tourism**

There are so many expressions and definitions about tourism discussed by scientists and scholars some of them summarized as below:

“Tourism” is a global word used by English, French and German people. Taking a tour, indeed may be also called as tourism, travelling, travel, excursion,... principally, tourism is an industry has considerably influenced on most activities such as communication

network, factory products, advertisement, sports, sports goods, tools, cloths, food products and cosmetics (Gareh Nejad, 468, 2006).

World Tourism Organization (WTO) knows tourists as people who spend their time for at least one night or more in their destination country and aiming to have recreational time, with safety, calm, study, sports, and etc.

Increased population in industrial era cities and environmental pollutions whether visual and acoustic pollutions affected on living and working spaces to such extent that it is necessary to have relaxation and recreation. Therefore, man may use of its times and opportunities to resorting to religious and pilgrimage places as well as nature to reduce its physical and mental fatigue and even attracting force.

Studies indicate that by development of geographical investigations, there have been emerged various forms of tourism with indicating their ecological, social and cultural importance as well as their special value.

According to Arthur Bormann (1931) "Tourism comprises from travels executed for recreational and business purposes, or any other occupational activities, and or for participating in specific ceremonies". And a tourist may temporarily leave its residence.

Along with, Greek and Romans were among first people who took action for tourism affairs by holding festivals, and religious and sports ceremonies. One of such affairs is holding Olympic Games held 776 BC in Roma.

Following the industrial revolution (18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century), the living style changed in UK and there occurred urbanization and mass production more than before. In addition, discovering the steam power, progress of technology and transportation, particularly flight, on one side and attaining more wealth, accessing to more recreational time, enjoying higher health level, on the other side, influenced more on tourism industry (Tavalaei, 4, 2006).

It is clear that in ancient era, businessmen, evangelists, nobility, different classes of society traveled by different objectives and principally, they had a kind of tourism activity. Famous explorers, adventurers, tourists such as: Marco polo, Magellan, Vasco dogoma

and Christopher Columbus conducted a type of tourism travels. But modern tourism industry occurred since industrial revolution.

### **Different types of Tourism in Iran and World**

Today, tourism is executed according to religious interests and or believes and or specific events by people through the world including:

1-Recreational tourism: travelers travel aiming to have a recreational tour and spending their vacations in their territory.

2-Medical tourism: it is conducted for using climate changes by medical purposes and using different minerals.

3-Cultural tourism: it is conducted for knowing the culture and art and ceremonies of different nations as well as seeing historical works and scientific studies.

4-Decamping tourism: every year, contemporary with decamping the tribes, interested people try to have such kind of tour.

5-Religious tourism: it is conducted for visiting religious and holy places as well as participating in worshipping ceremonies.

6-Sports tourism: it is conducted for sports activities such as mountain climbing, hunting, swimming, participation in events and watching the competitions.

7-Business tourism: they include travels for participating in markets and fairs held for showing goods and minerals and factory installations, products and etc.

8-Political tourism: this type of tourism is conducted for participating in international conferences and special festivals, congresses and conferences.

9-Rural tourism: in this field, tourists participated in rural living style and rural people may benefit more from such tourism activities.

On the other side, different views about tourism may make us aware from concepts of tourism and analyzing it.

### **Religious Tourism**

Religious tourism is one of the most prevalent forms of tourism through the world and including travels and visits following from special religious objectives and enjoying its high value in the body and spirit of traveler and religious attractions and shrines and places of pilgrimage attract tourists to themselves and residing and reception

installations of this kind of tourisms such as hotels, hostels, visitor houses according to their social, cultural and believe texture may have special properties with high variety in any country (Rezvani, 19, 1999).

Religious tourism is the only form of tourism conducted in most times in the year and seasonal changes, climate transitions may not prevent tourists from visiting the religious centers and towns.

Religious attractions because of their specific properties may attract other tourists, these attractions include: shrines of prophets and Imams, offspring of an Imam, mosques, tombs of the great, religious theaters, abbeys and monasteries, fire temples that are considerably abundant in our country, Iran.

On modern day, tourism is extending increasingly and is going to turn to the greatest industry through the world (Zarabi, 26, 2006).

Religious tourism defines as: visiting the tourists from holy places such as shrines, tombs, offspring of an Imam and likes.

Therefore, this kind of tourism include people who visiting the holy places of their religion and or enjoying holy places of other religions and in this field, Muslims visit their holy places such as: Mecca, Medina, holy places of Imams, Syria, Imam Reza shrine, majesty Fatemeh Masoumeh shrine, Majesty Abd Alazim Hasani Shrine, and Shah Cherag.

Christians and Armenian of Iran also visit some old and ancient churches such as Goreh Church located in Western Azerbaijan and or Vanak church located in Isfahan and deal with their special ceremonies. Jewish or Zoroastrian people also visit their holy places such as Ostromdkhai in Hamadan and or Koresh tomb in Pasargadae, Fars and various fire temples of Zoroastrian in Yazd and other places through the country.

Religious and pilgrimage tourism is one of the most important and prevalent types of tourism going back to past era. Historical documents of great civilizations of Mesopotamia and Egypt as well as works remained in pre-historic era indicate religious travels of thousands of people. Many peoples suffered many injuries and hardness for conducting their religious duties since thousands of years before and traveled far distances ([www.2rism.com](http://www.2rism.com)).

### **Qom, A Safe Place for Religious and Recreational Tourism**

In our Islamic country, there are 8919 religious holy places, 4319 of which registered in the works of cultural heritage (www.mazhb.com). Holy Qom town also enjoys precious tourism places. Based on its religious tourism, Qom is considered as an important and safe place for tourists and since past era, it was famous as a safe place. After visiting the shrine of Majesty Masoumeh and holy Jamkaran mosque, visitors try to visit tourism places of this town. By rehabilitation of historical places as well as tourism places of this town, the economy of this town can be prospered and it will increase development of tourism industry, particularly religious one, because this holy town has 93 Islamic holy places, 594 mosques and 260 religious theaters (Endowments Department of Qom, 2008).

There are also tourism places in Qom including: Shrine of Majesty Masoumeh, Four Offspring of Imams, offspring of Imam, Seyed Jamal, five offspring of Imams, Old Bazar, Timcheh Bazar, general mosque, Chel Akhtaran, Bet Alnour, Astaneh Museum, Ebrahim, offspring of Imam, Jahangirkhan school, Reservoir of Old Bazar, collection of tombs of Safavid and Qajar kings, and Jamkaran holy mosque (Urbanization Department of Qom, 2010).

### **Religious and Pilgrimage Tourism Attractions of Qom**

#### ***Empyreal Court of Majesty Fatemeh Masoumeh***

This valuable gem that donated a special privilege and value to Qom and its people in Kavir desert, and it could attracted various visitors and religious tourism Caravans since past, is the presence of Majesty Fatemeh Masoumeh.

It is not clear accurate birth date of her the great, but it is probably in the early Zigadeh, 173 according to lunar calendar, in Medina. Although her birth date is not clear, but its death date is clear and between 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> of Rabi Alasani, 201 lunar calendar (Babaei, 189, 2007).

Studies indicate that on 200 lunar calendar, Mamoon invited Imam Reza from Medina to let him be his guardian and because his sister, Fatemeh Masoumeh was not aware of him for one year, therefore, on 201, he moved towards Khorasan and arrived to Saveh and become patient there and people moved her to Qom, and Mosa Ibn Khazraj

went towards her and pulled her reins of convalescent towards the town and took her to his house.

Anyway, today in the zone of Mirgom square, there is a place called "Sateh" established a mosque and school around there and this place is where she landed (Eshtahardi, 20, 1994).

She only remained alive for 17 days and then died. People perform ablution for her and wrapped in a winding sheet and buried. When her tomb was becoming ready, people consulted for who may bury her. Among them, an old man called Gader, who had more proficiency, was selected, but before he do so, two mounted people came while they wore masks and without anybody could endure them, they buried her and then ride by their horses and left there. The place of burial of her majesty is in the land of Mosa Ibn Khazraj and in a garden called "Babelan". In the book of "Prophet's household" and second majesty Masoumeh Fatemeh, it has been stated that those people were Imam Reza and Imam Javad (Babei, 207, 2007).

Travel of thousands of people per year from different regions from Iran and other countries to Qom is because of visiting her and seeing her golden tomb and tiled as well as various minarets and magnificent porticos made out of gold and mirrors, turned this town as the most important tourism towns in Iran (Faghihi, 104, 1999).

### **Important Parts of Court of Majesty Fatemeh Masoumeh**

**1-Holy Yard:** This yard is the first yard of holy court of majesty Masoumeh with for elegant prticos called "Najafi Porticos", the same as "Golden Portico", the northern portico is the entrance of yard to Feizieh school, western portico is the entrance of yard to Great Mosque and eastern portico is the entrance of golden yard to Atabak yard.

### **2-The Great people who buried in the court of Majesty Fatehem Masoumeh include:**

- (1) Majesty Fatemeh Masoumeh, daughter of Imam Mousa Kazem;
- (2) Mom of Ahmed, daughter of Mosa Mobrag and grandchild of Imam Javad;
- (3) Meymouneh, daughter of Mosa Mobrag and grandchild of Imam Javad;
- (4) Mom of Gasem, daughter of Ali Kokabi;

- (5) Mom of Eshag, sister-in-law of Mohammad, son of Mosa Mobreg;
- (6) Mom of Habib, sister-in-law of Abu Ali, grandchild of Imam Reza;
- (7) Seyed Abulhasan Hossein Ibn Jafar Ibn Mohammad Ibn Esmaeel Ibn Imam Jafar Sadeg;
- (8) Hamzeh Ibn Ahmad Alrokh Ibn Mohammad Ibn Esmaeel Ibn Mohammad Ibn Abdallah Albaher Ibn Imam Zeyn Alabedin;
- (9) Abu Jafar Mohammad Ibn Hamzeh (son of Hamzeh from grandsons of Imam Sajad);
- (10) Abolgasem Ali Ibn Mohammad Ibn Hamzeh, another son on Hamzeh of grandsons of Imam Sajad;
- (11) Ali Ibn Hamzeh (brother of Mohammad Ibn Hamzeh);
- (12) Abu Ali Ahmad Alkhatib Ashjari Ibn Ali Ibn Mohammad Ibn Omar Alshajari Ibn Ali Ibn Omar Alsharaf Ibn Imam Zeyn Alabedin;
- (13) Abu Jafar Mohammad Ibn Ahmad Khatib (son of Khatib Shajari);
- (14) Abu Mohammad Hassan Ibn Ahmad Khatib (his another son).

#### **Main and Famous Mosques, of Tourism Attractions of Qom**

Holy Imam Zaman Mosque called "Jamkaan Mosque", Qom General Mosque, Imam Hasan Askari Mosque, Aazam Mosque, Great Mosque, Balasar Mosque, Shahid Motahari Mosque, Fatemieh or Khanom Mosque.

#### **Offspring of Imams and Holy places of Important Religious, Pilgrimage and Tourism Attractions of Qom**

1-*Abujafar Mousa Ibn Mobargaa, offspring of Imam:* Tomb of Mosa Albobargaa offspring of Imam Javad, is located in the site of old square called "Chel Akhtaran" and visited by everyone. There have been born millions of offspring of this Imam Zadeh attributed to him. Mother of Mosa Mobargaa Samaneh Magrebieh is the wife of Imam Javad.

2-*Zeyd, the offspring of Imam:* tomb and shrine of Imamzadeh Zeyd is located in the western side of Chel Akhtaran. This Imamzadeh is of descendants of Imam Sajad and his lineage attain to this Imam by eight intermediates (Babaei, 376, 2007).



3-***Shah Seyed Ali, the offspring of Imam:*** it has been located in the western north side of Panzdahe Khordad Blvd. the descent of this Imamzadeh with seven intermediate attains to Mohammad Ibn Hanafieh, son of Imam Ali (peace be upon him).

4-***Hamzeh Ibn Mousa Ibn Jafar, the offspring of Imam:*** This Imam Zadeh is specially famous among children of Mosa Ibn Jafar such that he distinguished him among other children. Anvar Almoshashain writes about him: "in our era, in Qom, there are two of Imam Zadehs who must be bowed. One is Fatemeh Bent Mosa Ibn Aljafar and another one Imam Zadeh Hamzeh Ibn Imam Mosa Ibn Jafar (peace be upon him) (Anvar Almoshashain, Vol II, chapter 7,261).

5-***Naser Aldin, the offspring of Imam:*** the tomb of Imamzadeh Naser Aldin is located in the crossroad of market in front of northern door of Imam Hasan Askari Mosque. He lived in late 8<sup>th</sup> and early 9<sup>th</sup> and is a prominent feature.

6-***Soltan Mohammad Sharif, the offspring of Imam:*** this tomb is located in Char Mardan street in a zone called by the name of this majesty.

7-***Ahmad Ibn Gasem, the offspring of Imam:*** The tomb of this Imamzadeh is located in the southern gate of Qom called "Malon lands" and also called "Castle Gate".

8-***Ali Ibn Jabar, the offspring of Imam:*** This tomb, although attributed to Ali Ibn Jafar (peace be upon him), but the deceased buried in this tomb is not Ali son of Imam Sadeh. Studies indicate that the burial place of Ali Ibn Jafar is located in Ariz in Medina, for this reason Ali Ibn Jafar famed to Ali Arsi. But someone who buried in this tomb is Ali Ibn Hassan Ibn Ali Ibn Hassan Alalavi Ibn Easa Ibn Mohammad Ibn Ali Ibn Jafar Arizi who is one of the grandchildren of Ali Ibn Jafar (Babaei, 352, 2007).

9-***Ebrahim, the offspring of Imam:*** Next to the tomb of Ali Ibn Jafar and in the distance of 100 m far from it, there is a tomb called Prince Ibrahim (Qom History, 1982).

10- ***Chel Akhtaran:*** it is a magnificent tomb located in Mousavian zone next to the tomb of Mousa Mobargaa (peace be upon him) called "Chel Dokhtaran". According to Qom history: until this time, i.e. 378 according to lunar calendar, fourteen of Sadat Razavieh who are

among the family of Mosa Ibn Jafar, and mainly are women, buried in this tomb.

### **Historical, Cultural and Natural Tourism Attractions of Qom**

- a- House of Imam Khomeini
- b- House of Haj Ali Khan Zand
- c- House of Ha Goli Khan.

### **Old and Historical Schools, Tourism Attraction of Qom**

Feyzieh school, Geyathieh (Pamenar) School, Jahangir Khan School, Razavieh School, Sayeah Schools, like: Hojatieh, Momenieh, Marashieh, Korha, Shahabieh, Kermaniha, Saad, Imam Khomeini, Amir Almomenin, Imam Bagher, Shahidain Rasool Akram, Alhadi, Golpayegani, Masoumieh, Mahdieh, Opic Chi, Dar Altablig schools that accounted as the most famous schools of this town (Babaei, 223, 224, 2007).

### **Historical Tourism Monuments of Qom**

- a- Alikhani bridge
- b- Dar Alshafa Reservoir

### **Historical Tourism Tombs of Qom**

Fathali Shah tomb, Second Abbasid King tomb, Shah Soleyman and Shah Safi tomb, Mahde Olia tomb, Ali Ibn Babouyeh Gomi tomb, Mohammad Shah tomb, Sheikhan cemetery, that is accounted one of the famous shrines of Qom; in this place, a group of close friends of Imams and scholars of 1<sup>st</sup> century have been buried. Scholar such as: Zakariaye Adam, Mirzaye Gomi, and Mirza Javad Aga Maleki Tabrizi; tomb of mother of Imam Khomeini, tombs of Gonbade Sabz garden.

### **Museums and Cultural and Tourism Centers**

Museums of Qom include: Astaneh Mogadaseh Qom museum, Qom Natural History Museum, Astaneye Mogadas library, Ayat Allah Haeri library, Ayat Allah Borojjerdi library, Ayat Allah Marashi Najafi library, old market, great arcade.

### **Natural Tourism Attractions**

Gomrood river, Gareh Chay river, Salt Lake, Hoze Soltan lake, Masileh basin, Kosar National Park.

### **Conclusion**

Generally, results of studies indicate that tourism industry, particularly religious one is considered as a valuable industry in Iran and among world's country and in Koran also there has been more stressed on tour and travel through the world.

The more important is that in old and extended territory of Iran, due to its long urbanization history as well as enjoying the gift of cultural and scientific formations, particularly after emergence of Islam and sovereignty of divine rules and development of Islam religion, tourism, particularly religious one has been more cleared. This can be seen in cities such as Mashahd, holy court of Imam Reza and in Qom because of presence of holy court of majesty Fatemeh Masoumeh and in Rey town due to shrine of Shahzadeh Abd Alazim Hasani and other towns through Iran as well as other Islamic territories.

Along with, Qom town possesses many religious, pilgrimages, historical and cultural attractions, particularly holy court of Majesty Fatemeh Masoumeh and holy Jamkaran Mosque that turned it to a tourism town, particularly religious one. On the other side, there are many offspring of Imams and scholars buried in the town; all of which caused believers and Muslims through the world, particularly from Pakistan, Iraq, India, Malaysia, etc... travel to Qom. This town possesses many museums and cultural centers with historical antiquity as well as natural attractions, attracted many tourists to it.

It is clear that tourism industry is increasingly developing this old town. Therefore, politicians require to protecting these valuable works by their integrated planning and develop them to provide the pilgrims and tourists with a safe place in the center of Islamic Iran and at corner of desert, Qom town, and this main tourism pole attain to its eminent value.

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