



## **Studying Status of Leisure Times and Tourism in Quran and Hadiths with emphasis on Spirituality**

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### **Abstract**

Human beings are constantly active to live their everyday life. They spend long hours of their life on working and activity in closed and confined environments. That along with urbanization, mental and psychological traumas and physical harms has led some to think about leisure time and its significance in their life. Meantime, various schools of thought and ideologies attach great significance to leisure time. Islam also recognizes the necessity of tourism, as a prescribed form of leisure time, at individual and social life. In this regard, tourism with a spiritual approach is followed by an intellectual upgrade and spiritual evolution of humans, leading to intellectual and spiritual enrichment. This study has been conducted to examine the status of leisure time and tourism in the holy Quran and hadiths. This descriptive-analytical research, which is based on Quranic verses and hadiths frequently narrated in authenticated books, aims to examine various aspects of leisure time and tourism in the Quran and hadiths. The findings of this research show that Islam views leisure time as a moral issue. Relying on the Quranic verses and hadiths, tourism may be divided into *Halal* (permissible), *Makrouh* (non- recommended) and *Haram* (strictly forbidden). Quranically tourism with a spiritual approach brings about serenity, durability and blessings while being faith-based and beyond gender division.

**Keywords:** leisure time, tourism, the Quran, narratives, spirituality

## ۱. Introduction

The issue of leisure time as a special need of human community has come further to the limelight; that is why modern civilization is often referred to as the civilization of leisure (Fokouhi & Ansarabadi-Mahabadi, 2003, p.62). Leisure time, as a new concept born out of separating workplace from home, technological advances and social job divisions, has created the chance, albeit short-lived, for human beings to free themselves from the obligations and restrictions of modern social order (Kivisto, 2001: 80). Various cultures and schools of thought attach great significance to spending leisure time, proposing planning and arrangement options (Movazaf Rostami, 2010, p. 41). In this regard, Islam has highlighted the issue of leisure time. Islam takes into consideration human beings' orientation, obligating them to be sensitive to management of their leisure time and know how their free time is spent. Islam recognizes entertainment as a bio-social need of human beings. Quranic verses and Islamic narratives bear proof to Islam's insistence on planning on how to spend leisure time so that human life would not be wasted away. That is why Shia imams and Muslim jurisconsults have recommended that free time opportunities be appreciated. Meanwhile, tourism – as a category of leisure time – is attached great significance in Islam.

Religious tourist attractions, pilgrimage and holy sites attract a large number of tourists every year. It has to be noted that the outcome of most policies and planning on leisure time and tourism in Muslim nations results from Islamic view. On the other hand, when a trip is made to a destination with a spiritual objective it would be considered as tourism with spiritual approach. "Spiritual tendencies conduct human beings toward understanding, excellence, goodness, harmony and peace" (Imani Khoshkhoo & Nadalipour, 2017, p. 45). Islam has laid emphasis on all aspects of tourism, particularly spiritual aspects. There are also Quranic verses encouraging people to embrace tourism (Pour-Hassan, 2015, p. 5).

Generally speaking, as Norman (2012) states, there are numerous examples in the literature in which the act of travel itself becomes a spiritual experience (Imani Khoshkhoo & Nadalipour, 2017). Thus, this research aims to study the concepts of leisure time and tourism to explain their status in the Quran and Islamic narratives as two major Islamic references. In this regard, research questions are as follows:

۱. How has leisure time been addressed in the Quran and hadiths?
۲. How has tourism been addressed in the Quran and hadiths?

## **2. Methodology**

This descriptive-analytical research refers to Quranic verses, hadiths and other Islamic narratives taken from authenticated books in order to develop a systematic method to research questions and examine various aspects of leisure time and tourism.

## **3. Leisure time**

Leisure time is defined as the time when you are not working and you can relax and do things that you enjoy (Collins dictionary). Leisure time activities refer to activities taking place during time not used for gainful employment. The International Sociological Association (ISA) defines leisure time as a group of individual voluntary occupations for relaxation, entertainment, development of information or non-profit education, and social and voluntary participation after disengagement from professional, family and social obligations (Alavizadeh, 2007, p. 69).

Leisure time activities have been divided from various aspects. For instance, Fletcher et al. (2003) classify leisure time activities under structured and unstructured categories. Generally speaking, leisure time has various functions, the most important of which are as: relaxation and distressing, fixing physical and psychological harms caused by occupational emotions, outing and freedom from monotony, setting aside everyday affairs temporarily, preparing the ground for growing character as well as physical and mental talents (Ziari et al., 2009, p. 320). After the industrialization of societies and expansion of urbanization, the issue of leisure time was highlighted due to human beings' involvement in industrial life. The focus on leisure time resulted from the mental and psychological challenges faced by urban dwellers and not by villagers. Therefore, leisure time covers moments of individual life, where there is widespread freedom of action. Therefore, everyone is happy with leisure time which may be interpreted as the most interesting and the most pleasant moments of life (Imani, 2012, p. 43). For some people, leisure time may mean creativity and reflection, while for some others it may present an opportunity for physical and mental refreshment or just an opportunity for entertainment and recreation. Leisure time is not limited to a specific social class or age group. Every single member of a society needs leisure time which is essentially a significant element in everyone's

life (Ajdarizadeh et al., 2000, p. 47). Leisure time provides a good chance for a sense of satisfaction and pleasure, which is instrumental in human's sense of independence and self-blossoming. In case leisure time activities have instrumental orientation, many physical and mental challenges will be overcome and individual and social creativities will come to fruition. In this way, the positive outcome of leisure time is human growth and excellence (Babae, 2009, p. 65).

Despite all advantages and blessings, leisure time may pose one of the most serious threats to moral and psychological health in a society if it is not managed correctly. One of the most causes of deviations, delinquencies and social traumas is lack of individual and social planning in leisure time (Sarookhani, 1992, p. 39). Leisure time activities are of such significance that they are referred to as the mirror of culture in a society. In fact, the way people in a society spend their free would largely symbolize the cultural features of that society.

#### 4. Leisure Time in Verses and Hadiths

Here, we must refer to Quranic verses and Islamic hadiths in order to shed light on the necessity and status of leisure time in Islamic teachings. Keeping in mind that leisure time and its management are closely linked with the level of material facilities and are relative in terms of time and space, Islamic teachings and precepts could not outline all possible states of leisure time and its management because Islamic precepts and the instructions given by the Prophet Muhammad and Shia imams determine universal principles, fundamental indexes and the extent of action. Except for special cases, they do not enter into details.

Islamic teachings require human beings to not lose any chance for acquiring knowledge and to start a new job after finishing one. The execution of this instruction requires human beings to have plans in their life and always move towards the main target (Mafakheri, 2012, p. 94). Islamic teachings want humans to not lose any chance for acquiring knowledge and start new jobs one after another. To that effect, human beings are required to have plans for their life and always move towards a specific goal (Mafakheri, 2012, p. 94). So when you have finished [your duties], then stand up [for worship]. And to your Lord direct [your] longing. (The Quran, 94, pp. 7-8)<sup>1</sup>.

These Quranic verses remind Muslims of the fact that hardships end and facility will follow. Therefore, human beings are required to remain

<sup>1</sup> فَإِذَا فَرَغْتَ فَانصَبْ وَإِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ فَارْجِعْ

studious and lose no chance for progress and excellence. That is why everyone has to finish one duty and start a new one afterwards in order to not waste time.

By managing free time for people, it would be possible to lead their beliefs, values, conducts, desires and wills towards the desired objective. In light of Islamic teachings about the significance of time and dismissal of debauchery and libertinism, it may be concluded that Islam views leisure time as an educative and moral issue and it does by no means interpret it as the waste of time (Sanaei, 2013, pp. 107-108). Islam considers inclination for recreation as a natural desire, interpreting it as *Mubah* (purely authorized). The Prophet Muhammad told his disciples to “play and entertain yourselves because I don’t like to see any sign of violence in your religion”<sup>٢</sup>. (Mohammadi Rayshahri, 2002, p.180). Imam Ali is also quoted as saying: “True believers divide their time into three parts: hours of prayers to God; hours of efforts to earn a living; hours of spending time on permissible pleasure and joy”<sup>٣</sup> (Nahj al-Balagha, Chosen Words, No. 382). Therefore, in Islamic teachings, leisure time is of high value and significance as part of human life and it should not be spent entirely on recreation; rather, it must be spent based on planning (Mafakheri, 2012, p. 102). In the hadiths and narratives attributed to the Prophet Muhammad and Shia Imams, there has been significant focus on time. The hadiths reiterate that every human being must serve other creations of God and work for the development of this world and happiness in the afterworld. But that requires health, joy, strength and liberation from physical and mental tensions (Ibid: 108). In his interpretation of “And stop them; indeed, they are to be questioned” (The Quran, 37, p. 24), the Prophet Muhammad has said: “On Judgment Day, nobody can take any further step before answering these four questions: how his youth has been spent; how his life has passed; how he has gathered wealth and how he has used it; how faithful he has been to the House of the Prophet.”<sup>٤</sup> (Sadouq, 1403 AH, vol. 1, p. 218).

Among other actions recommended for leisure time is reflection, particularly about the afterworld, and holding oneself accountable. Imam Ali has said: “It would be excellent should someone during certain hours

<sup>١</sup> Mizan al- Hikmah, vol. 4

<sup>٢</sup> اللَّهُوَ وَالْعَبَا فَاِنِّي اَكْرَهُ اَنْ يُرَى فِي دِينِكُمْ غِلْطَةٌ  
<sup>٣</sup> لِلْمُؤْمِنِ ثَلَاثُ سَاعَاتٍ: فَسَاعَةٌ يُنَاجِي فِيهَا رَبَّهُ، وَسَاعَةٌ يَرُومُ مَعَاشَهُ، وَسَاعَةٌ يُخْلِي بَيْنَ نَفْسِهِ وَبَيْنَ لَدُنِّيَا فِيمَا يَجَلُ وَ  
<sup>٤</sup> اِنَّهُ لَا يُجَاوِزُ قَدَمًا عِنْدَ حَتِّيْ يُسْأَلَ عَنْ اَرْبَعٍ عَنْ شَبَابِهِ فِيْمَا اَبْلَاهُ وَ عَنْ عُمْرِهِ فِيْمَا اَفْنَاهُ وَ عَنْ مَالِهِ مِنْ اَيْنَ جَمَعَهُ وَ فِيْمَا اَنْفَقَهُ وَ عَنْ حُبِّنَا اَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ

close his eyes to everyday life concerns and hold himself accountable and reflect on what he has achieved and what he has lost during day and night.”<sup>1</sup> (Tamimi Amadi, 1987, p. 684). In describing the characteristics of a true believer, Imam Ali said such believers do not lose time and always remain busy (Nahj al-Balagha, Chosen Words, No. 333, p. 421). The Prophet Muhammad had told Abuzar Ghaffari: “Oh Abuzar! Be greedier in spending your time rather than your dirhams and dinars”<sup>2</sup> (Makarem al-Akhlaq: 460). Imam Ali has also said: “Chances go by like clouds. Therefore, if any chance presents itself don’t hesitate to use it for good work; otherwise, you will regret it.”<sup>3</sup> (Tamimi Amadi, 1987, p. 473). Losing time is sorrowful.<sup>4</sup> (Nahj al-Balagha, Chosen Words: No. 118). Seize on chances; otherwise, you will never recover them if they are lost (Abolhassan, 1997)<sup>5</sup>. Imam Hassan has said: “The opportunities are lost quickly, but return slowly”<sup>6</sup> (Halvani, 1987, p.72).

Imam Sadiq said: “I would like to see the youth to be in one of these two states: either scholar and savant or learner. I swear by He who named Mohammad as His messenger that anything other than these two would be time loss. Anyone who wastes his life is a sinner”<sup>7</sup> (Majlesi, 1982, p. 170). Imam Sajjad said: “Oh God! If You have considered any leisure time for us please make it clean so that no sin will engage us and we will not get tired so that the angels will return to us with empty records of sins and filled records of goodness”<sup>8</sup> (Taghaddosinia, 2002). Imam Musa Kazem said: “Almighty God hates he who sleeps a lot and is jobless”<sup>9</sup> (Hor Ameli, 1988, p. 58).

## 5. Leisure Time Significance

<sup>1</sup> ما أحق الانسان أن تكون له ساعه لا يشغله عنها شاغل، يحاسب فيها نفسه، فينظر فيما اكتسب لها و عليها في ليلها و نهاره  
<sup>2</sup> يَا أَبَا ذَرٍّ كُنْ عَلَى غُمْرِكَ أَشْحَ مِنْكَ عَلَى دِرْهِمِكَ وَ دِينَارِكَ  
<sup>3</sup> إِنَّ الْفُرْصَةَ تَمُرُ مَرَّ السَّحَابِ فَانْتَهَرُوا هَهَا إِذَا امْتَكَنْتَ فِي أَبْوَابِ الْخَيْرِ وَ إِلَّا عَادَتْ نَدْمًا؛  
<sup>4</sup> إِضَاعَةُ الْفُرْصَةِ غُصَّةٌ  
<sup>5</sup> غَافِصِ الْفُرْصَةِ عِنْدَ امْتِكَانِهَا فَإِنَّكَ غَيْرُ مُرْكَبِهَا عِنْدَ فَوْتِهَا؛

<sup>6</sup> Oyoum al-Hikam val Mavaez: 350

<sup>7</sup> الْفُرْصَةُ سَرِيعَةُ الْفَوْتِ، بَطِيئَةُ الْعُودِ  
<sup>8</sup> لَسْتُ أَحِبُّ أَنْ أَرَى النَّسَابَ مِنْكُمْ إِلَّا غَادِيَا فِي خَالَتَيْنِ : إِمَّا عَالِمًا أَوْ مُتَعَلِّمًا ، فَإِنْ لَمْ يَفْعَلْ فَرَطًا ، فَإِنْ فَرَطَ ضَيِّعٌ ، وَ إِنْ ضَيِّعَ أَيْمٌ ، وَ إِنْ أَيْمَ سَكَنَ النَّارَ ، وَ  
الَّذِي بَعَثَ مُحَمَّدًا (صلى الله عليه و آله ) بِالْحَقِّ

<sup>9</sup> Sahifa Sajjadiah, Prayers 11: 62

<sup>10</sup> إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى لَيُبْغِضُ الْعَبْدَ النَّوَامَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَيُبْغِضُ الْعَبْدَ الْفَارِغَ

It is important for everyone in society to learn how to spend his leisure time. This issue takes up added significance for some groups like children and young adults. Ignorance of this issue may often become precarious and problematic. Meantime, too much leisure time is harmful to life. Therefore, it is necessary to make proper planning. The Infallible have said that oversleeping and more-than-normal leisure time would draw God's wrath. There must be a specific time space for leisure time activities.

Imam Musa Kazem has recommended that Muslims regulate and divide their leisure time as follows<sup>1</sup>: (Hor Ameli, 2012: 11/377)

١. Allocating time to communications with and prayers to God
٢. Allocating time to work and endeavor
٣. Allocating time to communicating with others and good-hearted people who tell us about our faults without any ill intention
٤. Allocating time to understanding permissive pleasures and healthy recreations which we interpret as leisure time (Pour-Esmaeil, 2006: 184)

There are three methods for spending leisure time, each resulting in a specific result:

١. Spending leisure time based on revelatory teachings which represent a step towards human perfection;
٢. Spending leisure time based on resort to counter-value actions which may cause abnormality in society and offend us.
٣. Spending leisure time on neutrality which would result in time loss (Ibid: 185).

Therefore, based on what was said, spending leisure time has both individual and social consequences. In fact, this sector is as significant as other sectors like education and employment and should not be neglected.

From Islamic perspectives, leisure time does not mean irresponsibility and ignoring legal and moral constraints and restrictions. Human beings are responsible as long as they are endowed with wisdom, power of choice and awareness. There is always something to do in every time and at every space. Therefore, leisure time could not be interpreted

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<sup>1</sup> اجْتَهِدُوا فِي أَنْ يَكُونَ زَمَانُكُمْ أَرْبَعَ سَاعَاتٍ : سَاعَةٌ لِمَنَاجَاةِ اللَّهِ؛ وَ سَاعَةٌ لِأَمْرِ الْمَعَاشِ؛ وَ سَاعَةٌ لِمُعَاشَرَةِ الْإِخْوَانِ وَ النَّقَاتِ الَّذِينَ يُعَزِّفُونَكُمْ غُيُوبَكُمْ وَ يُخَلِّصُونَ لَكُمْ فِي الْبَاطِنِ؛ وَ سَاعَةٌ تَخْلُونَ فِيهَا لِلذَّاتِكُمْ فِي غَيْرِ مُحَرَّمٍ وَ بِهَذِهِ السَّاعَةِ تَقْدِرُونَ عَلَى الثَّلَاثِ سَاعَاتٍ «...».

as free time.” (Sharifi et al., 2013, p. 93). Another important issue is that every society is home to various ethnic groups with different cultures. The cultural differences will give rise to diversity in leisure time spending. Relying on the Quran and hadiths we realize that most humans do not use their leisure time in a perfect and helpful manner. A special approach has been presented for correct use of leisure time, which will result in a pure life and human perfection and growth, which will finally put him on the path towards the ultimate goal of creation.

The most outstanding feature of leisure time is freeing oneself from everyday activity. It provides an opportunity for humans to do whatever they would like but they cannot due to professional preoccupations. Islam attaches great significance to time and life, advising against waste of time. Therefore, Muslims are responsible vis-à-vis time spent in their Islamic lifestyle and they have to remain accountable on Judgment Day. Relying on Quranic verses and hadiths from Shia imams, we see that Islam has presented special plans for spending leisure time. Some of them are prayers, self-accountability, recreation, sporting, traveling and tourism, and visiting relatives.

In Islamic culture, the key factor in spending leisure time is guarantee for one's physical and mental health. Therefore, for Islam, leisure time provides a good chance for someone to choose the path of human happiness and perfection. This issue is of great significance for both persons and society. Humans know quite well that “And that to your Lord is the finality”<sup>1</sup> (The Quran, 5, p.42). Therefore, it would be so good for humans to appreciate the opportunities available to them and do their best at every time. In an Islamic lifestyle, leisure time must follow a divine path. Therefore, humans cannot do just any action under the title of leisure time. Rather, they should take into consideration divine satisfaction as the main factor. Another outstanding feature of spending leisure time is that leisure time is active and does by no means imply laziness and time loss. So when you have finished [your duties], then stand up [for worship]. And to your Lord direct [your] longing<sup>2</sup> (The Quran, ٩٤, pp. ٧-٨).

Leisure time is not limited to recreation; rather there are many ways for spending leisure time. Recreation is one of them. Another principle to be respected with regard to free time is the issue of priority. In spending leisure time, one is faced with a variety of options, but he can choose the most important one through scoring and prioritization. Imam Ali said:

<sup>1</sup> وَأَنَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ الْمُنْتَهَىٰ  
<sup>2</sup> فَإِذَا فَرَغْتَ فَانصَبْ وَإِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ فَارْغَبْ



“Anyone focusing on important jobs will miss out on more important ones.” (Tamimi Amadi, 1987, p. 629). As it was noted, Islam dismisses unplanned and unprincipled leisure time. Therefore, another principle of leisure time in Islamic lifestyle would be to keep away from unhelpful and fruitless activities. And they who turn away from ill speech (The Quran, 23:3).

In light of Quranic verses and hadiths and based on recommendations from scholars about spending leisure time, it is concluded that every human being would need to spend some time on leisure activities in order to get free from job. This issue is critical to refreshment and removing monotony in the life. However, one important factor is that leisure time is linked with one’s worldview and everyone would use his leisure time based on his own religious and moral beliefs. Nonetheless, leisure time may be construed as one of the most significant principles of physical and psychological health when management of available facilities and the level of people’s life would as important as spending leisure time. That explains why Quranic verses and hadiths have not detailed all instances of leisure time and methods of spending leisure time. What Islam insists on is not to remain idle when one job is over. Among major affairs which everyone has to respond on Judgment Day pertains to young years of life. Shia Imams emphasized planning for the entire life as a key indicator of faith. Therefore leisure time does not mean time of irresponsibility; rather it implies time representing an opportunity for cultural, artistic, economic, social and moral development.

Islamic references have introduced some categories of leisure time activities like ecotourism, physical exercise, tourism (travel), visiting close relatives, spending time with spouse, agriculture and tree plantation (See Table 1).

**Table 1. Islam’s Recommendations for Leisure Time Activities**

Leisure Time Spending	Specifications
Ecotourism	Communications with nature, recalling afterworld, serenity, spirituality
Physical activities and movement	Physical and mental health, fighting laziness and lack of joy
Tourism	Spending leisure time, pilgrimage and spiritual experience, economic activity, recreation, experience, learning

<sup>1</sup> وَ الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنِ اللَّغْوِ مُعْرِضُونَ

Visiting close relatives	Acquisition of communications skills, benefiting from spiritual benedictions, satisfaction with life and hope, fostering bases of friendship and peace
Spending time with family	Serenity, fostering family foundations
Agriculture and gardening	Economic activity, serenity and joy, protecting the environment

Source: Research findings (2019)

## 7. Spirituality in Tourism

Spirituality is in general a sense of connection to something bigger than us, and it typically involves a search for meaning in life. According to experts, spiritual teachings may be extracted from the following four references:

- Teachings of global religions and faiths
- Words of mystics (including mystics who followed a specific religion or faith and mystics who followed no religion or faith)
- Existentialist teachings specifically because some existentialist figures have described many elements of spiritual life and related positive experience of spiritual life.
- Works of humanists like Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers, Karen Horney, Erich Fromm, Jung, and others referred to as the Third Movement of Psychology (Malekian, 2002)

In this regard, the relationship between religions and tourism implies a conceptual, political and social system setting the stage for unity and convergence between co- religionists within the framework of a travel plan. Such unit and convergence bears philosophical and conceptual grounds for the emergence of spirituality and spiritual perception of travel (Shafia & Sabaghpour Azarian, 2016). Spirituality in tourism has various aspects, as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2. Division of Tourism in Verses and Hadiths**

Category	Description
Halal (permissible)	Tourism strongly recommended by God and producing benefits for Muslims
Makrouh (non-recommended)	Tourism in which one may fail to perform his religious obligations.
Haram (strictly forbidden)	Tourism conducted for sinning or harming one's faith and religion.

Source: Research Findings, 2019

Based on Quranic verses and hadiths, the effects of tourism may be summarized as in Table 3.

**Table 3. Effects of Tourism in Quran and Hadiths**

Effects	Descriptions
Individual	Learning, experience, knowledge, physical health, resolving economic problems
Social	Purposeful life, social reforms
Mental/Psychological	Spiritual effects, serenity and joy

Source: Research Findings (2019)

## 9. Conclusion

Leisure time covers activities human beings embrace voluntarily for relaxation, recreation or for development of information or education, social and voluntary participation after disengagement from professional, family and social requirements. Islamic teachings require humans to not lose any chance for acquiring knowledge and not hesitate to start a new job after finishing one. To that end, humans are required to have plans and move towards a specific objective. Islam views leisure time as educative and moral. Islam does not see leisure time as waste of time and opportunities in life. Meantime, based on Quranic verses and religious teachings, inclination for recreation is a natural desire of human beings and thus purely authorized. Islam has suggested plans for filling the leisure time, including but not limited to prayers, self-accountability, recreation, sporting, traveling, tourism and visiting close relatives.

Tourism is one of the prescribed forms of spending leisure time. It incorporates the activities of people traveling to places outside their residence and workplace for recreation, relaxation and other purposes, but do not stay there for more than one year. The Quran believes that tourism and traveling on the globe would give a better understanding of the realities of being while traveling for sight-seeing and touring ancient monuments would teach lessons and lead to more reflection on fate. Based on Quranic verses and hadiths, tourism may be divided into *halal*, *makrouh* and *haram*, each having its own specifications. The same

sources enumerate the individual effects of tourism as learning and experience, the socialeffects as social reforms, and mental and physical effects as joy and spirituality. Quranically tourism emphasizing spirituality is a category of tourism which is eternal and faith-based in addition to bringing about tranquillity and excellence and standing beyond gender and social classes.

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