

Changing Features of the Concept of Pilgrimage

The example of the Mevlana's Museum in Konya

Pilgrim as a term

In religion and spirituality, a pilgrimage is a long journey or search of great moral significance. Sometimes it is a journey to a shrine of importance to a person's beliefs and faith. Members of many major religions participate in pilgrimages. A person who makes such a journey is called a pilgrim (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pilgrimage>).

According to Fiona Bowie, the typologies of pilgrimage that have evolved are dependent upon the background and intentions of the writers (Bowie 2006: 246). However, we can create a typology based on destination, such as the destination goal, which is the sacred place. Mary Lee Nolan and Sidney Nolan also categorise the term of pilgrimage based on destination. They state that we can use five categories to explore further the nature of pilgrimage (Nolan & Nolan 1989: 325).

These categories are:

1. *Pilgrimage to a sacred place.* The pilgrimage locale may be a physical structure, such as a building or some other construction—for example, the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, Graceland in Tennessee, or the Enfield football ground in Liverpool (Nolan & Nolan 1989: 325–8).

2. *Pilgrimage to a sacred person.* In some cases sanctity is related to a person. The Franciscan monk Padre Pio, who received the stigmata, attracted growing numbers of pilgrims to San Giovanni Rotondo in Italy (Bowie 2006: 247).

3. *Pilgrimage related to a sacred object.* Relics are an obvious example for this section. There are relics in almost every religion, and they have religious power. The pieces of the true cross, holy nails, the Virgin's breast milk and the burial clothes of Jesus in Christianity; Hırka-i Serif (Muhammad's cardigan), Sakal-ı Serif (Muhammad's beard) are some examples of sacred objects in modern times.

4. *Pilgrimage as a sacred text.* The idea of a pilgrimage being based primarily upon sacred text may seem strange, but this is one way of understanding Christian pilgrimages to the Holy Land (Bowie 2006: 248).

5. *Pilgrimage as an allegorical journey.* According to Bowie, all of life and its struggles can be regarded as a journey towards perfection, with Heaven as the goal. Hindu, Buddhist, Islamic Sufi, and Christian traditions have all developed this ideal of the interior pilgrimage (Bowie 2006: 249).

The meaning of travelling in Islamic culture

As in other civilisations and traditions, travel is an important phenomenon when considering changes in Muslim imagined communities. Within the Muslim doctrine certain types of travel, such as *hajj*, *hijra*, *ziyarets*, are encouraged and enjoined.

One of these is the express obligation to undertake the pilgrimage to Mecca during a specified time, the *hajj*. As a term *hajj* refers to 'heading for God, being purified, to be rid of sins etc.' (<http://www.diyenet.gov.tr/turkish/default.asp>). 'Every Muslim, anywhere in the world, is obliged to perform, at least once in a lifetime, the *hajj*, or ritual pilgrimage to Mecca. Although the obligation is a conditioned one—the Muslim is not expected to perform the act if it exceeds his or her physical or economic means—it issues from God Himself, in His Holy Quran.' (Peters 1994: xxi.)

Another travel type is *hijra* which was a compulsory migration from Mecca to Medina. The difference of the *hijra* is that it was an exception in Muhammadan time, in order to escape cruelty and to extend Islam in 622. *Hijra* is the emigration of Muhammad and his followers to the city of Medina, marking the first year of the Islamic calendar (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hijra>).

The type of travel important to our study is *ziyaret*. Visits to local or regional shrines (*ziyaras*) and travel in search of knowledge (*rihla*) provide further examples of religiously inspired travel (Eickelman & Piscatori 1990: 5).

The saints whose shrines remain to be visited are seen as active personalities (*zat*), to whom respect is due because of the greater respect which they showed to God. Miracle stories tell of the saints' extraordinary qualities and it is believed that they have the power not only to punish disrespect but also to make positive interventions in the world of the living. (Tapper 1990: 247.)

Change of the culture

Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi says the following words in one of his quatrains named *Towards Innovation*:

How nice to migrate from somewhere every day,
How nice to be somewhere every day,
How nice to flow without blur and freezing, gone with the past my dear,
No matter sayings exist in the past, now we need to say something new
(Bal 2007: 166).

The change Mevlana emphasizes is actually the only rule/policy of life and culture that has not changed since the creation of the human being. Individuals and communities, tribes, states have come and gone, but cultures and civilizations protect their continuity through ongoing change. Change and continuity are perceived as opposite concepts, but this perception is wrong. Because the perception called 'continuity' (uninterruption) can be advocated to be realized only by the role of change or the process. Under constantly changing environmental conditions, those who do not change and do not keep up with these changes are lost in time. (Güvenç 2004: 25.) Accordingly, becoming increasingly diverse must be a basic feature of various societies to guarantee compatible interaction between groups and individuals with multiple, various, dynamic cultural identities and the ambitions of living together.

The concept of 'culture' was published in *Primitive Culture* by Edward Tylor for the first time in 1871. Tylor defines culture as follows: 'Culture is a complex body including information, art, ethics, traditions and other similar skills and habits gained by man as a member of society' (Burke 2006: 9). Culture in each community is different in content and its scope is mostly quite different. But the culture industry aims at mixing old and known things with new, as a form of a new feature. In all branches of this industry, the products are shaped by some people in order to be consumed by others; they determine the nature of consumption for large scales of people and products according to a certain plan. The culture industry integrates consumers deliberately. From this perspective, it is said that it has not actually done anything but alienated the society from its major culture by transferring cultural products. (Tarhan 2007: 180.) We can say that the nineteenth century was the time when cultural products started to be materialised. Thus, the 'consumer culture' class was born. Moreover, changes in the rich cultural values and the loss of national and local cultural elements—which are part of the effect of consump-

Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi's tomb, the 'Green Tomb'. Photo <http://www.tmesimler.com/postcard.img3180.htm>.



tion culture—increase cultural uniformity; hence other problems caused by change of perception have emerged.

Here, the most important point to consider is the faith–culture–art–market relationship; this has to be balanced in a healthy way. Because today, the global economic system, in other words the consumption culture structure, affects everything from politics to economy, from individuals to society, from belief systems to cultural values and from human–society–culture–art relationships to all other areas that change our lives. The process of change in the world takes the shape of a transformational process. We can say that all of the changes and transformation processes experienced today give birth to some new and different concepts like 'faith tourism'.

The relationship between faith and tourism

Because of religion's big effect on travelling, tourism and religion are related with each other. Religion is a factor which canalises people to travelling. Religious buildings, rituals, spiritual festivals, beliefs and spiritual events are factors that cause people to the travel and direct them towards faith tourism.

Unlike other tourism types, people travel to sacred places to fulfil the sacred duties which are their religious obligations. Because worshipping is related to them, people travel to these places. (Usta 2001: 18.)

The number of people who travel to fulfil their sacred duties is constantly increasing, because religion is important for most people. Therefore the number of travelling people is increasing day by day and this creates a huge income for the tourism sector. (Herbert 2001: 312.)



Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi. Photo <http://www.sufism.20m.com/mesnevi.htm>.

To understand the importance of the relationship between religion and tourism, we have to understand the economic and sociological dimensions of religion and the effects of these on tourism. The economic dimension of religion on tourism has always charmed tourism investors, because people easily spend much more money for sacred duties as compared to ordinary travels. As a result of this, tourist business investments are moving into the faith tourism area. Nowadays tourism, which is an economic and aggregate event that creates serious cultural and political effects, has important consequences especially on international relationships. (Akat 2000: 24.)

People can reach some of their spiritual goals by the aid of faith tourism. We can summarize them as fulfilling spiritual entailments, accomplishing offered votives, being thankful, being satisfied in social and spiritual ways, getting in touch with other people who belong to the same religion, attending conferences about spiritual topics and so on.

The Mevlana Museum as an example in the context of faith tourism

Founded in 1926, the Mevlana Museum is located in a structural complex, which was the Dervish lodge of Mevlana, in Konya. The campus, known as the tomb of Mevlana, is located in an area of approximately 6,500 square meters. Today, the total area has increased to nearly 18,000 square meters, after additions that were made at the end of the nineteenth century and additional territories that were arranged as rose gardens. The Mevlana Museum is the second highest earning museum among those under the supervision of the

Ministry of Culture. Particularly in 2007, designated the 'World Mevlana Year' by UNESCO, Mevlana was celebrated through several activities all around the world. The number of annual visitors exceeded 1.5 million people.

The tomb that was built on Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi's grave is called 'The Green Tomb'. The place where the Green Tomb is located used to be Mevlana's lodge. The west part of the lodge is surrounded by rooms of dervishes. There are three gates in the lodge. The western gate, which was used by dervishes, is called the 'Dervishan Gate'. The second gate is called 'The Garden of Soul', located in front of the 'Üçler (Triple) Graveyard'. And the last one is located in the northern side of the tomb, called 'Çelebi [degree, given to grand-masters of Mevlana order] Gate'.

Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi was raised in the social and cultural environment of the thirteenth century, and the social and cultural events of that era influenced him deeply. Mevlana's father's faith in the Islamic system of mysticism, which is based on the Islam concept of *takva* (fear of Allah), influenced Mevlana's intact, pure soul towards itself. Starting from his early childhood, Mevlana reflected the scars inflicted on him, due to the mind movements of the culture that he lived in, as love poems; actually he was an interpreter of his own century's and society's problems. (Aydın 2002: 11-12.)

Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi was born in Balkh in Khurasan in September 1207 as the son of Baha'al-Din Walad, a man noted for his learning and himself a Sufi. In 1219 Baha'al-Din fled with his family from Balkh because of the impending invasion of the Mongols. After several years of wandering, he finally settled in Konya in present day Turkey, where he occupied a high religious office and was given the title 'king of the religious scholars' (*sultan al-ulema*). At the death of Baha'al-Din in 1231, Jalal al-Din succeeded him in his religious function. Following in his father's footsteps, Mevlana became attracted to Sufism early in life and became the disciple of a number of spiritual masters. Perhaps the most important occurrence in his spiritual life was his meeting at the age of thirty-seven with a wandering Sufi named Shams al-Din of Tabriz. For the remaining years of his life Mevlana was a Sufi who radiated the intoxication of Divine Love. In addition to writing voluminously, he trained a large number of disciples, from whom was to stem the great Mevlevi order of Sufism. He died on 17 December 1273. (Chittick 2005: 4.)

Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi was 22 years old when he arrived in Konya. He lived there until his death at the age of 66. The city afforded him the atmosphere and the opportunity to evolve and express his new ideas, which incorporated cultural values from the diverse religions and sects active in the Seljuk capital. He achieved distinction as a young theologian and Sufi. It

was in Konya that his philosophy engendered the Mevlevi movement or sect. Mevlana's ideas and ideals of spiritual purity, love and understanding, the aesthetic dimensions of faith, humanism, intellectual freedom and universalism found fertile ground and took root in the heartland of Anatolia (Halman & And 1983: 17). According to Irene Melikoff, Mevlana was a humanist, who invites people to the union of love. And this is his powerful side (Subaşı 2007: 155).

You are the example of God's secrets,
You are the mirror of God's beauty,
There is no subject aside from you in the universe,
You are the one what you are looking for.
(Halıcı 1986: 46).

However, for Mevlana the main issue is human. Religions, ethics and philosophies are just tools for making people happier. Loving God by seeing people and his other creations, by not blaming anyone, by not discriminating people as black or white, poor or rich, Christian or Muslim, by knowing and loving people just because of their humanity, in other words just because they are creations of God. (Subaşı 2007: 157)

Although Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi is a theologian, for Eva De Vitray Meyerovitch, he is a great thinker. She stated about him: 'Can you imagine that even in 13th century, he was teaching if you cut the atom you would find the core with planets circulating around it. He was definitely aware of atomic energy and warning us to be careful because crashing atoms can convert the world to ash.' (Subaşı 2007: 135)

Data analysis

To determine the visitors' intention for coming to the museum, short surveys were made among domestic and foreign visitors who came to visit the Mevlana Museum. Our sample group was chosen with the random sample method. To provide quantitative equality, surveys were conducted on 20 domestic and 20 foreign visitors. Surveys were not conducted on crowded tourist groups, in order to provide national or local diversity.

The most significant feature of the survey was obtaining information in as short an amount of time as possible. The survey was conducted just before people entered the museum because participants had limited time, so the

questions were short; getting relevant information for our study as quickly as possible and not boring the participants was our primary goal.

The basic point of the survey was determining the visitor's intention with visiting the museum on a classification based on some features of the participants. Therefore, the participants were asked some purposive questions, such as their age, sex, nationality, place of residence, knowledge of Mevlana, previous visits to the museum if any, and their favourite part of the museum.

Eight of the domestic participants were women, twelve of them were men. The number of the foreign participants was the same.

Dispersion of women and men among visitors.

	Women	Men
Domestic visitors	8	12
Foreign visitors	8	12

Dispersion among domestic and foreign visitors.

Domestic visitors	20
Foreign visitors	20
Total	40

In question 3, the nationality of the participant was asked, to determine participants' profiles. Among the participants there were eight German, two Australian, Swiss, Canadian, North-American and Japanese each, and one French and a South African. We can say that the Mevlana Museum has a large scale of visitors from all over the world, but especially from Europe. However, it should be stated that not all of the foreign visitors to the Mevlana Museum are in Turkey only for visiting Mevlana or Konya. Package tours are provided especially for the Cappadocia area and both Nevsehir (Cappadocia) and Konya (Mevlana) are included in these packages.

Distribution of the nationality of visitors.

Australian	German	Swiss	Canadian	American	French	S. African	Japanese
2	8	2	2	2	1	1	2

In the fourth question it was asked where the visitors came from, in order to determine whether the domestic visitors were from Konya or elsewhere in Turkey. Only two of the visitors were from Konya. The rest of the domestic visitors can be named as domestic tourists, because they were in Konya just for visiting. When we look at the distribution of cities tourists were coming from there were five from Ankara, three from Istanbul and one from Kayseri, Mersin, Kahramanmaraş, Antalya, Trabzon, Adana, Hatay, Nevşehir, Bursa and İzmir. In general, Konya's geographical situation, located on intercity roads, affects the museum's visitors even when people do not aim to visit Konya or Mevlana museum at first. Most people have the time to visit the museum when they on their way to somewhere else. In addition, the numbers of visitors from adjacent cities of Konya can not be underestimated.

Distribution of cities where tourists were coming from.

	Konya	Other cities
Domestic visitors	2	18
Foreign visitors	–	20

When we look at the frequency of the visitors returning to the museum, it is more common for the domestic visitors. Only two of the foreign visitors stated they came to the Mevlana Museum frequently, and only one of the rest stated that he had come to the museum once before. It was the first visit for the rest of the 17 foreign visitors. Whereas five local visitors stated they come frequently, ten stated that they had come to the museum a couple of times before. Five of the local visitors stated that this was their first visit to the museum. As a result of these numbers, we can say that locals visited the museum more frequently. This is naturally related to the accessibility of the museum for these visitors.

Frequency of the visitors returning to the museum.

	First visit	Second visit or more	Frequent visits
Domestic visitors	5	10	5
Foreign visitors	17	1	2

Nevertheless, seasonal differences are observed both for local and foreign visitors. Especially in December, a tourism peak is common and the week follow-

ing December 19th—government and local places arrange activities, because this week is the most important season for the Mevlevi doctrine. December 19th refers to Mevlana’s day of death and it is also a blessed day, due to his convergence with Allah. Therefore, it is possible that so many people—local and foreign interested in the Mevlevi doctrine—prefer to come again especially at that time of year.

The odes on the sarcophagus in Mevlana’s tomb are related to death. However, the idea of death is combined with a reunion with God. Therefore death should be evaluated as happiness. Do not think that death is a separation, do not say goodbye to the dead ones. Death seems as death in this world; however it is a rebirth in the other side. (Halicı 1986: 115).

When we asked why they had come to the Mevlana Museum before, foreign visitors stated that the reason for visiting Mevlana frequently was Mevlana’s sacred personality. Seven local visitors mentioned this, too. On the other hand, six local visitors stated their main visiting area is Konya, and for this reason they come to the Mevlana museum, too. Only two local visitors gave as their reason that they were walking around with their guests. None of the participants stated that their visiting reason was in order to offer a votive.

The purpose of the former visits.

	Mevlana’s holiness	Visiting Konya	Guiding guests	Offering votive
Domestic visitors	7	6	2	–
Foreign visitors	3	–	–	–

These results show that it is a tradition to visit the Mevlana Museum. This tradition is seen in connection with almost every tomb, even if it is prohibited to be visited by law. However, we should say that the Mevlana Museum is not an exception, but precautions taken by the government is protecting the museum from false beliefs and superstitions. For instance, an elliptical stone sculpture created by Wolfgang Laib, a German artist, was abrogated from the Mevlana Museum’s garden in 1983, because the community believed that that stone had fallen from the sky and it had some healing features. The most common superstition about it is that if an infertile woman sits on the stone, she will have a baby as soon as possible. (<http://muze.semazen.net/content.php?id=00113>.)

Another question concerned professional help. We asked the visitors: ‘When you came here before, did you use the services of a tourism agency?’

Only one local visitor stated that she had done so. Fourteen local visitors stated they did not need help, they knew where to go themselves. Although the number of foreign visitors who came to the museum frequently was quite small, one of them stated (s)he did not need help. Another two people had used the services of a tourism agency.

Need of professional assistance during previous visits.

	Independent visitors	With tourism agency
Domestic visitors	14	1
Foreign visitors	3	–

Another question was whether the participants had acquired any previous information about Mevlana or not. Seven people among the foreigner participants said yes, three said yes but not in much detail, eight of them said they had got information just before coming to visit, via the internet or books, and two of them mentioned they would get information in the museum. We see the differences between local and foreigner visitors/participants. Eight local visitors said they had acquired prior information, five of them said they had information but not much in detail, and only two of them said they got the information just before coming to the museum from the internet or books. Six visitors said that they would get information from the museum itself.

Previous information about the museum.

	Acquired prior information	Acquired prior general information	Acquired information shortly before visit	Acquired information from the museum
Domestic visitors	8	5	2	5
Foreign visitors	7	3	8	2

The number of people who had visited other museums and historical places in Konya is as follows: fifteen people among the local visitors and twelve among the foreign visitors mentioned that they did not visit other museums or historical places. The number of people, who said that they had not visited any other museums yet, was one of the local visitors and five of the foreign visitors. İnce Minare, Sırçalı Mosque, Allaaddin Mosque, Karatay Madrasah and

Visiting other museums or historical places.

	Visited only the Mevlana Museum	Visited other museums later	Had visited other museums already
Domestic visitors	15	1	4
Foreign visitors	12	5	3

the Ceramic Museum were some of the other museums and historical places which were visited by four local and three foreign visitors.

The last question concerned the visitor's favourite part of the museum. According to the answers, it was understood that almost every visitor liked the museum very much. However, some parts of the museum were especially mentioned, such as the tomb section, the section of handwritten Qurans and the tomb's roof and doors. In addition, due to the meaning of being a Muslim, local visitors mentioned that they liked the music played in the museum (sound of reed flute) and the section of the *sakal-ı serif* (prophet's beard).

Conclusion

Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi was a philosopher who influenced our era with his 'humanist' thoughts, his invitation towards everybody to friendship and brotherhood and his ideas about love and humanism. The museum, opened in his name in 1926 in Konya has been converted into a special place, describing Mevlevi's way of life, telling the history of the Mevlana Dervish lodge and exhibiting related works with religious historical values. This important Museum, attracting many visitors from all over the world, including Turkey, represents unique examples both in architecture and genuine works of arts from Seljuk and the Ottoman period.

Today faith tourism, emerging as a business sector, due to the increasing number of travelling people everyday, fulfils the space of the religious obligations related to travelling and also shows itself in religious aspects, not only pertaining to the major dimensions of a religion, but also by affecting all other religion-related rituals. The Mevlana Museum has become one of the places affected by the faith tourism. It has turned into an economic resource and become an important place for advertising Turkey, having visitors any time of year. Previously, the Sema ceremony (the whirling of dervishes is also called



Whirling Dervish. Design Ingrid Schaar, <http://www.sufism.20m.com/mesnevi.htm>.

a Sema)* has been offered to viewers only in December, but today in certain restaurants after eating Mevlana, which is a name of meal (a kind of pita), the show is offered to customers, as a kind of talent show or movie. It has become a tradition to, before the show, to buy souvenirs popular among both domestic and foreign tourists: Mevlana sugar and Mevlevi bric-a-brac.

Today, we live in a world formed by the culture of consumption, thus in this respect Mevlana and the Mevlana Museum certainly present nothing unusual to the public; they blend economic elements with faith tourism. All over the

world, we can see innumerable examples like this; faith tourism gives new characteristics and meanings to old places. However, this does not mean that Mevlana's religious importance is decreased or totally lost. As we can understand from the visitors' reports, the museum still continues to stand without exposing any corruption through the years, owing to the thoughts of Mevlana about 'peace', 'divine love' and 'tolerance', which embraces humanity. The most important suggestion that is to be made by us for such an important place containing numerous kinds of cultural values is, that it must be maintained

* The Sema represents a mystical journey of man's spiritual ascent through mind and love to 'Perfect'. Turning towards the truth, the follower grows through love, deserts his ego, finds the truth and arrives at the 'Perfect'. He then returns from this spiritual journey as a man who has reached maturity and a greater perfection, so as to love and to be of service to the whole of creation. Rumi has said in reference to Sema, 'For them it is the Sema of this world and the other. Even more for the circle of dancers within the Sema who turn and have in their midst, their own Ka'aba.' which relates Sema to the pilgrimage to Mecca, in that both are intended to bring all who are involved closer to God (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sema>).

and renewed on a regular basis and new exhibition styles must be given to the place, which suit world standards and fulfil the requirements of our era.

Come!

Come whoever you are.

Doesn't matter if you are an unbeliever.

Doesn't matter if you have fallen a thousand times.

Come!

Come whoever you are. For this is not the door of hopelessness.

Come.

Just as you are. (Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi)

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