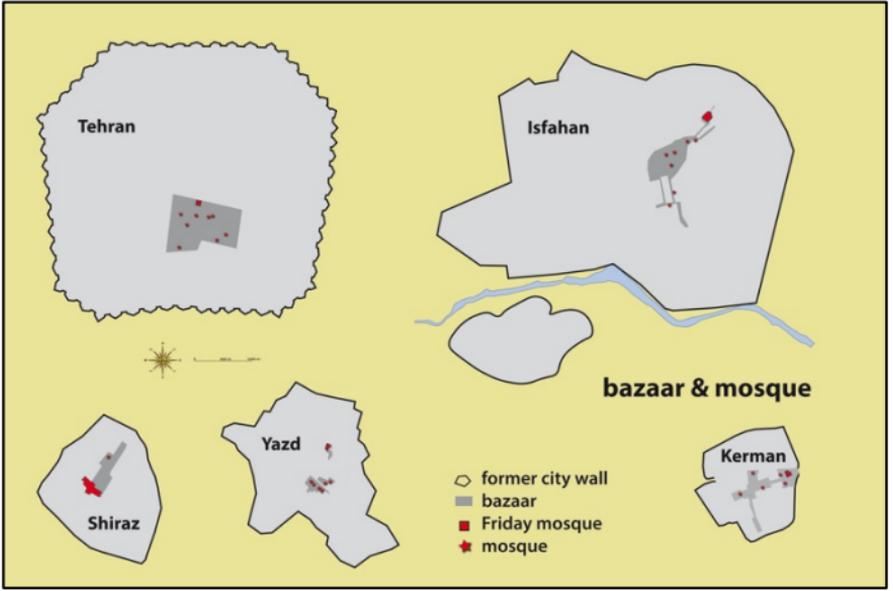




The bazaar and the mosque were traditionally closely interlinked. That was partly because the governors in control of the bazaar used the Shariah as their point of departure, which gave traders a sound basis for honest trading. In addition, rich merchants made donations to the mosque to maintain the religious real estate and provide an income for the imams. Under Iran's current tax regime, the mosques jointly collect about 10 per cent of the income tax to support the clergy. This income also covers the management and maintenance of religious property, although the construction of new mosques is sometimes financed by private individuals. The Friday mosques differ from the local, everyday mosques. Both types of mosque are dedicated to caring for the faithful but the preaching in the Friday mosque sometimes also deals with political misdeeds. In the everyday mosques, the faithful gather just for daily prayers and to meet one another.

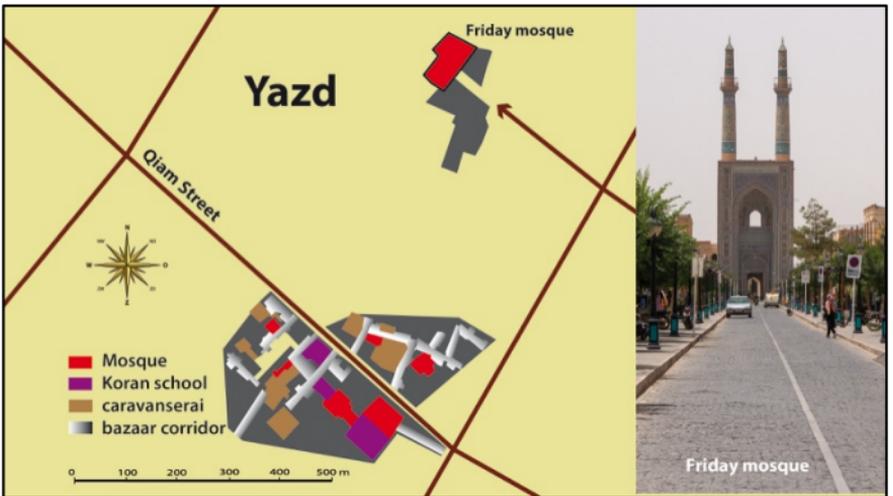
The mosques differ in size too: Friday mosques are far larger than everyday mosques. What is more, the square of the Friday mosque is a genuine public meeting space. That is partly because the Friday mosque is located on the edge of the bazaar with access via both the bazaar and the public street. In 'Bazaar 4', we showed how the mosque square in Tehran could be reached from the street. The everyday mosques, however, are always enclosed by the bazaar and their squares are deserted except at prayer time. The drawing below shows all the mosques located in or at the edge of a bazaar in the cities we visited. The maps are drawn to the same scale and give the areas within the former city walls. It is noticeable that Shiraz has one huge Friday mosque and only one everyday mosque attached to a bazaar. In contrast, Yazd has a high density of everyday mosques. The distribution is more even in the other cities.



In Yazd, we only noticed the everyday mosques in the bazaar when the call came for midday prayers. We did not hear the muezzin's chant in the rest of Iran. It was also only in Yazd that we noticed the Koran schools. The bazaar turned out to be full of mosques and Koran schools.

But we didn't find the Friday mosque there. It is built on the former site of a fire temple, in the heart of the historical centre. A bazaar grew up around the mosque but as it was not located on through trading routes, it remained relatively small.

The large bazaar for the region as a whole developed not in the centre but on a trading route that passed just outside the original city walls (now Qiam Street). We found as many as six everyday mosques and three Koran schools here. All could be reached via the passages in the bazaar, as can be seen in the drawing below.



With the construction of new roads from the 1930s, Yazd's Friday mosque was suddenly on a visual axis giving it a clear main entrance. You could say it became more extravert as a result.

The large bazaar to the south also got a new road, Qiam Street, which divided the bazaar into two. However, that did not really change the situation for the various mosques within the bazaar; these everyday mosques remained secluded and inward-looking.



Everyday mosque in Yazd's great bazaar

The above photo shows you first have to go down steps from the bazaar and then through a door to reach the mosque square. That is not something you feel comfortable doing as a tourist.

In contrast, the square of the Friday mosque in Shiraz is far more inviting, with people crossing it in all directions or simply lying down asleep. See the photo below.



Friday mosque in Shiraz

Next... Bazaar 6 – Shah