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## **Tolerance and Pilgrimage: The Experience of Tolerance at Mevlana Jalal ad-Din Rumi Mausoleum**

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### **Abstract**

Each year on 17<sup>th</sup> December people from different cultures and religions come and participate at Mevlana Jalal ad-Din Rumi mausoleum rituals, called Shab-e Arus, to pay their respects to him. During pilgrimage as well as organized and informal rituals that take place in commemoration of Rumi death anniversary as the well-known poet and mystic of 13<sup>th</sup> century, a form of tolerance emerges. As such, the point of departure for this article is the perception of pilgrimage space as the space of connections, where an arena for social and cultural interactions is created, that resulted in formation of a cultural tolerance. In other words, presence in the pilgrimage space and different rites has led to interactions that result in acceptance and understanding of the other, which thereby reinforces culture of tolerance. The cultural area and case study of this research is 744<sup>th</sup> ritual of commemoration of Rumi, formally called “time of Brotherhood”, that held on 7-17 December 2017 in Konya, Turkey. The paper discussed the rituals of pilgrimage of his tomb share characteristics with what Victor Turner discussed as modern pilgrimage. Accordingly, this article elucidates the role of pilgrimage sites as the center and source of cultural coexistence involved in transnational identities. It emphasizes that such pilgrimage centers create a peaceful coexistence in an intercultural space instead of conflict between groups of people.

**Keywords:** modern pilgrimage; experience of ritual; cultural tolerance; Konya; Shab-e Arus rituals.

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## INTRODUCTION AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Of all the elements that can manifest the concept of tolerance in the concrete facts of a culture, the present study opted for pilgrimage. Focusing on rituals and liturgy, the study considers and examines this concept as one of the birthplaces of the culture of tolerance. The central hypothesis of the research is that the pilgrimage works as a spiritual issue and the pilgrimage location and ambiance work as spiritual ones to provide an arena of social and cultural interaction, where people of various cultures are placed together based on what they have in common in a greater cultural realm. Making the journey, being in the atmosphere, and performing the rituals of the pilgrimage results in the pilgrims' knowing others, coming to terms with differences, and experiencing tolerance.

The main objective of this research is to examine the probability, emergence, enhancement, and reproduction of tolerance towards others in spiritual atmospheres and particularly in holy shrines and sacred mausoleum as cultural realms constant presence in which creates a cross-cultural ambiance and redefines the concept of "the other". Such a process results in the emergence and enhancement of tolerance in the guest and host societies and in the acceptance of the other rather than opposing the other. Mevlana Jalal ad-Din Muhamad Balkhi's (Rumi's) mausoleum located in Konya, Turkey was selected as the research area. An annual ceremony is held in this place that hosts scores of people from a variety of cultures.

The main hypothesis of this research is that the pilgrimage functions as a holy entity, and the shrine (mausoleum) appears as a holy space outside the paradigm of the official religion to form a realm in which, depending on the significance of the place, individuals of different cultures are brought together (in their extrovertive /outer journey), and begin an interaction which eventually results in their understanding, accepting, and tolerating the other (in a stage of the introvertive /inner journey). What shows up here is on one hand, the civilizational-cultural aspect of the ritual (pilgrimage) and cultural heritage attributed to Rumi in the connection between countries such as Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, and Tajikistan, which at times manifests the perspective of cross-cultural and inter-civilizational relations (Iran and Turkey). On the other hand, the heritage acts as a transnational,

cross-cultural entity which paves the way for the coexistence of those nations who resume the cultural diversity and pluralism as a spiritual issue in the Rumi's heritage, and avoid extremism and racism.

In this era, the actions of radical terrorist movements against the pilgrimage culture are in fact working to further consolidate tolerance. In his study of over 150 holy sites in Iraq, Syria, Tunisia, and Libya, KhamehYar points out the demolition of holy sites and mausoleums by the extremists. According to him, in the years 2004 to 2014 (when the book was published), around 40 shrines and ritual monuments in Iraq, 25 shrines in Syria, 20 shrines in Tunisia, and 70 sites in Libya were assaulted, set on fire, exhumed, or completely demolished by the extremist takfiri groups. (KhamehYar 2014, 136) As the extremists and radicals go on, it is deemed necessary to introduce and elaborate on the significance of the pilgrimage culture as a platform to enhance cultural coexistence. This must be carried out through a viewpoint in line with culture and social science fields with the aim of helping the executive and cultural policy makers at national and international levels. Research works of similar nature have already highlighted the concept of cultural coexistence and centers to consolidate it such as shrines which represent examples of spaces where the transnational identity shapes up.

## **RESEARCH QUESTION AND METHOD**

Taking into consideration the abovementioned issues, the present study attempts to provide a reply to the following question.

What are the social effects of the presence of different cultural identities within the space of Mevlana mausoleum on the ambiance of the host society and the experience of tolerance and peaceful coexistence among visitors/pilgrims?

In any given qualitative research, narratives or replies from the individuals are explained and interpreted. Therefore, the findings of such a research are limited to those collected from the research area and its particular conditions. That is why research works of this nature are considered descriptive, inductive, and temporal. The method used for the data analysis in this research is a descriptive one which in turn employs qualitative methods to find the answer to the research questions. To do so, the ethnographic research method was employed.

Ethnographic method is based on the event or phenomenon under natural circumstances. Thus, the research work is based on the visit made to Rumi's mausoleum and examining the behavior of pilgrims while the Whirling Dervishes Festival was held during the ceremony known as *Şab-eArus* (lit.wedding night; ritual ceremony annually held in December on the night known to be Rumi's death anniversary).

A variety of tools were applied to gather data for the present study the most important ones of which are as follows. Deep, semi-structured interviews conducted as purposeful conversations meant not only to extract and record information from the respondents, but also to establish an interaction between the researcher and the interviewee in order to gain a better understanding of the latter by the former. Possibility of raising and discussing secondary topics helps the researcher to have a holistic image of the interviewee's life-world, their viewpoint of their world, and their experience and perception of the pilgrimage. Another research tool is qualitative observation directly carried out by the researcher through relatively long-term field observation. This works as one of the methods used to form concept structures and research questions, which in turn help with collection of considerable loads of data. Semiotics of space is yet another data collection method in an anthropological research. Obviously, the space features no traits of its own. Rather, it is the presence of a number of people and the activity they have in that space that attributes a symbolic characteristic to the space. Space incorporates objects, colors, signs and implications, markers, sounds, lights, behavior, and actions that are the result of the presence of a certain group of people. Documentary method involves the use of external sources of statistical data, historical documents, and visual documents in order to elaborate on the subject.

In terms of the subject, the present paper focuses on the ritual atmosphere in Western Asia, namely a modern-mystical mausoleum located in Konya. As for the time, since the ceremony is held in Konya on the 17th of December every year, which marks the death anniversary of the Rumi, pilgrims and visitors of several nations gather to observe the occasion in the week of December 12-18, and thus the author was at the venue on the above dates in 2017.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF RESEARCH

This research is based on viewing pilgrimage as a ritual. Anthropologists tend to examine and analyze the ritual-related topics using interdisciplinary viewpoints as the wide variety of ritual forms necessitates. Victor Turner is one of the prominent anthropologists who has conducted research work on pilgrimage. Victor and Edith Turner were not the first ones to do research on pilgrimage. However, they presented the first ever theoretical model for the anthropological interpretations of pilgrimage. Turner and a number of scholars (Geertz 1966, Eickelman&Piscatori 1990) widened our knowledge and understanding of pilgrimage studies.

First published in 1978, *Image and pilgrimage in Christian culture* was one of their most significant works on the topic, which held to an interpretive paradigm of pilgrimage. Unlike Durkheim (1912), the pair saw religious issues as dynamic entities, and believed that in a ritual space like a mausoleum, people perceive different religious experiences based on their every-day life style. As stated in their 1978 book, they believed that pilgrimage has its origins in the ancient days, but the institutionalized forms of pilgrimage are the fruit of the divine and historical religions. In his point of departure on pilgrimage, Turner used the works of the French folklorist, Arnold Van Gennep (1961) and the concept of rite of passage. Pilgrimage is one such rite, and the pilgrim begins it in a social structure, and eventually returns to the society.

During the pilgrimage, the pilgrim reaches a state Turner calls liminal, where social ranks are suspended, and the spirit of human equality temporarily rules the Communitas (Pavicic et al. 2007). Turner introduced and developed the two concepts of liminality and communitas. The term liminal is derived from the Latin word "limen" meaning to be at the threshold. The word liminal refers to the condition of those who take part in the rite while they have symbolically left their social position or ambiance, but have not entered the new position of phase yet: They are allegorically at a threshold position of between two social worlds (Turner 1969, 107). Turners argue that in such a text, pilgrimage acts as the initial situation for liminality and the communitas to replace the passage rite.

Numerous researchers have advanced their scholarly work on pilgrimage based on Turner's approach and viewpoint to the topic. (Turner 1974,172; Turner & Turner 1978,3-7) Hitrec (1991) and Jukic (1988 cited in Ambrosio 2007) believe that pilgrimage is in fact a frill to unite and to manifest the tendency to be united, especially for those who share a religion. Such an idea is propagated by works Boisvert (1997 cited in Ambrosio 2007) where formation of a shared social experience in the course of the pilgrimage is put forth by the pilgrims, which make it possible for them to collectively enter a mythical realm within the temporary spatial text of the pilgrimage using the tradition of "common community". In this regard, Fortuna and Ferreira (1993 cited in Ambrosio 2007) have based his opinion on Turner's viewpoint, explaining that once pilgrimage is considered as a uniting characteristic, it generalizes the spirit of communities, and is seen as a departure point from the social conditions, which makes it possible to suspend the inequalities pertaining to the social class and culture.

The present paper uses Turner's viewpoints and the concept of *communitas* put forth by him, which draws upon a shared sense of identity among the pilgrims. The ideas are employed to study the concept of transnational identity in the pilgrimage visit to the Rumi's mausoleum (in Konya) among the pilgrims, and its influence on the formation of tolerance culture. Accordingly, those who attend a shared ritual behavior work to boost the pilgrimage belief and tradition. Likewise, the interaction between individuals and the exchange of cultural concepts during the pilgrimage bring about cultural alterations that can result in the enhancement of tolerance towards others.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

As evident in the review of the literature, the interest in works on pilgrimage with an anthropological approach emerged after the 70s. Previously, pilgrimage studies witnessed a historical approach. From historical viewpoint, pilgrimage is a concept connected to the pilgrim's religious beliefs and their inner feelings, and originates from their faith in supernatural powers. Through this perspective, ethnographic works carried out to date mainly include travel literature that elaborate on the traveler's experience of the pilgrimage along the course of the journey. Of the oldest texts of such nature is William Wey's book

(1458) and two books by Richard Hakluyt *Hakluytus Posthumus* (1613) *Purchas his pilgrimage* (1625) which include details of the sacred monuments, pilgrimage sites, votive offerings, songs of the pilgrims, and in general, all the persons and objects involved (Korte 2000,31). Prior to these works, however, Howard refers to a volume published in 1458 and 1462, containing a list of places, temples, mausoleums, and pathway to Compostela in Greek and Hebrew, which also includes the pilgrims' songs with the respective musical notes (Howard 1980,20-21 cited in Korte 2000, 24). Other old sources in the field are William Robertson Smith's book entitled the Religion of the Semites and Sociological Study by Robert Hertz (1913) carried out in St. Besse in the Italian Alps.

In the first decade of the 20th century, Emile Durkheim's *the Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (1912) was published which was a considerable work. On his discussion on sacred and ritual, Watts Miller (2012) argues that Durkheim "is especially concerned with a set of three examples that especially involve ritual and that are based on Spencer and Gillen's report of three types of sacred objects, the *churinga*, the *nurtunja* and the *waniga*". The main difference is "howchuringas are enduring ritual objects with enduring prestige, sorted for safe keeping in sacred places when not in use. *Nurtunjas* and *wanigas* are temporary, constructed for particular ritual occasions without being preserved afterwards" (ibid, 114). In fact, in Durkheim dualism of sacred and profane, "sacredness is a matter of degree, the profane refers to the everyday, and things can switch between the two categories" (ibid).

Other scholars (Erik Wolf 1958; Pavicic et al. 2007; Stirrat 1984; Bowie 2000) drew upon Emile Durkheim's social functionalism approach in their works, reiterating that pilgrimage works as a force to spiritually revive the society, and manifests widespread social processes such as enhancing social positions and forming the social identity (Pavicic et al. 2007), and brings together different social groups and clusters (Bowie 2000).

As elucidated in theoretical framework, Turner's approach had opposers as well. Alan Morinis criticizes the idea of formation of *communitas* in such varied platforms (as included in Turner's viewpoint) (Reader 1993). Also, Pfaffen Berger puts forth the idea of contradiction in the pilgrimage site after doing research on the

pilgrimage to *Kataragama* and the Hindu and Buddhist pilgrims there. (Pfaffen Berger 1979, 270)

Elsewhere, Sallnow refers to the presence of the divine power and providence in the pilgrimage site as the characteristic of seeking the truth and gaining the experience that is accompanied by divine traits (Sallnow 1987). As two influential researchers, Eade and Sallnow added novel perspectives and ideas to the realm on Christian anthropological pilgrimage studies. To them, pilgrim is the point at which various, adversarial discourses come together, which is made possible through the three components: individual, space, and text (1991, 19).

Coleman, the anthropologist and Elsner, the historian in their book *Pilgrimage past and present in the world religions* add a fourth component of movement the three ones mentioned earlier, which is, as they put, among the fundamental components of pilgrimage. (Coleman and Elsner 1995, 206)

Mircea Eliade is another scholar and theorist in religion and pilgrimage with a phenomenological approach. In his book, *History of Religious Ideas* (1981), he states that pilgrimage is based on one's perception from the experiencing the idea of the Holy, which is manifested in the sacred place and time (Reader 2014, 30).

Another issue to be considered in the pilgrimage literature is applying the attribute of holy to a certain space which can be viewed otherwise as well. One way of attributing sanctity to a place originates from holy texts (Salomone 2004). Another way is the empirical data (i.e. the number of visitors to a given site). Such site can be located within the religious boundaries, can be related to religion, or can even be outside the religious structures of people. (Nolan and Sopher 1987 cited in Stoddard 1997, 54) The third criterion in the sanctity of a location is referring to the individuals' opinions. In this perspective, which was originally introduced by pilgrimage scholars such as Bhardwaj (1983) who studies pilgrimage sites of India and Stoddard (1980) in study on Khatmandu valley, as soon as a group of people start to believe that a certain site is sacred, the sanctity of the site is confirmed. In this regard, Dubisch (1995, 35) is to believe that pilgrimage sites are certain locations distinguished from others. The distinction is because of the power and the extraordinary traits attributed to them in a variety of ways, as in what Preston calls the



"spiritual magnetism" (Preston 1992). Timothy and Olsen also see the reason of the holiness in holy legends, narrations,, and predictions which change an ordinary place into a sacred one (Timothy and Olsen 2006, 53).

In the 1990s, in a book by Thomas Barrie (1996), the components of sanctity shared by all pilgrimage rituals were listed as spiritual preparation for the journey, separation from one's society and every-day life, rituals and ceremonies observed on the path to and at the site, presence in the sacred space, and return to the changed situation. The pilgrim has a definitive role in denoting the pilgrimage site, as Sellars and Walter says in his book, *Pilgrimage in Popular Culture*, describes that the emergence and attributed sanctity of a certain location is through the presence of the pilgrims (1993, 179). Anthropologists of religion started analyzing the issue of pilgrimage through interdisciplinary approaches in the first decade of the 21st century. A book like *Intersecting Journeys: The Anthropology of Pilgrimage and Tourism* was the result of such an approach, which includes valuable articles on topics such as the concept of emigration/ *hijra* in Islam, modern pilgrimages, Sufis' and saints' tomb sites as pilgrimage sites, and immigration and gender.

The unification of tourism and pilgrimage began in the 70s, when Mac Cannell (1976) discussed that as a pilgrim, a tourist is seeking other thing. From the 90s onwards, the analysis of the relation between pilgrimage and tourism began to focus mainly on the similarities and differences between a tourist and a pilgrim (Cohen 1992,1998;Collin-Kreiner &Kliot 2000; Timothy&Olsen 2006;Turner &Turner 1978).Many of the classifications and approaches towards pilgrimage have been through a tourism point of view. The relationship between pilgrimage and tourism can be categorized as follows: a. Viewing pilgrimage as a part of the travel spectrum which opposes tourism (Smith 1992; MacCannel 1976); b. viewing pilgrimage as a section of tourism (Blackwell 2007).

Ambrosio (2007) elucidates today's modern lifestyle encourages traveling for reasons other than pilgrimage such as politics, culture, seeking knowledge, or attempting to discover one's origins and identity. Ebadi (2015) believes that it is near impossible to draw a demarcating line between various types of pilgrimage, as the liquidity in the concept of pilgrimage results in a different perception of the

idea even for each individual pilgrim, and calls for an interdisciplinary view of the area. Turner and Turnersays that"a tourist is half a pilgrim if a pilgrim is half a tourist"(1978, 20). According to them, pilgrimage features secular basics and characteristics. Blackwell also presents his categorization of the sacred sites and of the distinction of the pilgrim and the tourist by distinction of the visitors of a sacred site (Blackwell 2007,39).

From the 1990s on, the analysis of the relation between pilgrimage and tourism began to tend to mark the similarities and differences between a tourist and a pilgrim (Smith 1992; Cohen 1992;Timothy & Olsen 2006).It was in that decade that the arguments regarding the definitions of tourism, pilgrimage, and other related concepts were expanded, and scholars began to focus on the sites and on the secular aspects of the pilgrimage in order to gain a vaster knowledge of the area (Badone&Roseman 2004;Margry 2008; Reader & Walter 1993). In his discussions of pilgrimage and tourism, Schackley states that a given religious site features a number of characteristics to appeal to tourists and to attract non-pilgrims (Schackley 2003, 161 cited in Blackwell 2007).

Review of the literature in the field of tourism and pilgrimage shows that the difference and distinctions between the pair is fading out, though the motive for pilgrimage as a religious act is what demarcates the definition of religious pilgrimage from that of modern and secular visit.

In addition, an overview of related research on pilgrimage to Konya, demonstrated that most of the relevant texts (in Persian and English) actually related to the travel description more than examining correlation between the experience of Tolerance and visitors of pilgrimage site.

## **DISCUSSION: PILGRIMAGE EXPERIENCE AND PRACTICE OF TOLERANCE**

As set by the field approach in anthropological studies, ethnography is in itself a narrative of the experience. What creates the concept is the local and popular knowledge which in turn originates from the experience. Dilthey (1979) says of the people's life in his work, which carries a type of experience. Turner, who studied the *communitas* and

anti-structural forms of culture, was also inspired by him, and based his pursuit on the experience. In fact, the liminality and communitas are based on the informal, real, personal experiences of individuals.

The concept of experience put forth by Dilthey is the foundation of Turner's view of the anthropology of experience. Dilthey says that the reality comes into life for us only through the conscious affected by the inner experience (1979, 164). To Turner, a cultural experience is not an isolated experience, and is rather one that always entails a current of activities. He sees the activities as a flow and act that are rooted in the social circumstances (Turner 1986).

In Turner's anthropological approach, culture is a sensitive living entity affected by the context which features an outer reflection. Experience encompasses redoubled self-consciousness (ibid). While in the field study, an anthropologist is in the dialectic of a soliloquy and conversation with others at the same time. Thus, it is safe to conclude that this approach of anthropology is a new one that focuses mainly on the social factor and its reality.

The experience of visiting the Rumi's mausoleum in a pilgrimage is not merely a static, theatrical one. It is rather an active, dynamic process of the pilgrims' reaction in their spiritual journey, and in the meantime, defines the pilgrim's aim of the visit. This experience is a journey which results in the constancy and durability of a spiritual experience whose new aspects distinguish this ritual from a given pilgrimage experience. As implied in all the interviews, almost all respondents described this journey as different from other journeys including the religious ones they had made before. They even confidently pointed out that the presence of those who attended the ceremony had not been because of their own will and wish, and a supernatural force had brought on this journey and the Rumi's mausoleum.

*We are all invited here... he wanted us to come, and so did we.*

A 40 year, Iranian-American pilgrim, female.

*As if Mevlana calls on us, invites us, and says, "come forth, no matter who and what you are..."*

A 55 year, Turkish pilgrim, female.

Another recurrent matter in the interviews is the trust in the goodness of all those who visit the mausoleum as pilgrims. All respondents stated and reiterated this issue.

*All those who are here are a beautiful smile.*

A 60 year, Turkish pilgrim, female.

*Whoever comes to visit Rumi's shrine in a pilgrimage is undoubtedly a nice person. Here, we are all good in the face of all our differences.*

A 49 year, Iranian-Austrian pilgrim, female.

A pervasive sense of fraternity and equality and interaction among all the participants is perfectly tangible. Based on what the respondents reiterate about their experience, particularly during their visit to the Rumi's shrine in Konya, this sense is so propelling that most visitors spend the next year of their life planning to repeat the visit, wishing to experience the communitas and sense of tolerance and love for others all over again. As described earlier, Turner refers to this constancy as a constant communitas. (Turner and Turner 1978)

*When I leave this place, I keep missing it and the ambiance. I can hardly wait for the next year to come for the visit again.*

A 49 year, Iranian-Austrian pilgrim, female.

*Only one visit, and then you would wish to come back to Konya every year. I have a great sense of peace and tranquility here.*

A 55 year, Iranian pilgrim, female.

The researcher would hardly come across people who were there to visit for the first time. In fact, most of them had made the journey at least three times before, and there were people who had had the experience even 15 times. This sense of unity, tolerance, and equality is evident not only in the living experience of the pilgrims who attend the ceremony, but also in the banners across the town, which refer to the ceremony as the 'Time of Brotherhood' in Farsi, Turkish and English [*Zaman-e Baradari/ KardeşlikVakti*]. In other words, the space policies in Konya have approximated the informal, mystical culture pertaining to the rituals of Rumi, and have thus brought about further attraction for pilgrim-tourists.

An implicit comparison of the pilgrim's own culture and that of the city they visit on a pilgrimage is a noteworthy topic as well. Most cultures have in their micro cultures of the groups and nations some form of pilgrimage rituals. However, making the holy journey outside one's culture is one of the significant features of such trips in the developed world. (Coleman and Elsner 1995, 206) Given their cultural/ subcultural backgrounds, any given pilgrim gains their own personal experience of the pilgrimage to the Rumi's shrine, and in turn leaves their influence (no matter how small) on the mausoleum. The initial effect of such a trade is the enhancement and reproduction of sanctity in the space. Therefore, in some discussions of the topic, the mutual influence of people and spaces is taken into consideration (Ibid). Personal, individual experiences emerged as the focal point of most field studies in the 1990s. Scholars like Smith (1989), Cohen (1992) Collin-Kreiner and Gatrell(2006) and Poria et al.(2004) have scrutinized these effects along with several others. In a gradual process, one can track down the transition from the research into the outer elements and the general ethnography of the pilgrimage ambiance to the research on the inner experiences of the individuals. Likewise, the transfer from the study of pilgrimage as a public, perceptual phenomenon to one that sees the pilgrimage as an individual, pluralistic phenomenon is evident. Those research conducted on pilgrimage indicate that the experience can be considered as the direct outcome of an objective study of pilgrimage. In other words, the research work being carried out currently focuses on what the pilgrim expresses about their journey. In a number of studies, the idea of experience is taken as an issue connected to the

concept of pilgrimage, including the pilgrims' experience, perception, and overall encounter. It seems that the future studies on pilgrimage would be mainly concerned with probing into the pilgrims' various experiences and their spiritual and objective needs. (Collin-Kreiner 2010, 448) The experience of pilgrimage is a distinct one in that the pilgrim's interpretation of the journey is expressed as one experience, which results in their individual transformation (Ambrosio 2007). This experience becomes even more significant as the concept of traveling and setting forth to reach a pilgrimage destination and personal transformation mark the distinction between this type of pilgrimage and other rituals (Badone and Roseman 2004). An example of this is the experience of pilgrims from their visit to Konya.

In Konya, cultural tourism has a whole new definition. The examinations and observations of this study show that the visit to the Rumi's mausoleum in Konya and the cultural tourism it entails overlaps with a cultural pilgrimage in its literary sense. It appears as if the ceremony of Shab-e Arus and the presence of the Rumi's shrine in the town as the main reason for the pilgrims to visit Konya have established a link between the identity of the city and that of the ceremony. Taxi drivers in Konya are among the groups of locals that come face to face with great numbers of both Turkish and foreign visitors. There is a piece of writing in the taxis across the town which welcomes the visitors and pilgrims to Mevlana's mausoleum. As inferred from the interviews, the respect they show to the visitors is not merely for the better income they bring to the hosts, but in fact it is for the belief that the pilgrims of Mevlana's mausoleum are selected people from around the world, and that the Rumi chooses his own visitors. This belief has passed down from generation to generation among the local people of Konya.

Ebadi (2015) believes that there are numerous ancient religious and spiritual sites across the globe which can attract visitors not only for their religious nature, but also for the historical and cultural heritage they have to offer. Thus, a category of cultural pilgrimage can be commenced especially to those sites listed by UNESCO. This class of visitors can be referred to as cultural pilgrims due to the close proximity between the cultural events and the pilgrimage. Given the link between culture and religion in pilgrimage, some researchers like Digance (2003) consider the pilgrimage as a cultural phenomenon

which establishes historical links between several cultures and ethnic groups. In fact, cultural pilgrims are defined more by knowledge-based motives (such as knowing about the history and culture of the religious site) rather than pure religious or leisure motivations (Ebadi 2015). Such pilgrims seek to gain a better cultural understanding of the history and other nations of the world, and thus, respect for the other is an indispensable part of this category of tourism. In this perspective, a given religious monument can be of two functions simultaneously: first, it can serve the religious needs of the pilgrims, and second, it can attract them to its non-religious features such as brilliant architecture or murals. Some other cultural pilgrimage destinations are Notre Dame de Paris, Cologne in Germany, and several religious temples in Asia which attract international tourists, and are the shrines of such prominent literary figures as the Rumi, Shakespeare, etc.

Through the perspective of literary/cultural tourism, it can be said that owing to its vast span, the Persian literature is capable of attracting scores of a tourism flow as cultural pilgrimage. For instance, people travel to Konya to pay a visit, relief their sense of nostalgia and mystical identification. Pilgrims describe their journey to Konya as an authentic, genuine experience which sets them free from their ontological disorientations especially once visiting the Rumi's mausoleum. Represented by the Rumi, Hafez, Attar, and Sa'di among others, Persian literature is one of the most mystical, most spiritual literary forms in the world. Therefore, it can act as the birthplace of one of the most significant forms of cultural and spiritual tourism. It can both transfer mystical and spiritual teachings to the visitors and pilgrims, and generalize and propagate tolerance, forbearance, acceptance of differences, and cultural diversity.

Under such circumstances, the literary tourists are in fact pilgrims who seek a sublime spiritual entity. Assimilating the literary tourist to a pilgrim underlines the fact that though pilgrimage and tourism function in two essentially different spheres, they still have significant overlapping areas (Norman 2011). This was already stated by MacCannell where he referred to the "tourist as a pilgrim" (1976).

The experience of some tourist/pilgrims who were on their first-ever visit to Konya was mainly of aesthetic nature, and yet they ended their visit with an altered perspective of a spiritual journey and a need

for another visit the next year. Therefore, some scholars rightfully used the phrase "spiritual tourist" to refer to them instead of cultural pilgrims. (See for example Brown1999; Timothy&Olsen 2006; Norman 2011) Norman (2011) believes that those tourists who seek to reach spirituality or religion so to gain an experience of this nature are in fact spiritual tourists. In agreement with Mac Cannell(1976), Norman also states that this type of tourism has come to existence due to the emergence of insecure changes in modernity and secularism (Norman 2011, 18).

In various Christian, Islamic, Buddhist, and other cultures, seeking spirituality opposes the denial and dismissal of spirituality put forth by modernization processes and other similar currents. In the same fashion, spiritual hubs confront industrial hubs. Based on this approach, visiting Rumi's mausoleum in Konya is a type of existential tourism. This definition is in line with Cohen's viewpoint where he states that in this category of tourism, the tourist leaves behind her/his life and habits in search of another center. Thus, this type of tourism is hardly distinguishable from pilgrimage (Cohen 1996, 101). Pilgrims and tourists of this category have their experience in the form of a personal alteration that confirms Turner's opinion about the *communitas* and a different experience of the pilgrimage. What was extracted from the conversations showed that all pilgrims emphasized a sense of spiritual freedom and emotional discharge. The pilgrim experiences freedom from social constraints, and finds in themselves the ability to tolerate different thoughts and cultures. This is a spiritual experience of being in a community regardless of the differences in the social class, culture, and beliefs, which cannot be reached in the pilgrims' everyday life, and that is why they tend to repeat the journey and the experience. The visitors to the Rumi's mausoleum talk about the value of the collective pilgrimage as what makes it pleasant to be in this space. They find the delectable sense of pilgrimage not in a secluded ambiance, but along with the hustle and bustle of the presence of other pilgrims who seek all the same goal (reaching the truth). In fact, tolerance is only conceivable within the spiritual realm of gathering and merging with others. This confirms Guo's (2006) study where it states that the joy of the pilgrimage is part caused by the collective spirit it brings about, where the pilgrim becomes a part of a whole. (Guo2006) In his book, *KhasidarMiqat*, Al-e Ahmad



(2008) also depicts the same sense. In this perspective, tolerance is an act of internalized moral motifs rather than a response to outer factors (such as being punished for insulting a person). In this context, the person who has internalized the culture of tolerance would be embarrassed by breaking and trespassing of the moral norms (such as lying down or being naked in public places). In such situations, tolerance is an objective value to the person, similar to what they experience in values like love and friendship, and it is what propels their individual and group activities (Agius and Ambrosewicz 2003).

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on what was described above, the concept of tolerance is a vast one. Numerous studies with various approaches have been carried out on tolerance. What is meant by this aspect in the present study is an anthropological perspective of tolerance (rather similar to the approach of UNESCO), and particularly cultural tolerance. Here, cultural tolerance is obviously concerned with the issue of tolerance through a cultural perspective. It can be stated that the ambiance of pilgrimage in a place like Rumi's mausoleum in Konya brings people from various cultural backgrounds face to face with the social traditions and norms of another culture as an outsider. In other words, the study attempted to conduct an anthropological study on people of different cultures and subcultures who visited the mausoleum of Rumi as pilgrims in order to examine and analyze their view and approach towards acceptance or non-acceptance of the other from another culture in the same space. As a meeting point of various cultures and an arena for cross-cultural contacts, the Rumi's mausoleum can provide a desirable platform to run an anthropological research focusing on the concept of tolerance. The tolerance being discussed here is of a cultural nature, which produces and reproduces feedbacks based on the experiences from "the other". The culture of tolerance creates a perfect system of moral and spiritual capabilities which can contain tolerating and forbearing behavior. Here, accepting the other is not caused by the fear of punishment, but by an inner belief. What matters in the topic and research works concerned with tolerance is that almost all human societies are faced with a constant challenge of turning the concept of tolerance into an accepted reality and value like

love and peace in their lives. This reality is what reminds the individuals that at the definitive decision making junctures, “we” must be given priority over “I”.

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