

## Reference List

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centralized.

Another example of this type of rituals is Taziat in Iran. The effect of this type of ceremony on the adjacent areas is medium within the defined environment.

### **Widespread**

It takes place in a wide area of the city and communication networks and streets become its platform. In Mewar festival, the organizers and the audience are placed together and usually the whole assembly is moving in the city. This is the decentralized ceremony which has a transient and limited impact on a wide range of adjacent areas. Besides Mewar festival in Udaipur in India, “La Tomatina”, a traditional festival (Toma-

to Festival) in Spain and “Ashura and Tasua” are examples of this type.

### **Linear**

Due to space constraints of urban area, this type of ceremony can be considered similar to central morphology. The difference is that the focus and attention of the events is in a line.

Usually it is due to the proximity to a linear urban element, such as streets, bank of a river, etc. The difference with the widespread morphology is the limited space that is involved. The holy baptism in Varanasi in India is an example.

Based on the case studies, we can categorize physical connections and activities in the cities in the following chart:

## **Conclusion**

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Qawwali ritual, Mewar festival and holy baptism are examined in three cities of Delhi, Udaipur and Varanasi as examples of three types of ceremony in urban area: central, widespread and linear.

The study outlines that the rituals in the mentioned cities, connect and affect the physical dimensions and the urban activities and form the cities.

It seems that the initial design of the studied cities has been in concordance and harmony with the ritual ceremonies.

Qawwali ceremony takes place in harmony with the limited space among the existing buildings. In Udaipur, the design of the city has followed the needs of Mewar festival by required changes. This includes permanent change, such as transforming the edge of Pichola Lake to the stairs and construction of Ghat and also some temporary changes during the festival. The same story has happened in Varanasi which creates the

Ghat, the palaces and temples to prepare better physical and visual access to the ritual ceremony along the river. All these cases show the harmony between the urban space and the ritual ceremony. The deep relation between the city and the ceremony is an important part of the identity of these cities. Although during the time affected by overpopulation, the lack of space has negative consequences on visual, vocal and physical connection and public health in these ceremonies.

These issues have been temporally resolved, for example by attendance of guards and agents or application of the technologies. However, these cannot be sustainable solutions. Therefore it is possible that in the long term these ritual ceremonies may be at risk of extinction; moreover, the urban landscape may be affected extensively. These changes would affect popularity of these ceremonies because of lower access of most of population to the event. As a result tourism may be affected negatively.

er access routes, commercial spaces and easy access to the water to perform baptism and to release ashes, flowers and candles. Access to the water and proper visual and vocal connection is very important for this ceremony.

### Morphology of the ritual ceremonies in urban areas

Ritual ceremonies are take place in urban spaces in a larger scale in compare to the temples, shrines and houses.

Reviewing these three cases reveals that the ceremonies could have three forms in urban spaces: central, widespread and linear.

#### Central

In this type of ceremony, people gather around a confined space or a specific performance. In Qawwali ceremony, two groups attend: performers and audience around them. Visual and aural connection is established between the two groups and this assembly is static, focused and

Table 1: Spatial needs of the case studies. source: Authors.

Morphology of rituals	Space Requirement			
	Movement	Point of Focus	Effect on adjacent areas	Example
Central	Static	Central	Medium	Qawwali Ceremony
Widespread	Mobile	Not central	Limited	Mewar Festival
Linear	Mobile	Semi-central	High	The holy baptism and festival of light

Table 2: The relationship between the physical connections and the activities in the case studies. source: Authors.

	Qawwali Ceremony	Mewar Festival	The holy baptism and festival of light
Physical access	Through narrow routs through residential area and bazaar	through bazaar and holy places	By Rickshaw or walking toward the river and by boats beside the edge of the river
Visual Connection	By CCTV (closed-circuit television)	Ghat, platforms and palaces beside the lake	Ghat, platforms and palaces beside the lake and from boats on river side
Voice connection	Using Microphones	Music played by the groups while moving toward destination	In small groups of participants
Public health and urban discipline	Under supervision of the agents	Under supervision of the guards	Under low supervision of the guards
Coordination with adjacent areas	In harmony with other tombs and hazzar but in conflict with residential area		In harmony
Satisfactory for the number of population	To Some extend	Not Satisfactory	Not Satisfactory



Fig 5. The Ghat, temples and palaces and boats, the edge of the Ganges river, Varanasi - Holy Baptism, the Ganges, Varanasi. Photo: Hoda Kameli, 2012.

infectious diseases in the community that are transported by air and water. Udaipur City Council has decided to disinfect by gases at the time of ceremony. (National Center for Disease Control in India).

### 3) The holy baptism in Varanasi

Varanasi is the most important holy city for Hindus which is famous as the religious capital. This city has been shaped near the Ganges River which in Hindu beliefs is attributed to Lord Shiva. In addition, baptism in the Ganges River is one of the ways to clear spirit before entering the temple.

The ritual baptism that is also known as holy baptism is a part of the light festival. (Plum-Ucci, 2008 : 75) In November, that the moon is not visible in the sky, people come from all around India to the Ganges river to perform a baptism ritual.

Centuries ago, western edge of the Ganges River has been designed for this ceremony and other festivals. The Ghat is an access steps to the water all around the year. Many palaces and temples have been constructed along the river. The boats at the time of ceremony are positioned in

front of the bank of river where the ceremony is take place to provide the best view for audiences. The streets that reach the river are used either for commercial purposes or for placement of temples and ashrams (Fig5.).

The old and narrow streets are not enough for the overpopulation and most of the time it is close to the vehicles. The Rickshaw, (a two or three-wheeled passenger cart) is the main transportation to the Ghat.

Ghat are functional variety of purposes' such as visual and physical access to the river. They are also ideal for religious and commercial activities (Samant, 2004). The audiences witness the ceremony from different places: adjacent Ghat, platforms, nearby palaces and the boats. Beside ceremony times the festival begins at the evening until midnight Early in the morning, most of the people try to get to the water for holy baptism.

The crowd flow of this ceremony is not organized but as it happens alongside the river its always in form of the line. Therefore it can be considered linier ritual ceremony in the urban space.

### Space specifications

Space specifications for ceremony include prop-

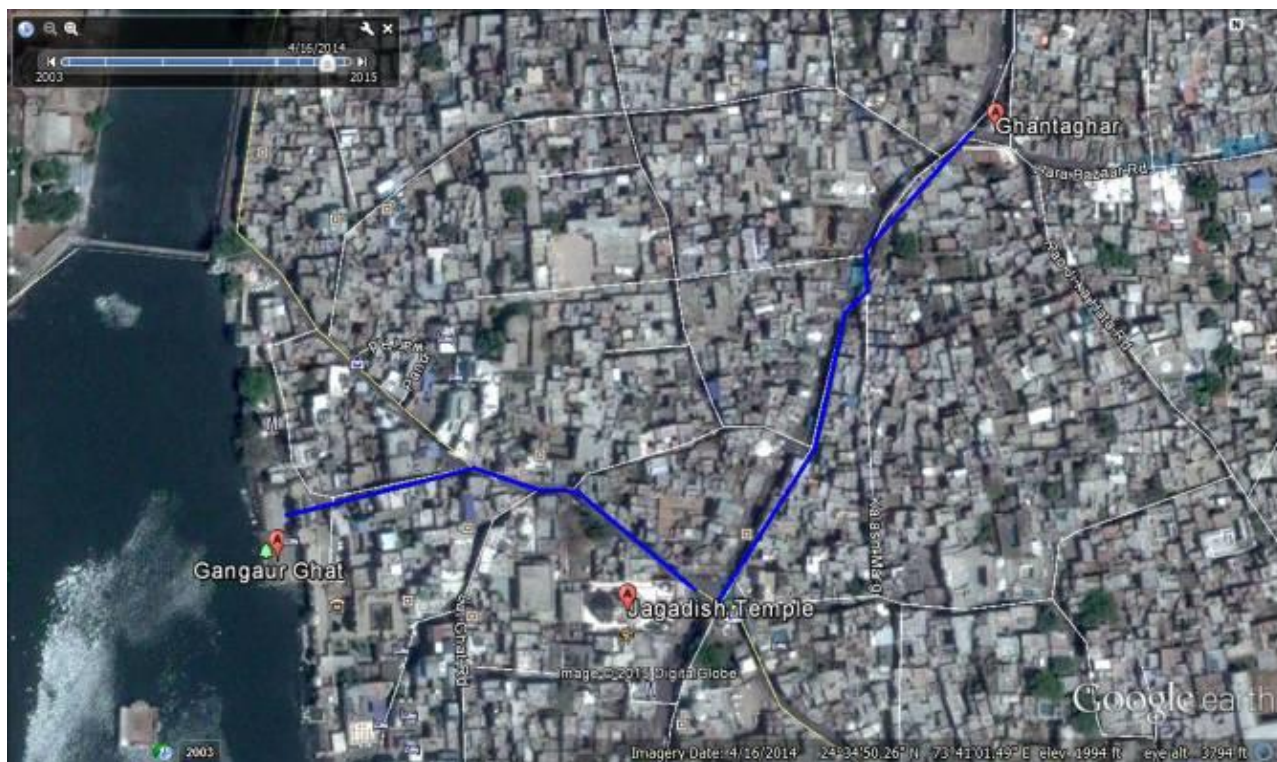


Fig 4. The path of the Mewar Festival, From the clock tower to the Jagdish temple, Udaipur. Source: Hoda Kameli,2012.

stay until evening.

The path of the ceremony includes adjacent areas like the clock tower, temple, markets, palaces, gates and Ghat at the edge of the lake.

Several groups will arrive at the edge of the lake at different times and after stopping for a while leave the area for other groups. This type of ritual in the city is widespread and mobile.

In two locations other than the final destination, people wait for the groups carrying the statues: one at the clock tower and the other one the open space in front of the main temple.

### Space specifications

The path of the ceremony has been signed by the colored chalk on the ground so that the audience can wait for the ceremony to begin. In the market area, the cafes become the stop point for the public until people who are carrying the statues

arrive. The vendors sell flowers, etc.

The Ghat has made an easy access to the water on the edge of the lake that is necessary for a part of ceremony. The statues are placed on the stairs in front of the lake and the women start praying around them. The Ghat provides appropriate sitting area for the participants and the audiences. Although it seems that the crowd is desirable for the market, however narrow streets, impaired the business. In addition, narrow streets and poor organization of the groups makes problems for the flow of the crowd. At the riverside, the final destination does not have enough capacity of more population and the group of the audience that have arrived later on the site, are deprived of having a visual connection with the praying ceremony.

The other issues that According to Health Research, during the event due to an increase in

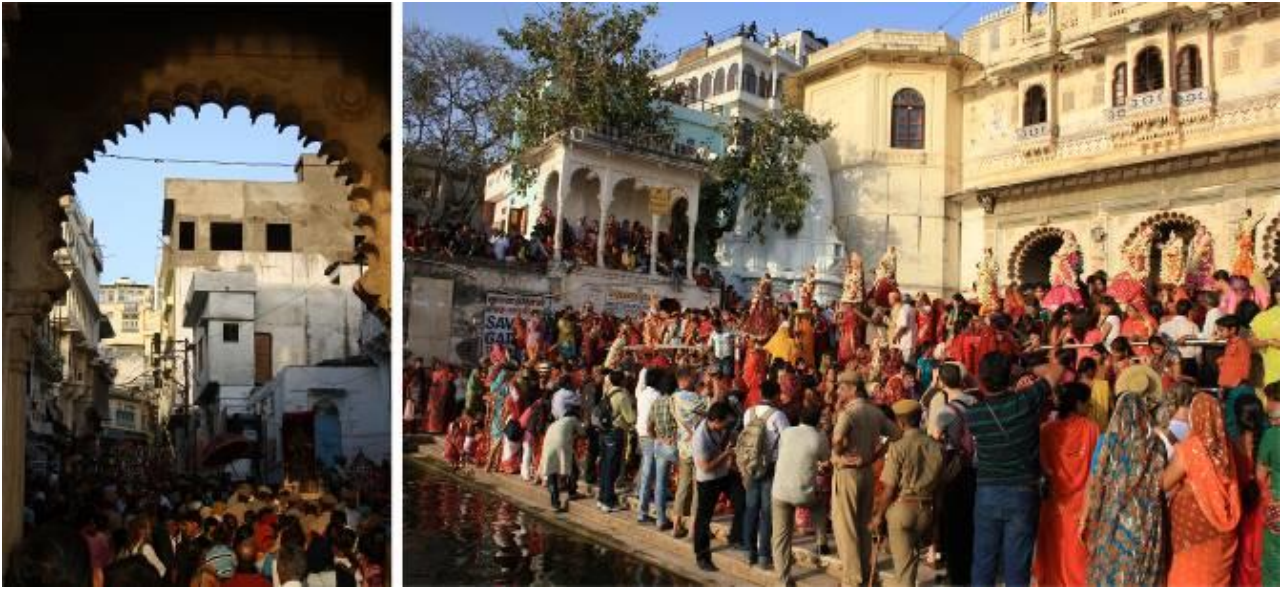


Fig 3. Mewvar Festival, the Gangaur Ghat gates, Udaipur. Photo: Hoda Kameli, 2012.

ple just passed by for pilgrimage the shrine of Nizamuddin.

### Space properties

The basic physical requirement of the event is the sitting area for the Qawwalis in front of the entrance of the shrine to have a visual relationship. Moreover audience sit around in circle form. There are some agents who are preventing the visual blockage between Qawwalis and the shrine. This event is settled and it is considered as a central event.

With increasing population a larger space is required, but the only available space is the openings among the tombs and houses. These spaces not expandable therefore new technological facilities communication such as speakers and CCTV (closed-circuit television) have been installed.

Due to space restrictions and close proximity to residential context, increase in population during the peak of the event causes a lot of problems. Also, because of narrow pathways which do not

meet standards, in case of emergency, the population is in imminent danger.

### 2) Mewar or Gagaur ceremony in Udaipur

In the state of Rajasthan and many cities in northern India, 2-3 days after the New Year in a ceremony called Mewvar in mid-March people celebrate spring. The origin of this ceremony is Gangaur celebration which is a feminine celebration. It is for worship Paravaty, the wife of Lord Shiva and it can be considered similar to a wedding feast. In last day of Gangaur ceremony, the women wear colorful costumes and decorate the images and statues of Shiva and Paravaty and carry them on their head toward the lake, river or the holy pool of the city (Ganj, 1990: 12-11). They move the statues while the music is playing. In some cities at the end of the ceremony, the statues of the gods be left in the water.

In Udaipur, different groups begin the ceremony from various part of the city to the clock tower and through the market Pichola<sup>10</sup> and end to the lake. People accompany them all the way and



Fig 1. Right: Qawwali ceremony in the courtyard between the tombs opposite the port of Hazrat Nizamuddin, New Delhi. Source: <http://kunzum.com/2010/11/17/delhi-enjoy-the-weekly-qawwalis-at-nizamuddin-dargah/>  
 Left: Gateway Hazrat Nizamuddin, New Delhi, Source: <http://www.delhitravel.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/Hazrat-Nizamuddin-Dargah-Delhi-Picture-3.jpg>



Fig 2. The adjacent spaces (tombs and mosques - residential area-access routes and markets) Source: Hoda Kameli.

### Quality of space

To hold ceremonies in the city, particular physical and functional requirements should present:

#### Physical access

Physical access from outside to the ceremony location includes participant easy access to it and fast access of emergency services. In addition, all movements inside the ceremony is necessary to be facilitated. Both inside and outside connections should be provided by temporary or permanent changes in the structure of the city.

#### Visual connection

Visual communication between participants and audiences should be provided without disruption by over population.

#### Voice connection

Voice connection should be provided when the music or any form of audio communication is the part of ceremony. Nowadays, technology has helped to transfer the voice to a huge number of populations. But it can be problematic, in cases where they are multiple audio sources at the same time.

#### Public health and urban discipline

To restore health and urban discipline, the ceremony should be coordinated with adjacent spaces such as residential spaces and commercial spaces etc. For the stores, customers have difficulties to access because of population and retailers absorbed to the ceremony, such as of boats, selling flowers, candles.

In addition, during the ceremony, epidemic of communicable diseases, such as cholera and dengue fever have happened in Delhi. During past 20 years, according to the World Health Organization, one out of 50 tourists returning from India has been diagnosed with dengue fever.

However, recently this has been increased to 1 out of 6 tourists (Gardiner, 2012).

### Case Studies

#### 1) Qawwali ceremony in Delhi's Nizamuddin port

Qawwali is a branch of Sufi music which origin goes back to six centuries ago. Sufis that would perform and sing their master (lord) poems, became popular as Qawwalis. Qawwalis during their performance, sit in two, three or four rows behind each other. Musical instruments are the requirements for this event. Qawwali sing with head and body movements. Qawwali usually starts at the evening (after Isha prayers) and may continue until the morning. Qawwali ceremony takes place at the shrines. (Rawalpindi website). Qawwali ceremony has been held in the courtyard of the shrine of Sheikh Mohammad Nizamuddin Olya (13th and 14th century Sufi), on a weekly basis and in the religious festivals. Qawwali ceremony in Delhi's Nizamuddin port, is held outdoors. This outdoors space is an urban space because of the composition of the temples, residential area, and bazaar (Fig. 1).

This urban area is quite live and deeply affected by Qawwali ceremony. (Fig. 2).

Nizamuddin area is one of the ancient parts of Delhi, which has been divided into east and west by Mathura Road. The train station and the higher class area of the city is located at the eastern part of the Humayun's Tomb.

Shrine of Nizamuddin is located in western part. On the map below, the market area, the old and the new streets are surrounded by Nizamuddin shrine (Fig. 3).

Gathering of people at an event like Qawwali, is similar to a concert. It is a musical performance by a group of Sufis. This group sit on the ground outside the shrine. During the ceremony, a large crowd will come to join the group and some peo-



## Introduction

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Ritual as a social activity, requires public space and has interaction with it, even it creates new space. In addition, ritual as a cultural and social phenomenon has the ability to transfer social and cultural norms.

City is an organized social life in connection with the space (Alhesabi & Paykan, 2013) and can shape identity of a city. Indian cities are well known for various ceremonies. They are the

proper examples for investigating the relationship between city and the ritual ceremonies. This study attempts to answer the following questions: How ceremonies take place in a city? How are they managed in an urban space? What are their physical forms and functions? What activities do they require in the surrounding areas? And how they shape identity of city?

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### Ceremonies, Ritual and Ritual ceremonies

Ceremonies define customs, habits, directive and rules (Dehkhoda Dictionary). Collective ritual is a kind of a public event that different groups of the society are involved in creating it with strong social interactions. Moreover ritual is a ceremony that connects present to past mythological times. It reminds an important old issue which should be remembered for ever. The unique aim of the participants in these ritual ceremonies is to keep the symbols alive (Miniature Sajadi, 2011). Ritual means tradition, customs, and habit (Dehkhoda Dictionary). Rituals are symbolic actions to benefit from supernatural forces. Leadership and the running of the rituals can be done by either the especial or ordinary members of the community (Payne, 2007). Religious teachings should be transfer to the followers. Therefore the task use for transferring and implementing of those teachings can be done is ritual ceremonies. Durkheim believes that a society is an organize system which classifies people with characteristics. However this classification disappears during the ceremony. In fact, characters and social classes get mixed and some kind of homogeneity and integrity appears and the taboos are broken. The concept of celebration includes repetition (Fokohi, 2011).

Ritual ceremony is a collection of actions that rooted in metaphysical or religious instructions. It is attached to the traditions and history because of their repetition during years and became a part of culture. (Abedi, 2007).

Repetition and symbolic nature of ritual ceremonies, which happens in special days, leads to a memorable experience in the urban spaces. This makes the public spaces meaningful and creates a special identity for each city. (Alhesabi & Paykan, 2010)

### Urban ritual ceremonies

In this section we examine the basic needs of three selected ritual ceremonies, such as space requirements, access, and security. Because huge population growth and the importance of public health, two criteria could be added to the above mentioned requirements, which is essential for improving the suitability of space. Examination of these cases reveal that three types of connections are available between city and a ceremony: First, central in Qawwali ceremony in Delhi; second, linear in holy baptism ritual and the festival of light on the banks of the River Ganges in Varanasi; and third, widespread in Mewar festival in Udiapur.

# Ritual Ceremonies and Urban Spaces in Indian Cities

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## Abstract

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Ritual ceremonies have roots in people's beliefs and they have been established over the centuries. Such ceremonies are held either closed architectural spaces, such as temples, or urban and public spaces. This study examines the relationship between urban space and ritual ceremonies in three cities of India. Examination of these cases revealed that three types of connections are available between city and a ceremony: First, central in Qawwali ceremony in Delhi; second, widespread in Mewar festival in Udiapur; and third, linear in holy baptism ritual and the festival of light on the banks of the River Ganges in Varanasi. This article reviews the environment, activities, physical movement, visual communication, sound communication and public health. These components have critical importance when a huge number of populations gather for the ceremony. Moreover, we acknowledge the effect of these ceremonies on the shaping of the cities.

Field observations support the idea that because of unplanned population growth, urban spaces have imposed many limitations to hold collective rituals and ceremonies. However, possibly when these ritual ceremonies were formed, the urban spaces could provide proper platform for these events. Considering that form has an important role in the continuity of these ceremonies, the before mentioned limitations could disrupted the durability of rituals in the long term.

## Keywords

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Ritual Ceremony, India, Urban space, Qawwali, Festival of light and holy bath, Mewar. Festival