Redefining the concept of the 24-hour city and city nightlife for holy cities, with the use of Islamic instructions: 
A Case study of the holy city of Karbala

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Abstract. The development of the 24-hour city includes the development of infrastructure, and economic, cultural and social planning. The approach taken in most of the western cities has been considered compatible with the lifestyles prevalent in those countries, and has three main parts: people, place, and creativity, and three basic principles: providing a safe city centre for people and their places of leisure, developing the night economy, and improving the city’s image. The interaction between proponents and opponents of 24-hour cities and their effects on the planning of the cities is also one of the challenges in cities in Islamic countries. Most proponents tend to encourage the creation of new urban places and the introduction of special activities compatible with nightlife. However, some cities already provide opportunities for attendance and activity at all times of day and night without formal organisation, including areas such as Karbala and Mashhad where the focal point is a holy shrine. Islam has a special view of urban life and lifestyle and therefore defines its own favoured activities, entertainment, residency, and purpose, proposing special times and places for all things. Reviewing the concept of the 24-hour city in light of the Islamic lifestyle using examples of holy cities can thus help redefine the 24-hour city and produce new patterns for it that are more compatible with the needs of Islamic countries. This research thus tries to answer the following questions using a qualitative method and surveys to develop a case study of Karbala city: What are the connections between an Islamic lifestyle and 24-hour city life? What capacities of the city are lost, based on the current local nightlife? The aim of this study is to begin to redefine the 24-hour city concept to make it compatible with both Islamic culture and local capacity.

Keywords: 24-hour city, Nightlife, Islamic lifestyle, Holy cities, Islamic city, Karbala.

1. Introduction

Nowadays, human cycles do not follow natural timelines. Zerubavel believes that daily life is now managed by mechanical time; people do not wake up with the sunrise or go to bed with sunset; humans have rejected the natural and organic timetables of the diurnal pattern and replaced them with mechanical timetables [1].

Living at night as a concept the was introduced in the middle of 19th century for the first time. During that time, the industrial, social, and cultural revolutions in cities meant that night life, which had previously only been experienced inside homes and private places, moved out of the home [2].
Although the term “24-hour city” word evokes the concept of having all municipal services and activities available day and night, the expression was in fact formed due to the development of nighttime entertainment industries in European cities, especially in England. This expression is thus more accurately related to activities such as recreation and entertainment [3]. Night life at the cities is when people are more social and thus tend to consume more, meeting together and purchasing food and drinks; the presence of tourists, especially young people, also contributes to such night life.

This type of life has some advocates and some detractors; indeed, every group has its own opinion and judgment based on cultural, social, economic and political mores. A single style or method thus cannot be found for 24-hour city or night life in all cities. Each city requires a special plan for night life compatible with the norms governing that society and these cannot necessarily be extended to other cities; suitable spaces and utilities must thus be considered for each plan.

The introduction of the 24-hour city concept to Islamic cities has triggered many different reactions. The social structure developed by Muslims in cities has some necessities and Islamic lifestyles and teachings result in special social and personal behaviours not comparable with western lifestyles; a more compatible night life pattern must thus be found.

While the development of nightlife in European and American cities tends to refers to the creation of new places and the injection of new activities and special conduct at night; however, in some of Islamic countries such as Iran and Iraq, there are some cities that can already be considered 24-hour cities because of the basis of their formation; these cities are the pilgrimage cities such as Kerbela, Najaf, and Mashhad. The formation of these cities was related to the sacred places of Shia Islam’s Imams (i.e. religious leaders), and the presence of pilgrims performing religious activities and making pilgrimage to holy shrines results in these cities being active throughout the day and night.

1. In this present paper, attempts are thus made to redefine the concept of 24-hour cities and night life for Islamic holy cities by examining the concept of 24-hour cities in the literature in conjunction with Islamic instruction on lifestyle.

2. Research method

This research aims to redefine the concept of 24-hour city by using a qualitative method based on Islamic culture and land capacity, thus considering documentary studies and comparing the current definition of night life with Islamic lifestyle instructions. By investigating the case study of Kerbela it also attempts to answer the following questions: what is the relationship between Islamic lifestyle and 24-hour city life and what are the neglected capacities of the city based on current local night life?

3. The concept of the 24-hour city and nightlife in urban spaces

The expression 24-hour city was introduced for first time for New York City in the 1920s. This phrase evoked a picture of a place that was constantly busy, with many events happening in its streets. In England, the expression was introduced formally for first time in 1993, in a conference labelled “toward a 24-hour city” which was held at Manchester that examined regeneration strategies and the reorganisation of city centres at night, finding inherent incompatibilities between many proposals [3].

One of the important problems cities faced at the end of 20th century was related to the utilisation of the city centre by people. At that time, city centres were seen as places for people to work and do shopping between 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and after those times, they left the city centre. These limitations of working hours resulted in some problems for cities, including increased traffic and crowding of public places such as recreational centres and stores during the day [4].

According to some researchers, the problems posed by land use zoning and evacuation of the city centre that began to become apparent in the 1960s could be solved using a “24-hour city” approach and reinforcing the night economy, which has thus become one of new approaches to regenerating city centres [1],[5],[6].
Figure 1: Regeneration of city centres as result of people, presentation, and recreation in urban night spaces

Kreitzman noted that England is changing toward a 24-hour society. An examination of the English strategy reveals that three main principles form the concept of its 24-hour cities:

- Providing a safe city centre for all types of people to enjoy without being afraid
- Development of the night economy of the city
- Improving the image of the city in order to attract domestic capital [7].

Figure 2: Approach for 24-hour cities in England based on three principles [8].

The integrated framework of the 24-hour city approach includes infrastructural, economic, cultural and social planning, which in turn follow three main coherent axes in order to promote city centre development:

- People
- Place
- Creativity [9].

As mentioned in the introduction, the usual meaning appended to the “24-hour city” concept in cities in Europe and America is not related to providing a full range of municipal services and activities for all people and social groups around the city, but instead is related to night activities mainly connected to entertainment and hobbies, encouraging consumption and shopping; and the main users of these programmes are thus young people who gather at certain places.

In terms of night life, Chatterton and Holland explains that the city centre has changed to becoming a place for consumption at night, for activities such as playing, dancing, and having fun. New places have developed rapidly to facilitate these activities, where people gather for drinking, dancing, and social relationships in “nightscapes“ that are now part of the common image of large cities.

Figure 3: Nightscapes as places for consumption, dancing, and enjoyment.
The modern market for youth consumption has been lucrative in those cities have been able to tap into it, particularly where this has been done as development programmes for otherwise declining regions of the city. Most cities now have unique, youth-oriented regions; this includes cities such as Las Vegas, which after some years of advertising itself as a “family oriented” city changed its orientation in 2003 and began to claim to be a place for “youth recreation and joy”. A current advertisement says daringly, “what happens in Vegas stays in Vegas”, and large discos have been constructed by the casinos to feed the night market [4].

Based on the current literature and many visual examples, the expression “24-hour city” refers to attractive city with marketing potential that contains several absorbing elements, painting the city as a lively and dynamic place with the goal of presenting recreational, cultural, shopping, and similar consummational activities throughout people’s free time, especially at night.

4. The intentions of night life and 24-hour cities

The advocates of the 24-hour approach believe that the optimal usage of time is one of the most important reasons for such cities. Kreitzman believed, for example, that while the usage of night times in 24-hour society does not create more time, it allows people to use time more efficiently.

A 24-hour society also creates the possibility of avoiding commutes at hot or busy times, allowing traffic jams to be reduced [1]. The advocates of night life also believe that another achievement of such schemes is the increased presence of people, promoting safety and economic efficiency.

The literature on the world’s cities suggests that night life is currently experiencing a form of “branding” to increase the attractiveness of night spaces. To explain this approach to urban spaces, Paul Chatterton and Robert Hollands used the expression “McDonaldization”, referring to the aggregation of multiple universal brands in an urban space [4].

With considering city culture, Montgomery emphasised the importance of soft substructures such as programmes, activities, and events as well as hard infrastructure such as the design of spaces and buildings. Carmona believed that encouraging people to use public spaces should be implemented by both offering required services and presenting these in safe and attractive spaces [1]. The presence of people, acting as the “eyes of the streets” and the lights of buildings near streets can play an important role in increasing feelings of security as the night gets dark [10].

As a general overview, the expected outcomes of 24-hour cities and night life are summarised in Table 1: (Table 1)
Table 1. The intentions, users, and behavioural and locational appearances of the 24-hour city and night life

| Expectations of night life and 24-hour city | Expected users | Expected place appearances | Expected behavioural appearances |
|------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| - Optimal use of time                    | - Presence of families | - Urban squares            | - Eating and drinking            |
| - Presence and vitality                  | - Presence of youth | - Parks and recreation centres | - Business                       |
| - Social coherence and development of social relations | - Presences of middle aged and elders | - Restaurants and coffees | - Celebration and joy            |
| - Security enhancement                   | - Presence of tourists | - Discos and casinos        | - Movement and traveling         |
| - Economic efficiency and creating job   | - Presence of women | - Stores                    | - Visiting cultural-historical places |
| - Space branding                         |                       | - Cinemas                  | - Carnivals and outdoor events   |
| - Making positive urban spaces           |                       | - Theatres                 | - Watching films, plays, or concerts |
| - Revitalizing urban centres             |                       |                           |                                  |
| - Tourism development                    |                       |                           |                                  |
| - Increasing sense of belonging          |                       |                           |                                  |
| - Reducing traffic congestion            |                       |                           |                                  |

5. Disadvantages of night life and the 24-hour city

Carmona does note some disadvantages for the 24-hour city and society despite enumerating the many advantages. The most negative point of the 24-hour city is that it decreases synchronicity and people’s relationships in time and place, further developing individuality in society and decreases social relations, which are formed by presence of people at communal social events [1].

Some people believe that 24-hour city policies have a masculine orientation and cause an increase in alcohol use; in particular, these spaces have nothing to offer people who responsibilities for taking care of their families, who have no time to stay awake during the night time and must go home after work to start cooking, taking care of the home, and watching their children. Many activities related to the night economy policy thus conflict with supporting family duties and the solidification of the family. This raises the question of whether social groups of all different ages could use these spaces [1].

Kreitzman cautioned that, in recent years, the residents of some cities, especially young people, have become insatiable consumers. Most people, especially in European cities, who have enough income to select any type of entertainment support companies and institutions which provide multiple types of recreation at night times, theoretically offering a place for everybody any time they want. However, he highlighted the gaps between social groups such as the young and older people, employees and the unemployed, and families and singles people [7], [11].

There are also problems such as conflicts between noisy applications (coffeehouses, restaurants, and music venues) and applications which are sensitive to such noises (i.e. residential areas in city centres) [11]. Other problems posed by night life include increases in antisocial behaviours such as littering and destruction of equipment, and sometimes violence, which is not only unpleasant and frightening but also causes a lot of costs and remedial work, along with increased incidence of crimes such as drug dealing and theft [3].

Environmental problems include light pollution, which harms many animal species by affecting the physiological cycles and the metabolisms of living organisms [12].

Table 2. Disadvantages, Intents, Users, Place and Behaviours

| Disadvantages of 24-hour cities and night life | Intent of 24 hour cities | Users | Place | Behaviours |
|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------|-------|------------|
| - Decreasing human relations                   | - Presence               | - Presence of single people | - Urban squares | - Individual isolation and individual behaviours |
| - Increasing individuality and                 | - Economic efficiency and creating jobs | - Presence of youth | - Parks and recreation centres | |

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6. Features and qualities of night according to Islamic teachings

In Islamic culture, the usual word for “night” is “Layl”. “Layl” refers to darkness and blackness and is the opposite of “Nahar”, which means “day” [13]. The time from sunset to sunrise is thus considered “Layl” (i.e. night) [14].

In Holy Quran, the word “Layl” and its derivatives are used 91 times. Many verses of the Quran thus cover the features, effects, and advantages of night.

6.1. The sign of God

In verse 12 of Surah al-Isra, God is reported as saying “And We have made the night and the day as two signs. Then We have obscured the sign of the night and made the sign of the day radiant that you may seek the bounty of your Lord, and that you may know the numbers of the years, and the account (of time). And everything We explained in detail” [15].

Two words of “Layl” and “Nahar”, referring to darkness and brightness, are seen as following each other at sunrise and sunset; these two things are signs of God and imply the unity of God in lordship [16].

Therefore, the change from day to night and vice versa, is one of signs of God. The most important point related to night here is that the appearance of night should be understood and that the day and the night are signs of the power and majesty of God’s wise creation that can be understood and their effects and blessings are observed. Based on this, one of the suitable practices for night is thinking deeply about the mature of the universe.

6.2. Peace and tranquillity

In verse 96 of Surah al-Anaam, it says “The Cleaver of the daybreak, and He has appointed the night for resting, and the sun and the moon for reckoning. Such is the measuring of the All Mighty, the All Knowing”. To emphasise this gift and its importance, verse 72 of Surah al-Qasas also says “Say, (O Muhammad): Have you considered, if Allah made day everlasting for you until the Day of Resurrection, who is a god besides Allah who could bring you night wherein you rest. Will you then not see?”[15].

Imam Ali (AS) reported in “Nahj al-Balaghah” that he ordered one of his friends “not to travel at the beginning of the night. Because God has created night for tranquillity not for traveling, take rest at the night” [17].
Imam Sajjad (AS) ordered his servants not to sacrifice any cattle during the night before sunrise and he said: “God has set the night for everything in peace” [18].

Therefore, the Islamic view is that the night is the time for peace and tranquillity rather than movement, excitement, and anxiety, and everything which disturbs the tranquillity of night and causes anxiety conflicts with nature of night and the purpose of its establishment.

6.3. Cover
Islam believes that God made the night dark to cover all things, to act like a curtain to cover everything to allow people to take a rest and calm down after working hard during the day.

“And He it is who has made for you the night as a garment, and the sleep as a repose, and He has made the day as the return to life” [19]. This dark curtain not only covers people but all creatures on earth, protecting them like a cloth. The night covers those who sleep like a coverlet and provides darkness for taking rest [20].

Thus, anything which disturbs the coverage and confidentiality of the night such as excess lighting and making noises is not condoned from an Islamic point of view.

7. Proper behaviours at night based on Islamic teachings

7.1. Staying with family

In verse 17 of Surah al-Inshiqaq refers to “the night and what it gathers (Ma Vasagh)” [15]. Here, “Vasagh” which means “gathering the scattered”, points out the return of various animals, birds, and even people to their homes at night, resulting in peace and tranquillity for living organisms [20].

The most fundamental unit in Islam is the family. Members of the family go out during the day to work and earn money (scattering). The night is the time for gathering the family members; some delicate interpretations thus infer the suitability of a family-orientation at night:

7.1.1. Home

In Islamic teachings the expressions “Bayt” and “Maskan” are used both for the home. In verse 80 of Surah al-Nahl, it says “And Allah has made for you in your homes (Boyout) an abode, …” [15]. The word “Boyout” is the plural form of “Bayt”, which means home or room. The origin of word “Bayt” is “Beytouteh” which is the practice of staying the night; as people use their homes for staying at night, the word “Bayt” was used for home [20].

The word “Maskan” more specifically means peace and tranquillity as a term for the place where people live at night. These special word usages in Islamic culture suggest that the best place for peace and tranquillity is at home. If the night is the time for peace and tranquillity, the home is their place.

7.1.2. Spouse

In verse 21 of Surah al-Room, it states “And among His signs is that He created for you mates from yourselves that you may find tranquillity in them, and He placed between you love and mercy. Indeed, in that are signs for a people who reflect” [15]. In this verse, the idea of humans taking partners is considered as one of God’s signs and being with a spouse is seen as a source of tranquillity.

Spouses are also referred to as the cover and the cloth for each other, as in verse 187 of Surah al-Baqarah: “…They are as a garment for you, and you are as a garment for them…” [15].

Regarding the narrations of the prophet Muhammad (s), one of the valid reasons to be awake in the night is to be with a spouse [21].

Putting the use of the words home and mates together, it can be inferred that the night is the best time for being at home and with a family. The night time is thus a family-oriented time inside the home.

1. Surah al-Furqan, verse 47.
7.2. Worship

The prophet was instructed in verse 79 of Surah al-Isra “And at night, wake up and pray with (Quran) it, an additional prayer for you. It may be that your Lord will raise you to an honoured position”; and: “Stand (in prayer) at night except a little. Half of it, or lessen from it a little. Or add to it, and recite the Quran with measured recitation” [15]. Ayatollah Makarem said, in the interpretation of verse 79 of Surah al-Asra, “The whims of daily life attract human attention and brings people’s minds into many places, so that the presence of heart is very difficult. But at the end of the night, during the dawn, quenching the whims of material life and relaxation of the soul and the human body as a result of sleeping, a special attention and vitality are found for humans, which is very unique” [20].

Many Imams have thus emphasised the act of worshiping and reciting the Quran at night, and it has been seen as a ways to achieve spiritual virtues. Muhammad (s) said: “Everybody who recites ten verses of the Quran every night is never considered ignorant” [18].

According to the Quran, the reason for worship at night is that “Indeed, the rising by night is more effective for controlling the self, and more suitable for words”, and it is an introduction to reaching the highest spiritual virtues such as “Maqam-e Mahmoud” or “honoured position”[15].

Due to this, Islamic teachings emphasise staying awake on special nights during the year such as Qadr Night (i.e. Night of the Decree), and many spiritual rewards are considered to accrue to such practices. The place for night worship could be at home, a mosque, a place of pilgrimage, or any similar venue.

7.3. Learning

One of the permitted reasons for staying awake at the night is for learning. The Prophet Muhammad (s) said: “Staying awake is correct only for three things: learning, worship and Quran reciting, and taking the bride to the home of groom” [22].

It is likely that this emphasis on learning is related to the special properties of the night with regard to establishing peace and tranquillity, which are necessary for clear thinking. One of the best times for learning is thus at night, because learning needs mental peace and concentration. Learning places could be at home or any places constructed for learning such as libraries or schools.

7.4. Moderate sleep and rest

In terms of the qualities of the night, peace and tranquillity are the main features, and sleeping is one of the things that brings more tranquillity; the best time for sleeping is thus the night. The Quran states that “And He it is who has made for you the night as a garment, and the sleep as a repose, and He has made the day as the return to life”[15].

The Prophet Muhammad (s) is also reported as saying that “speaking and talking after Bight Prayer is undesirable” [21]. According to the narration emphasis, staying awake for a long time is thus undesirable.

It should, however, be noticed that oversleeping or sleeping throughout the night is also undesirable from an Islamic perspective. Imam Sadiq (AS) said “God is opposed to excessive sleeping and inaction” and “More sleeping ruins the human’s world and other worlds”. In many narrations, sleeping all night and especially in the early morning is considered to increase bodily corruption and decrease human sustenance. Imam Sadiq (AS) said: “Sleeping at the early morning is really bad and causes the earnings to be prohibited and the body colour changes to yellow and the face gets ugly. Rightly God distributes the sustenance of servants between the early morning and sunrise, therefore do not sleep at this time”

[2] . Surah al-Mozzammel, verses 2 to 4
[3] . Surah al-Muzzammil, verses 6
[4] . Surah al-Isra, verses 79
[5] . Surah al-Furqan, verse 47
Awakening after midnight causes health in the body; as narrated in tradition: “Awaking at the night (after midnight) and prayer of dawn causes the health of the body” [23].

Examining the traditions, it can be understood that it is better for humans to be awake after midnight and to say prayers at that time. Therefore, while humans should take a rest and sleep at night, they should retain a level of moderation in terms of sleep time and avoid oversleeping.

Table 3. Desired qualities, users, place and behaviours and undesirable behaviours for night in Islamic thought

| Quality of night in Islamic view | Users | Desired behaviours | Desired Place | Undesirable behaviours |
|----------------------------------|-------|--------------------|---------------|------------------------|
| - Sign of God                    | - All people | - Thinking         | - Home (“Bayt”) | - Movement, excitement and anxiety |
| - Peace and tranquility          | - Family  | - Staying at home  | - Mosques     | - Traveling            |
| - Cover and confidentiality      |         | - Marital duties   | - Places of pilgrimage | - Disturbance to animals and plants |
| - Family-oriented                |         | - To be with family| - Schools     |                        |
|                                  |         | - Say prayers      | - Libraries   |                        |
|                                  |         | - Recite Quran     |              |                        |
|                                  |         | - Learning         |              |                        |
|                                  |         | - Sleep and rest   |              |                        |

8. Comparison between anticipated qualities of night life from an Islamic view and current literature

According to an examination of literature around 24-hour cities and nightlife and examples from its primary origins in comparison with Islamic instructions about the night and its features, the following determinations can be made:

In the western lifestyle, based on current realized examples of nightlife, there is no considerable difference between the qualities of night and day. The advocates of night life thus do not consider any unique features of night and try to propel night-time activities toward the activities that they prefer. The greatest emphasis is thus related to increases in economic efficiency and earning the most income for the city. The main point is that this type of economic efficiency is not productive, being based on more consumption, driven by the advertising industry creating false needs in users for the benefit of investors and traders. This point is supported by from the types of activities and products organised for night times. Most such activities are materially orientated and ignore the spiritual needs of users. In this type of life style, social and familial coherences are not considered and are not given much importance. Young people, singles, and men use these places more than families.

The Islamic view, in contrast, is that the day and the night have their own features related to their philosophical natures, and according to that, special behaviours are defined for each. By considering the emphasis placed by Shiite Imams on dividing daily time for performing daily activities and considering other traditions and the Quranic about the quality of time throughout the day, the necessary guidelines for choosing the right activities at any time can thus be determined.

Imam Ali (AS) said: “Every believing person divides his time to three parts: One part is for saying prayers and supplication. One is for working and earning money. One is for recreation and the using of permitted (lawful) pleasures. A wise person does not spend his time only on one of these three things: earning money or earning spirituality or doing permitted pleasures” [17]. Imam Kazim (AS) said: “Try to divide your daily time in four parts: One part for saying prayers and supplication. One part for earning...”
money. One part for sitting with your brothers and trusted friends who have sincerity and the other part for permitted pleasures” [24].

Some people believe that the pleasures which are permitted in Islamic traditions include social activities and recreations in urban places at the night without family, but this is not a correct view; examples of the permitted recreations are more specifically mentioned in the traditions. For example, Imam Baqir (AS) said: “The recreations of believing person are in three things: to be with a wife, telling jokes to friends and dawn prayers” [24], and these activities should be performed at their appropriate times.

As previously mentioned in the discussion of night features, suitable behaviours at night from an Islamic perspective are related to the spiritual nature of humans and thus oppose the anticipated behaviours at night in the current western view. In Islam, the day is the time for activity, earning money, and having interactions with others, whereas the night is the time for rest, meditation, saying prayers and interaction with family.

9. Pilgrimage cities: real 24-hour cities (case study: Kerbela)

In some Islamic countries, certain cities are known as pilgrimage cities. The development of these cities is related to holy shrines where Shi’ite Imams are believed to have been buried after martyrdom. As a result of the spiritual importance of these places according to many Muslims, large groups of Muslims were attracted to these places and created large and prosperous cities. Kerbela and Najaf in Iraq and Mashhad and Qom in Iran are the examples of such pilgrimage cities.

Islamic teachings emphasise the importance of pilgrimage to places and the great virtues of such visits. Imam Sadiq (AS) said: “One who visits us at the time of our death is like having visited us during our time” [25]. This has led to large groups of people visiting these holy places on a daily basis, with even larger crowds on particular festivals.

These religious places have adopted the concept of city space from the time of their formation; such places bring human emotions, kind feelings, mutual interests, and a sense of unity to humans at the social and individual scale. Therefore, in these places, the link between the humans and religious life is much clearer, and such spaces have always been a demonstration of the social, cultural and historical identity of cities [26].

Due to their function and the socio-religious significance, holy places in pilgrimage cities, their applications and supporting activities, are active 24 hours a day, and have been thus for many years. This 24-hour activity is spontaneous, inward, and natural, rather than imposed or artificial.

If the qualities of pilgrimage and behavioural and physical appearance are taken into account according to Islamic teachings, then the reason for the naturalness of the 24-hour activity of these places becomes clear.

Table 4 indicates the qualities of pilgrimage and its behavioural and physical appearances according to the Islamic view, which should be compared with qualities of night and its behavioural and physical appearances according to Islamic teachings.

**Table 4.** Conceptual, social, and behavioural qualities of pilgrimage in Islam view and its expected place, behaviours, and users

| Conceptual qualities of pilgrimage in Islam | Social qualities of pilgrimage in Islam | Behavioural qualities of pilgrimage in Islam | Expected users | Expected behaviours | Expected places |
|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|----------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| - Purity                                 | - Social                              | - Cleanliness                              | - All ages     | - Thinking          | - Holy Shrines  |
| - Peace                                  | - coherency and development of social relations | - Avoiding unnecessary activities | - Men and Women | - Individual Prayer and Pilgrimage | - Mosques And Schools |
| - Guidance                               | - Inclusive                           | - Thinking                                 | - Families     |                     | Connected to Holy Shrines |
| - Modesty                                |                                      |                                             |                |                     |                 |
| - Spirituality                           |                                      |                                             |                |                     |                 |

| Expected places | Expected users | Expected behaviours | Conceptual qualities of pilgrimage in Islam | Social qualities of pilgrimage in Islam | Behavioural qualities of pilgrimage in Islam |
|-----------------|----------------|---------------------|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| Holy Shrines    | All ages       | Thinking            | Purity                                   | Social                              | Cleanliness                              |
| Mosques And Schools | Men and Women   | Individual Prayer and Pilgrimage | Peace                                   | coherency and development of social relations | Avoiding unnecessary activities |
| Connected to Holy Shrines                  | Women          |                     | Guidance                                 | Inclusive                           | Thinking                                 |
|                                              | Families       |                     | Modesty                                  |                                     |                                            |
|                                              |                |                     | Spirituality                             |                                     |                                            |
The holy shrines create spaces suitable for spiritual and physical tranquillity, for thinking about the universe, God’s worship, and connecting to the spiritual world via the revered Imam. In these places, scholarship opportunities have also been available in the past due to links with schools and mosques. A combination of individual, familial, and social behaviours and practices is expected in the sacred shrines and around them, while maintaining personal privacy also helps to integrate social identity.

Considering the correspondence between these qualities and the qualities of night in the Islamic view supports the presence of more people in these holy places during the night. These shrines and their supporting spaces are thus suitable examples of 24-hour activities and night life, offering a practical and local example of night life in the Islamic style.

9.1. Holy city of Kerbela

One of the most important religious centres and pilgrimage cities in the world for Shia Muslims and the country of Iraq is the Holy City of Karbala. This city is located in south of Baghdad, on the southwest of the Euphrates River, in an alluvial region. The land of Kerbela is the site of the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (AS) and his followers on Ashura in the year 61 AH (680 CE). It is also the burial place of those martyrs.

Due to the value which a pilgrimage to this martyred Imam for those of Shiite beliefs, and the great emphasis placed on this pilgrimage by the Imams (AS), this city has been the focus of Shiite pilgrimage since just after Imam Hussein’s martyrdom. Nowadays, many more Muslims act as pilgrims to Imam Hussein (AS) and Hazrat AbulFazl (AS); the population of pilgrims is estimated at tens of millions of people every year.

Imam Sadiq (AS) said: “Anyone who God wants his welfare, put the love of Imam Hussein (AS) and his pilgrimage in his heart, and anyone God wants his badness, put the hate of Imam Hussein (AS) and his pilgrimage in his heart” [27] and “No one is on the Day of Resurrection without wishing that he would have visited Imam Hussein (AS), when he sees what they do with pilgrims of Imam Hussein (AS) and how much value they have near the Lord” [27]. Imam Reza (AS) said: “Everyone who visits Imam Hussein (AS) near the Euphrates River is like someone who has visited God at the throne [28].

In Shia narratives, the pilgrimage to Imam Hussein (AS) is considered to be desirable throughout the year and whenever a person has the ability to do so. Imam Sadiq (AS) said “It is desirable that the rich man twice a year and the poor man once a year visit Imam Hussein (AS)” [29]. Imam Kazim (AS) said “Do not persecute Imam Hussein (AS) (Do not quit his pilgrimage). A wealthy and capable man will go
to his pilgrimage every four months and the poor man has no obligation, except in the amount of his ability, and Allah has not commanded all that is beyond the power of the servants” [29].

To achieve greater excellence, Imam Hussein’s pilgrimage can be done at certain special times and therefore people often prefer to be pilgrims at those times. Table 5 indicates the most important times for visiting Imam Hussein (AS).

Table 5. Special times of Imam Hossein pilgrimage and religious rituals

| Special pilgrimage times | Special religious rituals |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| - Thursday night and Friday | - All of the days of Moharram and Safar |
| - The first night and the first day of Rajab month | - The birth day of Imam Hossein, Imam Saj’ad and his holiness Abolfazl |
| - The night and the day of the middle of the Rajab month | - The birth dates of the Imams |
| - The night of the middle of Sha’ban month | - The martyrdom dates of the Imams |
| - The first night of Ramadan | - The fifteenth night of Ramadan |
| - The first night of Ramadan | - The Grand nights in Ramadan |
| - The night and the day of Feat of fast-breaking | - The night of Eid al-Adha |
| - The night and the day of Arafah | - The night and the day of Ashura |
| - The night of Eid al-Adha | - The day of Arbaeen (Twentieth of Safar month) |
| - The night and the day of Ashura | - All of the days of Moharram and Safar |
| - The night of Arbaeen (Twentieth of Safar month) | - The birth day of Imam Hossein, Imam Saj’ad and his holiness Abolfazl |

Interestingly, most of important times for pilgrimage include the night and many rituals are performed at night. For this reason, the shrine of Imam Hussein (AS) and its surrounding areas and their supporting activities have a 24-hour function, delivering services to pilgrims all day and night. If the place requirements of actions are considered, including the need for tranquility, the possibility of thinking and meditation, socialisation, and inclusivity, and these features are compared with the qualities of night in the Islamic view, the harmony of these behaviours with night time can be recognised. The combination of these acts and rituals with the night and the holy shrine location offers maximum material and spiritual productivity to the people. There is a kind of inherent coordination between the time frame, the spatial container, and the behavioural content, which occurs without applying any artificial behaviours or activities to establish night life in a special part of the city. This happens internally and self-reliantly in Kerbela, especially around the shrine. This generates a historical and temporal continuity, as well as being part of the city’s urban behavioural identity, having derived from intrinsic choices by residents and visitors.

The field investigations performed for this case study confirmed these activities. Table 6 presents the summary of important points obtained from field investigations about the night life in Kerbela.

Table 6. Nightlife in holy city of Kerbela

| Behavioural appearances | How needs are met | Places for activities and behaviours | Users | Qualities resulting from behaviours and activities | Problems as a result of behaviours and activities | Preferr ed times for prayer and pilgrimage through out the day | Managing behaviours and activities | Physical and functional defects |
|-------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------------|------|------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|

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- Pilgrimage - Ritual activities - Friendly discussions - Souvenir sales - Saying prayers - Religious knowledge meetings - Eating and drinking - Taking rest - Focus on spiritual needs, but material needs are also addressed.

|  |  |
|---|---|
| Imam Hussein (AS) shrine | Hazrat-e Abolfazl (AS) shrine |
| The space between two shrines | The markets around the shrines |
| Restaurants and coffeeshops around the shrines | The streets approaching the shrines |

- All ages - Men and Women - Families - Tourists

- Increase in social coherence - Economic growth - Safety - Spirituality - Environmental vitality - Increase in sense of belonging - Increase in knowledge

- Pollution of passages and city spaces due to additional garbage - Audio disturbance for residents near the shrine - Traffic interference

- Five prayer times - The time after sunset until sunrise

- Most activities and behaviours occur spontaneously and publicly but are monitored by the management of the shrine. - The ceremonies and programs are independently developed by the management of Imam Hussein (AS) shrine and Hazrat-e Abbas (AS) shrine

- Poor public transportation - Weakness of medical and emergency facilities - Shortage of restaurants - Shortage of rest space - Poor vegetation and lack of climatic comfort - Lack of space for worship and pilgrimage, especially during busy times.

**Figure 7:** Samples of night activities and behaviours in Kerbala

**10. Conclusion**

According to studies on the concept of night life and 24-hour cities in the literature to date, it can be understood that what has been achieved matches the desired goals only in terms of economic profitability, by promoting consumerism, and, in many aspects, negative results have been observed. The realisation of night life and the 24-hour city based on the criteria and desires seen in western cities cannot be compatible with the basics and lifestyle of Islam, or made suitable for Islamic cities. In the western concept, the duration of activities is considered without considering the specific needs and special features of the night. Moreover, the western goals and ends are merely material and every action is measured by material purpose and answering material needs, which are often false needs generated by advertising. The bias of such spaces is towards the exploitation of specific social and gender groups.
and several social groups are excluded. In addition, the normal cycle of work, activity, and rest, which is in harmony with the physiology of the human body and its nature, is ignored.

In the Islamic view, special activities are defined for each time period compatible with the purpose of night and day. The main goal is to provide spiritual requirements, though material instruments are used for this. In this Islamic view, the day is the time for working and earning money, as is compatible with the nature of the earth, and the night is the time for tranquillity, meditation, praying and seeking harmony with the universe.

This definition and explanation make it clear that the western pattern of night life cannot apply to Muslim cities. However, for the particular behaviours and needs that are considered desirable in Islamic teachings and derived from the Islamic life style for the realisation of Islamic goals, a sample of night life could be organised in certain places with appropriate external and public appearances.

To redefine night life for Islamic society, in a Muslim city, the night is time of peace, preservation, meditation, and thinking about divine verses and beneficial sciences. The main social group within the night is the family and home is the most compatible space for that; however, for behaviours and practices such as learning and worship, their compatible places can be considered places that may be active at night.

With this in mind, it is not necessary to create artificial spaces for unnecessary night activity in all cities; where cities have the capacity to develop night life activities in harmony with Islamic desires, it is not necessary to open the whole city, though the identification and organisation of appropriate focal points is beneficial.

The most prominent examples of cities that highlight the possibility of organising Islamic night life are pilgrimage cities such as Kerbela, Najaf, Kazemain, Samara, Mashhad, and Qom, and these are organised not to take over the whole city but in the central urban fabric around the Shrines.

In these places, in order to increase the productivity of the audience, it is necessary to organise these spaces to encourage behaviours in harmony with the concept of pilgrimage and to provide the basis for the maximum presence of various groups with family orientation. This may include various aspects such as physical safety, transportation, land use, landscaping, environmental concerns, and security aspects.

More studies are warranted to encourage the optimised planning of such aspects with respect to holy shrines, especially at night.

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