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TURKISH STUDENTS' SPIRITUALITY TODAY

BY

MERVE ALTINLI MACIĆ

THESIS SUBMITTED FOR

THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

(PhD)

DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY AND RELIGION

DURHAM UNIVERSITY

JANUARY 2017

Abstract

TURKISH STUDENTS' SPIRITUALITY TODAY

Merve Altınlı Macić

Spirituality is a universal phenomenon; however, its conceptualization can differ from one culture to another. The meaning of the concept has been changing since the last couple of decades. Even though it has been previously regarded as a religious concept in terms of institutional organized religion, its meaning has altered over time initially towards personal spirituality based on religion, and then, towards spirituality totally untethered from religion in which popular interest is growing. This shift in its meaning attracted the attention of researchers, and therefore, it has become a topic of concern in academia. Nevertheless, the majority of studies have mainly been conducted in western countries with largely Christian populations. On the other hand, the research in other parts of the world is relatively scarce. Turkey is a country that forms a bridge between the West and the East, and historically has a religious culture, with a Muslim majority population. It has begun embracing western values along with the process of secularisation since the beginning of the last century. This westernizing trend has become even more evident in the so-called global era. Therefore, the objective of this investigation is to explore the contemporary perceptions of spirituality in a Turkish context. Moreover, it aims to examine whether the popular perceptions of spirituality that emerged in the western world exist in Turkey. Accordingly, qualitative interviews have been conducted with undergraduate and postgraduate university students from the departments of Psychology and Theology in Turkey. Consequently, it is found that the understandings of the term among the participants are similar to contemporary definitions of spirituality in the West. Correspondingly, it is argued that the western European conceptualisations of the term might be applicable with some qualifications in the Turkish context since there is not a substantial difference between the perceptions of spirituality in the West and Turkey.

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DECLARATION

This work has been submitted to the University of Durham in accordance with the regulations for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

It is my own work, and none of it has been previously submitted to the University of Durham or any other university.

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STATEMENT OF COPYRIGHT

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the Ministry of National Education of the Republic of Turkey, which have brought this present project to life.

I would like to express my very great appreciation to my supervisors *Professor Christopher Charles Holland Cook* and *Professor Douglas James Davies* for their guidance, understanding, and valuable and constructive suggestions during my study. They provided insight and expertise that assisted the research, and without their supervision and constant help, this thesis would not have been complete. I am also very appreciative to *Professor Rachel Blass* for introducing me to the topic of contemporary spirituality and for her lectures, and to *Professor Kate Miriam Loewenthal* for her contributions to my knowledge during MA at Heythrop College. Thank you!

I am indebted to the participants of my research who willingly helped me for the interviews, for their honesty and enthusiasm, and for sharing their stories with me, and those people who put us in contact with the volunteers. Without them, this study would not have been possible.

I am grateful indeed to my nearest and dearest in Durham who made it possible to survive my PhD journey with their kindness, support, encouragement, uplifting spirit, and prayers. Especially, *Abeer O. Al-Mahdawi*, *Holly Flynn-Piercy*, *Rachel Davies*, *Jeanette Hagen*, *Katie Girsch Marcar*, *Eda Akdemir*, *Naci Akdemir*, *Feyza Saçmalı*, *Arzu Soloiman*, *Ravza Altuntaş Çakır*, *Mahshid Turner*, *Ayşe Yazıcı*, *Esma Şencal*, *Meral Özçelik*, *Ayşe Dönmez, Hatice Nur Keskin*, and all others whom I could not mention here. You all have been gifts in Durham.

I would like to offer my immeasurable gratitude and heartfelt thanks for my beloved parents; my caring and loving father *Ekrem Altınlı* who urged me begin this study and offered unlimited support constantly throughout this long thesis process, and my mother *Zeynep Altınlı* who helped me complete this thesis with her encouraging words, unconditional love and compassion. Special thanks to both of you for your unwavering confidence in me, and supporting my dreams my entire life. I greatly appreciate the endless support my siblings and their husbands gave to me; the words of encouragement of my sister *Büşra Altınlı Arı* and her husband *Murat Arı*, and the myriad helps of my sister *Beyza Nur Arslan* and her husband *Muhammed Burak Arslan*; you are responsible for countless laughs during this challenging journey. I would like to extend my gratitude to my grandmothers *Güler Güngör Altınlı* & *Sevinç Yasdıman*, my grandfather *Mehmet Emin Yasdıman* and my aunts and uncles for their prayers. Words cannot explain how much I love you all.

I owe huge thanks to my husband *Haris Macić* for his love, joy, sacrifice, forbearance, support, wisdom and insight, who has motivated and encouraged me to persevere over the course of writing my thesis. Special thanks to my sweetest baby boy, my little sunshine, the biggest miracle in my life, my heart *Taha Ilijas Macić* who brightens my life and inspires me in so many ways. I am forever grateful for your presence.

Last, but most certainly not least, to my Lord I owe the deepest gratitude. May I be ever mindful that He is *the Owner of all Praise. To Him all belongs. Indeed, my prayer, my sacrifice, my living, and my dying are for my Lord, the Cherisher of the worlds. My success is not but through Him. Upon Him I have relied, and to Him I return.*

Glory be to Him, forever and ever.

For my father

Ekrem

the most generous person I have ever known

and

in memory of my grandfather

Etem

Rest in peace!

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

"Read in the name of your Lord Who created. He created man from a clot. Proclaim!
And thy Lord is Most Bountiful. Who taught (to write) with the pen.
Taught man what he knew not." (The Qur'an, 96:1-5)

This thesis will focus on the spirituality of university students in Turkey today, and this chapter aims to form the backbone of the dissertation by providing preliminary information to the reader. Accordingly, this introduction includes describing the problem in general by briefly summarising the literature on the problem, then pointing out the gap in the existing literature, and finally addressing how this research dealt with the problem in order to fill the gap along with the researcher's personal opinion on the issue. At this point, it is important to note the value of the researcher's opinion as Doherty (2009) arguably highlights the importance of providing authors and researchers' own religious and spiritual backgrounds including their religious and/or spiritual beliefs and/or affiliation, stating

> This omission of autobiographical information is unfortunate, because readers inevitably wonder how an author's religious background and current orientation affect the research or writing. No one can be fully neutral or objective about the values-saturated domain of religion and spirituality. (p. 216)

In recent decades, the concept of spirituality has been in the process of redefinition without being associated with religion in western world, which may be due to the secularising trends therewith, and therefore, a final agreement of the definition and characteristics of

spirituality in literature has yet to be made. The growing popular interest in this topic led researchers to meticulously study, explore, and discuss spirituality scientifically within the framework of various fields such as theology, sociology, psychology, and psychiatry. Academic studies on the subject regard spirituality as both a private and social phenomenon, which plays an important role in individuals' lives, and has positive and negative impacts on both mental and physical health. Even though some research found that spirituality might cause anxiety and distress, the majority of studies show that spirituality has a positive effect on human functioning by bringing happiness, joy, hope, love, and other good feelings and emotions to individuals. Therefore, these studies continue to provide an insight and knowledge to human service sectors and assist in the yielding towards a different dimension on health care. Moreover, a large number of studies indicate that spirituality is a multidimensional construct, which is a broader concept than religion, and people refer to several foundations of spirituality such as transcendence, relationships, meaning, and purpose in their definitions of the word. In spite of research separating spirituality from religion and attributing a diversity of definitions to the concept, there are scholars who argue that differentiating spirituality from religion creates vagueness. Within this context, there are also debates on the meanings of the words that are used in definitions of spirituality, such as transcendence and the sacred. Due to such reasons, whether spirituality is a religious term and whether it can be conceptualised universally is a controversial issue. It is necessary to explain such issues about the contemporary spirituality and secularising trends, which are considered as the main factor behind the shift in the meaning of spirituality from its religious context towards its modern sense in order to provide general information about the problem of the dissertation. Therefore, this topic will be fully analysed in Chapter 2.

On a personal level, I believe spirituality is maintaining a sincere relationship with God; however, I understand the format of this relationship in an Islamic framework. Knowledge about God ensures loving Him and the sincere relationship with Him. The best method of knowing Him is reading the things He has sent to us. I can divide this into two groups one of which is His book, the Holy Qur'an, and the other is creation and His creatures. Reading the former helps the reader "read" the latter and understand it, and vice versa. In other words, reading the Qur'an, we can feel, understand, and know God, as a theoretical work. In reading the creation and the creatures, we put the former reading (of the Qur'an) into practice just as in a fieldwork. We obey God's orders and prohibitions because of our relationship with God, our love, and respect towards Him. Therefore, we not only strengthen

our connection with God through rituals, but also establish and shape our relationships with other creatures, with the universe and nature through His orders. I believe that sincere relationship with God brings with it moral applications, which provide harmony in social life and enrich relationships among people. The devout connection to Him helps the individual find sincerity in the relationship with himself/herself, with others, with nature and the universe. Feelings, such as love, respect and sincerity and such that are experienced in these contexts (the relationship among the individual, God, others, and the universe) shape the basis of an individual's spirituality. I believe, as a Muslim, spirituality is the vision, worldview, ideology, and mission that the Qur'an brings to human beings. It also helps us to live faithfully and sincerely for the sake of this ideology and to improve our sincerity with God, which serves as a basis of the relationship among the individual, God, others, nature and the universe.

I was born and grew up in a conservative religious family. Until I started university, my environment and my interactions were with those that had a similar mind-set to my family. I became friends with the children of my parents' friends. I went to a religious college and my friends were people who had a very similar world-view to us. It was only when I started university that I had the opportunity to meet new people from different cultures and backgrounds and get to know their life-styles and world-views for the first time. I was a student in the department of Theology; however, I stayed in a dormitory that included students from different life-styles. There I made new friends who were very different from me. After my undergraduate education, I came to the UK to do a Masters and again had a very wide range of friends, this time from different countries as well as cultures. This new environment changed my perspective on spirituality and helped me form the idea of spirituality as potentially experienced by all human beings in different ways. Moreover, it summoned my curiosity and triggered my desire to discover worldviews of others. Furthermore, the academic papers I read on non-religious conceptualisations of spirituality attracted me to study this subject even more. Notwithstanding the fact that I relate spirituality to the relationship with God, to Islam, and to fulfilling religious duties including daily rituals and social moral codes, I wanted to learn life stories and perceptions of spirituality of others through this research. Therefore, I took the position and belief that spirituality belongs to all humankind and spiritual life can be built outside the boundaries of religion. In addition, I gained my Masters' degree in the field of Psychology of Religion, which helped me

understand my own approach to spirituality and widened my perspective further, as Pargament and Mahoney (2009) state

> Researchers need to gain some basic education in the psychology of religion and spirituality and to examine their own preconceptions and attitudes toward spirituality before they engage in this type of study. (p. 616)

Eventually, I decided to investigate the understanding of spirituality in Turkey, and hereby, my PhD journey began. The majority of the studies conducted on spirituality are mostly on western cultures and Christian majority countries. Therefore, there is an urgent need for studies covering different cultural and religious settings. Turkey has a strategic cultural and geographic position between the East and the West, which gives it an interesting position to understand its affairs since it forms as a bridge between civilizations. Moreover, I was curious about the current situation in my country, where intellectual and economic developments along with the processes of secularisation, westernisation, and modernity result in social change, and where all of these factors play an important role in setting the stage for shaping the perceptions of religion and spirituality like any other phenomena. A detailed discussion including relevant information about religion, spirituality, and the process of secularisation in Turkey is necessary in order to provide the reader a general overview of the context and this discussion follows in Chapter 3.

The possibility for change in the meanings that people in Turkey attribute to the concept of spirituality led me to conduct a research on new generation with a sample consisting of university students since they are arguably the most affected group in the population as a result of the impacts of such developments. Another reason was that although there is a growing academic interest on this topic, the literature on it is scarce in Turkey. Furthermore, the existing studies mainly employ quantitative methods measuring correlations between variables. Thus, this situation creates a need for qualitative inquiries in order to gather in-depth information about the participants' own descriptions and definitions of the concept of spirituality. This study addresses this gap in the existing literature. The understandings of spirituality and the psychological and social factors behind the conceptualisation of the term cannot be fully discovered by a single research project; however, the current study aims to contribute to the existing literature adding knowledge about the contemporary perceptions of spirituality in a Turkish context. Hence, our study takes the next step investigating the perceptions of spirituality within a group of university students in Turkey and fills an important gap in literature. It is anticipated that the findings of

this study will be a meaningful and valuable contribution to the field of psychology, religious studies, and to the study of spirituality, including researchers and academics that have similar concerns, and therefore, engage in similar research. It also hopes to serve human service professionals such as health care providers, consultants, therapists, and clerics as well. Taken altogether, this research is designed to investigate the concept of spirituality as understood by university students in Turkey. Therefore, the project aims to answer several research questions, such as how the research sample perceive, experience, and express spirituality, what role spirituality plays in their lives, and whether the research sample differentiates spirituality from religion. Detailed discussion about the significance of the study and research questions are provided in Chapter 4.

In order to find answers to the research questions, semi-structured interviews are conducted with university students. Accordingly, Chapter 5 explores how the research design and method is determined and how the interview schedule is developed. Moreover, it examines the research procedures including how the participants are chosen, how pre-pilot and pilot studies are conducted, and how the data are collected through the main interviews. In addition, the same chapter presents data processing and analysis along with the ethical considerations. Chapter 6 introduces the research findings, which are illustrated with quotations from the subjects' own words, while Chapter 7 hosts the discussion and interpretation of the findings where comments are provided with reference to the Turkish context and relevant literature. The chapter also identifies the limitations of the study. Finally, Chapter 8 concludes the whole dissertation by presenting main findings of the study, expounding the implications and contributions of the study, and providing recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 2

FACTORS IN WESTERN SPIRITUALITY

2.1 Introduction

As briefly touched upon in the first chapter, this and the following chapter are reserved for further introductory explorations of the key concept of this study, in this case, spirituality. Providing a general background on the journey of the concept of spirituality from its religious roots to its contemporary usage in the West should be helpful for the reader to find his/her way through the implications and cross-references throughout the study. Within this framework, this chapter introduces a brief history of spirituality in the West by covering the process of secularisation, secularising trends, and their important impacts on the redefinition of spirituality. Furthermore, the shift from traditional religion to contemporary understandings of spirituality along with several major foundations of the concept as appearing in the western literature is presented. This introductory chapter is necessary because it almost seems impossible to talk about spirituality in Turkey, without having sufficient understanding of the emergence of popular spirituality and its development in the West. Moreover, it is also important to note that it is not possible to talk about all of the conceptualisations of spirituality, which exist in the contemporary scientific studies in such a short dissertation, since spirituality and religion have a contested and debated nature and there are numerous books and articles published on both topics in literature. For instance, mysticism/mystical spirituality, which is another broad inquiry in western spirituality, is not explored in the study.

2.2 *Religio* and *Spiritus*

The word religion derives from the Latin word *religio,* which is connected with *religare* meaning to tie or to bind. It is also connected with *relegere* meaning to re-read, to read over in speech or thought. Modern writers have accommodated the former as the root of the word religion more than the latter (Hoyt, 1912). The concept of religion has a great number of different meanings and it means something different to everyone. “The word religion cannot

stand for any single principle or essence, but is rather a collective name" (James, 2002, 26). However, it is important to note that it has many characteristics.

Religion has been a topic of debate for centuries. There are various arguments regarding the definitions of the term. In fact, it is argued, "any definition of religion is likely to be satisfactory only to its author" (Yinger, 1967, 18). Moreover, the possibility of a universal definition of religion is a subject of debate on its own; however, its distinguishing features may be identified (Dresser, 1992). Therefore, it is clear that formulating a definition that appeals to all cultures and traditions is challenging. As religion is a contested and complicated topic, it is impossible to discuss and engage a full analysis of it in this dissertation. However, it should be acknowledged that the history of spirituality in the West is deeply related to its religious tradition.

As this is beyond the scope of this study, only a limited number of definitions of religion can be given here. Generally, scholars of religion and social scientists typically define religion in two ways: individualistic and social (Chernus, n.d.). The first way of usage signifies an individual's inner religious experience. Accordingly, the Latin *religio* signifies "a bond between humanity and some greater-than-human power" (Hill, et al, 2000, 56). Therefore, it is believed that religion is "a search for significance in ways related to the sacred" (Zinnbauer & Pargament, 2005); it "refer(s) to all aspects of human relationship to the Divine or transcendent that which is greater than us" (Nelson, 2009, 3). Hence, "beliefs, practices, and rituals related to the sacred, beliefs about spirits, both good (angels) and bad (demons)" are considered within religion by most scholars (Koenig, 2012, 37), and it is "immanent in our bodily life, daily experiences, and practices" (Nelson, 2009, 4). In short, religion is recognized as "(more or less) organized search for the spiritual" (Emmons, 2003, 5). In this sense, some scholars (Chernus, n.d.) define religion in terms of a particular kind of individual experience. Nelson (2009) states that

> Ninian Smart (1998) identifies religion as a human activity with some or all of the following dimensions: (1) practical and ritual, including prayer, worship, and meditation; (2) experiential and emotional; (3) narrative or mythic; (4) doctrinal and philosophical; (5) ethical and legal; (6) social and institutional; and (7) material, including buildings and other artefacts. (p. 6)

The second usage of the concept of religion is its social dimension, which focuses on "societies, or groups of people (family, tribe, notion, etc.), rather than individual experience" in social-scientific approach (Chernus, n.d.). This dissertation is limited to Geertz's definition

of religion, because his reference to moods and motivations is naturally outlined within issues of spirituality that are important for this dissertation. Geertz (1973) defines religion as:

> (1) A system of symbols (2) which acts to establish powerful, pervasive and long-lasting moods and motivations in men (3) by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and (4) clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that (5) the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic. (p. 90)

Geertz's symbolic approach to religion embraces the idea of religion being an inherent part of culture; he argues that religion is worldview and one way of seeing things, and he states, "Culture patterns have an intrinsic double aspect: they give meaning, that is objective conceptual form, to social and psychological reality both by shaping themselves to it and by shaping it to themselves" (Geertz, 1973, 93), where Smart (1998) believes that trying to find out the essence in religion causes vagueness and he defines religion as a human activity with several dimensions only. Kunin and Miles-Watson (2006) categorize the definitions of religion into three categories: essentialist, substantialist, and functionalist. The third category might be considered the most useful for our dissertation because it aims to explore the functions of religion in the world. However, classical functionalist definitions of religion focus too much on the role of religion in coping with life, and therefore they miss "the important role religion plays in how people conceive life" (Baker & Miles-Watson, 2010, 19). For instance, some theorists pay an extreme attention on inward spiritual forms of religious life, and the others focus on the outward aspects of religion. Nevertheless, Geertz (1968) offers another way of understanding and defining the concept stating that his focus is "on the socially available "systems of significance" –beliefs, rites, meaningful objects –in terms of which subjective life is ordered and outward behaviour is guided" (p. 95). Accordingly, he focuses on the meanings embodied in the symbols that inform the way people live (the way of life or ethos, "the tone, character, and quality of their life, its moral and aesthetic style and mood") and the way people see the world (worldview) (Geertz, 1973, 89).

Geertz (1973) argues that they altogether construct religious phenomena, religion unites worldview with ethos. Accordingly, religion is a model for life and a model of reality and truth and it provides its adherents with meaning. Religious symbols and symbol systems induce dispositions in the worshipper, create motivation, and encourage certain moods to make sense of the world. It motivates persisting negative or positive tendencies in its followers to make them "perform certain sorts of acts and experience" (p. 96) and provides them strong moods and feelings. Moreover, religion creates general ideas of order of existence by giving ultimate explanations of the world especially in difficult times (in

bafflement, suffering, and moral dilemmas) "at the limits of (its adherent's) analytic capacities, at the limits of his(/her) powers of endurance, and at the limits of his(/her) moral insight" (p. 100), and therefore by persuading its followers that there is a meaningful order in the world and that these religious conceptions are indeed true and really real. Hence, religion convinces its adherents that their moods, emotions, feelings, dispositions and actions all come from God; they are good and fulfilling. In short, Geertz (1973) emphasizes the role religion plays in the interaction between moods and motivations, in other words "between inside cognitive structures and outside physical engagement" (Baker & Miles-Watson, 2008, 451). Religion and the sacred pervade everything in the lives of the followers and penetrate their "daily thoughts, words and actions" (Baker & Miles-Watson, 2008, 451).

Geertz's definition and theory of religion is one of the most famous, widely used and influential definitions, yet it has been criticized by some thinkers. Even though examining all of them here is not possible[1], it is important to mention some of the main points in Asad's criticism of Geertz's approach to religion in order to present an Islamic perspective on the subject. Asad (1993) criticizes the anthropological attempts to define and universalize religion stating that religion cannot be defined transhistorically:

> There cannot be a universal definition of religion, not only because its constituent elements and relationships are historically specific, but because that definition is itself the historical product of discursive processes. (p. 29)

Moreover, he specifically makes it clear that "to conceptualize Islam as the object of an anthropological study is not as simple matter as some writers would have us suppose" (Asad, 1986, 1). He points out that Geertz prioritizes belief, thought and ideas before practice, action and traditions, and he ignores the historical events and processes, politics and power. He also protests Geertz's dialectic tendency toward isomorphism, in other words his view of "religion as part of a two-way process" (Baker & Miles-Watson, 2008, 451). Asad (1993) thinks that the fundamental question is "with the assumption that there are two separate levels –the cultural, on the one side (consisting of symbols) and the social and psychological, on the other –which interact" (p. 118). In addition, he believes that religion has a wider socio-political context and reality than a system of symbols, and therefore events and conditions around symbols are meaningful, stating that "Symbol is not an object which serves as a vehicle for conception, it is itself the conception" (Asad, 1983, 239). Furthermore, Asad (1983) asserts

[1] See *Issues in the anthropology of Islam: Contributions and critis of Clifford J. Geertz* by Daniel Shinjong Baeq for a comprehensive review of Geertz and the critics of him.

that Geertz does not examine the social and economic environment of the worshipper; he does not explore if there is a relationship between religious experience and the social world, and if so what kind of relationship that is. He advises that, instead of focusing too much on religious symbols and meaning, "concrete sets of historical relations and processes" and "the historical conditions (movements, classes, institutions, ideologies) necessary for the existence of particular religious practices and discourses" are essential for studying religion (1983, 246 & 252) since focusing too much on religious symbols and their meanings lacks "the occurances of events (utterances, practices, dispositions), and the authorizing processes which give those events religious meaning" (Asad, 1983, 245). Moreover, Asad (1993) emphasizes that Geertz's definition of religion has a Christian approach, and therefore he considers the other religions as "a state of mind rather than as constituting activity in the world" (p. 47).

In his book *Religion Observed*, Geertz (1968) explores the diversity of cultural expressions and experiences of Islam and Islamic practice within two distant countries, Morocco and Indonesia that have diferent and quite contrasting sociocultural and traditional structures. Islam was introduced to both societies in different periods (in the seventh century to Morocco, and in the fourteenth century to Indonesia), and Islamic symbols, meanings, and ideas differed greatly because of the dissimilar conditions in each country. After reviewing briefly the histories of the two countries in order to compare and contrast them, he introduces one legendary character from each country, a low-class rustic Sidi Lahsen Lyusi from Morocco and the son of a high royal official townsman Sunan Kalidjaga from Indonesia in order to explain the relationship between cultural and religious forms and political structures. They are the figures demonstrating traditional, cultural, mystical and particular diversities of the classical religious styles: maraboutism in Morocco and illuminationism in Indonesia. What symbolizes religion and spirituality (Islam) in Morocco are fundamental and orthodox "activism, fervor, impetuosity, nerve, toughness, moralism, populism, and almost obsessive self-assertion, the radical intensification of individuality" and in Indonesia are adaptive, gradual and comprehensive "inwardness, imperturbability, patience, poise, sensibility, aestheticism, elitism, and an almost obsessive self-effacement, the radical dissolution of individuality" (Geertz, 1968, 54).

Moreover, Geertz (1968) offers two concepts *force* of a cultural pattern (any symbol system including religion) and its *scope* in order to understand and explain the relationships between the sacred and the secular in forming worldviews of the individual. According to him force refers to the internalization of religion; "the thoroughness with which … a pattern is

internalized in the personalities of the individuals who adopt it, its centrality or marginality in their lives" (p. 111), and he defines scope as "the range of social contexts within which religious considerations are regarded as having more or less direct relevance" (p. 112). He suggests that force and scope differs between the adherents of a religion in each society. In pre-modern societies, high force and high scope is seen, there was not divergence between the religious and the worldly life, however, religion has no longer impact on individuals in modern and post-modern societies, therefore religion "is either separated from or encompassed by the secular fields of relational thought and science" (high force low scope) (Baker & Miles-Watson, 2008, 452-453). Accordingly, even though some adherents of a religion practise religion and experience it powerfully, they might separate religion (the sacred) and their daily life (the secular). For instance, they might think that religionis just for Sundays or they might try to keep religion out of the secular spheres such as education, economy and politics. Geertz's comparison of the two countries demonstrates that the force of religion in Morocco is greater than it is in Indonesia, yet its scope is less; religion has impact on only a few parts of life in Morocco. However, in Indonesia almost everything has more or less a religious, transcendental and metaphysical meaning (Geertz, 1968).

Geertz's *Islam Observed* is also criticized by some scholars. For instance, he is criticized for focusing too much on experiences and ignoring Islamic texts and literature, and therefore his approach and study is considered as "latent Orientalism" (Lukens-Bull, 1999, 3). Furthermore, he is blamed of affirming the idea of *Islams*. El-Zein (1977) states:

> Although he proceeds by assuming a single form of religious experience and a unity of meaning within Islamic tradition, Geertz simultaneously accentuates the diversity in the actual contents of religious experience as lived in the everyday world. (p. 227).

Baker and Miles-Watson (2010) argue that a definition of spirituality emerges from Geertz's definition of religion. They state, "For if religion is the way that spiritual impulses are confirmed, strengthened and communalised then spirituality is the set of predispositions that both form religious experience and are formed by it" (p. 20). Spirituality has been associated with religion for a long time and it was considered that one could not exist without the other. The word 'spirituality' derives from the Latin word *spiritualitas,* associated with the adjective *spiritualis* (Sheldrake, 2007, 2) derived from *spiritus,* which is an abstract word meaning to breathe or to blow, and breath as a noun (Elkins, 1988; Wulff, 1991). The biblical and Qur'anic idea of divine 'breath of life' as an animating principle is another etymological

addition to the meaning of the *spiritus*[2]. This particular connotation is enduring even today, especially as the opposite of *bodily* or *corporeal*.

Historically, the word *spiritualitas* is used to refer to the influence of God in Christian sense, and it first appears in a letter in Latin as "so act as to advance in spirituality" implying "a life according to the Spirit of God" in the beginning of the 5th century (Principe, 1983, 130). Spirituality originally means, "The self-disciplining faith practices of religious believers, including ascetics and monks" (Smith & Denton, 2005, 175). In Christian parlance, its biblical meaning was retained until the twelfth century and later, the word spirituality meant psychological function or aspect, the inner life and subjective experiences of faith more than materiality or corporeality (Wakefield, 1996, 361-363; Roof, 2003). In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the Latin word *spiritualitas* and different forms of this word in French and in English were used "for the clergy as a distinct order of society, and sometimes for ecclesiastical property or revenue" (Principe, 1983; Wulff, 1991; Wakefield, 1996). In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the word spirituality was used in religious sense more often than before, but there were also its pejorative uses by some of the French authors. By the nineteenth century, spirituality still had a devotional content in English; however, it progressively became old-fashioned and was rarely used. In the twentieth century, it drew attention again, even also in many languages and its usage became widespread (Wakefield, 1996; Cook, 2004).

To talk about spirituality and religion as two distinct and stand-alone concepts is a very recent development in our scientific and analytical discourses, as well as in our everyday conversations. Not so long ago, it was unconceivable to talk about spirituality without overt reference to religion, in one way or another. It was only after a long 'secularising process' in the Western society, that by the beginning of the twentieth century we see the first attempts to define spirituality as something independent of religion and to consider it a self-sustaining term. Therefore, this particular change in perception concerning spirituality (and religion) has

[2] "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." (Genesis, 2:7)

"When I have fashioned him (in due proportion) and breathed into him of My spirit, fall ye down in obeisance unto him." (Qur'an, 15:29)

"But He fashioned Him in due proportion, and breathed into him of His spirit. And He gave you (the faculties of) hearing and sight and understanding: little thanks do ye give." (Qur'an, 32:9)

not come unannounced. Consequently, spirituality has become a contested and debated issue over time, and there is no currently agreed on definition (Gibson, 2014).

Before further deepening into the analysis of contemporary spirituality in the West, we should note that if any account involving such topics (and others like religion, secularisation, history, and politics in this case) are not properly defined from the outset, they will be doomed from the start. Dwelling too deep will drown us in such topics that are beyond the limits of this dissertation. A simple reason for this is that these concepts are very hard to define and mostly taken on an intuitive basis. Along these lines, it seems appropriate to treat the concept of spirituality in two different settings, namely, 'spirituality within its historic religious context(s)' and 'spirituality untethered from religion (its current secular usage)', corresponding to the state of affairs before secularising trends had started (roughly up to the beginning of the seventeenth century) and the last century, respectively. The period of about 300 years in between is what we denominate as 'secularizing processes', 'trends,' or simply 'the process of secularisation'. It is noteworthy that, even though secularisation (ambiguous as it may be) seems to be the main factor in the detachment of spirituality from religion in a historical sense, it does not mean that religion does not include any spiritual content today. While religion continues to maintain its own traditionally deeply rooted spiritual content, it is 'spirituality without religion,' that is trying to stay on its own feet without any recourse to religion.

In the earlier periods of Christianity, we can see that spirituality usually referred to one's appropriation of the Spirit of Jesus in life and ministry. One other usage of the word in the early Christian era (though of philosophical origin) is that which pertains to the immaterial soul, as opposed to body. In addition, most of the mystical movements of this early period use the concept of spirituality to describe their anti-materialistic tendencies (Howard, 2008). However, 'spirituality within religion' in this dissertation, as opposed to the contemporary conceptions of spirituality, denotes Pauline/biblical/Christian sense of spirituality, which stands for 'life in Spirit', both on individual and societal level (Sheldrake, 2007, 3). Accordingly, due to the particular circumstances of this study, an Islamic dimension will be introduced in order to account for 'spirituality within its religious context' as understood by people in Turkey.

2.3 Secularisation in the West

Over time, there have been differentiations and polarizations between religion, being bad and negative, and spirituality, being good and positive; and therefore, attempts to separate spirituality from religion and any religious sense. “This change coincided with the greater secularization of Western society” (Boehme, 2015).

> The meanings of spirituality have shifted alongside changing cultural assumptions, the most significant of which is the role of religion in society and its relationship with secularizing trends. (Nolan & Holloway, 2014, 40)

Focusing on the historical changes of this transition might help us understand the shift from religion to various perceptions of spirituality accompanied by secularisation in the Western world. However,

> There are multiple and diverse secularizations in the West and multiple and diverse Western modernities, and they are still mostly associated with fundamental historical differences between Catholic, Protestant, and Byzantine Christianity, and between Lutheran and Calvinist Protestantism.” (Casanova, 2006, 11)

The main research topic of this dissertation is not about the process of secularisation, yet the secularisation paradigm attempts to provide an explanation of the changes in the religious dimension of societies, which the Western world faced throughout the history since the Middle Ages (Bruce, 2011). Therefore, this section aims to be a brief overview based on the accounts of some articles and books written by social scientists and theorists on secularisation. It is not intended to be comprehensive but briefly show the debates and controversies on the process.

Over the last couple of centuries, a steady decrease in religious attendance and practice has appeared in Britain, in Europe, and in the US. Namely, western societies have exhibited certain signs of detachment from religious or divine authority, starting as early as the beginning of seventeenth century (Schultz, 2006). This decline occurred because of several dynamics: the Renaissance and Reformation movements, Scientific Revolution, the age of the Enlightenment, Industrial Revolution, urbanization and geographical discoveries, which are the foundations of modernity (Sheldrake, 2007). They influenced not only the daily lives of European Christians but also their understanding and practising of religion. The impacts of

secularisation (which crudely comprises all of the abovementioned) on the Christian Western world have increased throughout history, and "loosened the dominance of the sacred" (Mills, 1959, 33), so that the interference of religion has definitely been hindered (Yapici, 2007a; Ertit, 2015).

Secularisation has been one of the most complex and contested terms in social sciences[3]. Casanova (2006) emphasizes the significance of distinguishing three different connotations of secularisation in order to make clear discussions about it. Accordingly, the first meaning is "the decline of religious beliefs and practices" among individuals, which "is the most recent but currently the most widespread usage of the term in contemporary academic debates on secularization" (Casanova, 2006, 7).

The second meaning is the privatization of religion, "often understood both as a general modern historical trend and as a normative condition, indeed as a precondition for modern liberal democratic politics" (Casanova, 2006, 7).

Finally, the third meaning is the differentiation of secular spheres (state, economy, and science) from religion. Accordingly, it refers to "the decline in the societal power and significance of religious institutions" and "emancipation from religious institutions and norms," which "is the core component of the classic theories of secularization" (Casanova, 2006, 7-8). It is, in other words, transformation and transposition in institutions, losing connection with religion and no longer being considered as religious, the separation of church and state, "the confiscation of some of the Catholic Church's property after the Reformation" (Schultz, 2006, 172). Accordingly, "knowledge, patterns of behaviour, and institutional arrangements which were once understood as grounded in divine power are transformed into phenomena of purely human creation and responsibility" (Shiner, 1967, 214). It is also regarded as "the transfer of activities from institutions of a religious nature to others without that character" (Sommerville, 1998, 251) Therefore, "the previously accepted symbols, doctrines and institutions lose their prestige and influence. The culmination of secularization would be a religionless society" (Shiner, 1967, 209).

European sociologists use both the first and the third meanings, which are "structurally related components of general process of modernization" (Casanova, 2006, 8). American

[3] For detailed information about the Latin root, meaning and uses of the word, see Shiner, L. (1967). The concept of secularization in empirical research. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 6, 207-220.

sociologists of religion adopt the first meaning and they discard the theory of secularisation "as a European myth" claiming that "in the United States none of the usual indicators of secularization, such as church attendance, frequency of prayer, belief in God, etc., evince any long-term trend" (Casanova, 2006, 8). Casanova argues that the first and second meanings have been criticized since more than two decades, yet the third meaning "remains relatively uncontested in the social sciences, particularly in European sociology" (Casanova, 2006, 9).

Apart from being defined as the decline of religion in general, and beside these three connotations, the word secularization is being used in several other contexts today, including

- Differentiation in social structures, "the separation of religious activities, groups, or ideas from other characteristics of the society" (Sommerville, 1998, 250)
- "Disengagement of society from religion, to limit religion to the sphere of private life" (Shiner, 1967, 212)
- Desacralization of the world (Shiner, 1967, 215)
- Shift in mentalities meaning "a significant shift of attention from ultimate (religious) concerns to proximate concerns" (Sommerville, 1998, 251), "The religious group or the religiously informed society turns its attention from the supernatural and becomes more and more interested in this world" (Shiner, 1967, 211)
- Secularization of a population is different than secularization of a society, and it means where a whole population, the individuals that consist a society, is "characterized by a neglect of religious habits or convictions" (Sommerville, 1998, 251)
- Secularization of religion, which ordinarily is "used in contrast to Christianity" (Sommerville, 1998, 251)

The objective of the secularisation paradigm is "to explain one of the greatest changes in social structure and culture: the displacement of religion from the centre of human life" (Bruce, 2011, 1). Bruce supports the idea of the decline of private religion with his collected data and he states, "Our medieval past was considerably more religious than our modern present" (Bruce, 1996, 55-58). According to the conventional secularisation theory, the more societies become modern, the more secularisation becomes unavoidable (Pearcey, 2004, 71); and therefore, the more religion fades. Wilson (2009) defines secularisation as a "process by which religious institutions, actions, and consciousness lose their significance" (p. 149-150), by which religion is rendered obsolete (Bainbridge, 2011).

The classical secularisation theory defends the idea of when a society undergoes the process of secularisation, it shifts away from being affiliated and identified with religious institutions, values, activities, and ideas towards having non-religious structures. Therefore, "traditional religious symbols and forms have lost force and appeal" (Yinger, 1957, 119); and this situation might be defined as "systematic erosion" (Norris & Inglehart, 2004, 5). Accordingly, the increase in the economic and educational developments, social welfare and healthcare, and separation of the institutions (the family, the economy, and the state, etc.) along with the process of rationalization (Houtman & Aupers, 2008) might lead to a diminution in the importance and influence of God, and therefore, the impact of religion on people's lives decline. Moreover, social and moral orders change, and these changes might have an effect on people's frame of mind and on perceptions of concepts, such as spirituality, gender relations, family, marriage, divorce, and abortion, which have been understood through a religious angle earlier. Thus, such concepts are being attributed new meanings and are being defined from non-religious perspectives (Ertit, 2015).

The conventional secularisation theory that has been described as unfashionable (Bruce, 2011), claimed to be wrong (Berger, 1999) and failed (Stark & Finke, 2000) and criticized by some social thinkers and theorists, such as Martin (1965), Shiner (1967) and Greeley (1972, 2003), following a return to religion in the United States after the 1970s (Schultz, 2006). Berger was one of the advocates of secularisation theory in 1960s, however, afterwards, he wrote, "The world today, with some exceptions […] is as furiously religious as it ever was, and in some places more than ever. This means that a whole body of literature by historians and social scientists loosely labelled 'secularization theory' is essentially mistaken" in the end of 1990s (Berger, 1999, 2). He stated:

> I think what I and most other sociologists of religion wrote in the 1960s about secularization was a mistake. Our underlying argument was that secularization and modernity go hand in hand. With more modernization comes more secularization. It wasn't a crazy theory. There was some evidence for it. But I think it's basically wrong. Most of the world today is certainly not secular. It's very religious. (Berger, 1997, 974)

It was not easy to give up on the conventional secularisation theory entirely; therefore, it needed an update and a new theory was needed. "The tactic of the new believers is to salvage the idea behind the theory but to soften its predictive capacity, or to shift the definition of secularization by emphasizing different aspect of what secularization means" (Schultz, 2006, 175). Many sociologists including Martin (1965), Wilson (1966), Wuthnow (1988); and post-

secularists Stark & Bainbridge (1985), and Stark & Finke (2000); and the ones who wrote about the multidimensional nature of secularisation Dobbelaere (1987), Chaves (1994), and Casanova (1994) focused on some aspects of the decline in religion and change in religious tradition over time, yet did not claim its complete disappearance:

> All have argued for some sort of long-term linear loss in religion's overall political power and personal salience, but none would deny shorter-term instances of religious surges manifest by spurts of personal religiosity and/or spirituality, church growth, and the proliferation of sects and cults – or "new religious movements." (Demerath III, 2003, 213)

Secularisation cannot be applicable for every country, society, culture, and religion. Moreover, there are still questions regarding the efficiency and applicability of secularisation theories in the West. All of the uses of the concept of secularisation have defenders and critics, and it is impossible to give place to everything written on the theory and concept in this dissertation. Moreover, this dissertation does not aim to support or criticise any of the connotations and theories of secularisation, this section is placed here with the aim of giving a brief account of the major debates in this area.

As mentioned earlier, several dynamics such as The Renaissance and Reformation movements, Scientific Revolution, the age of the Enlightenment, Industrial Revolution, urbanization, and geographical discoveries triggered the decline in religious affiliation and practice in Britain, in Europe and in the United States and discredited the authority of the sacred (Mills, 1959).

> The European Enlightenment is one of the many historic sources for the varieties of secular spirituality practiced today. Sometimes referred to as the Age of Reason or the Cult of Reason, the Enlightenment promoted a program of new thinking centred on the belief that humankind should be freed to exercise its own reason unfettered by the shackles of religious superstition and political tyranny. (Wallace, 1996, 75)

Formerly, knowledge about nature and the universe was limited to the information provided by the church, which was unquestionable and beyond the limits of criticism. Natural events were reasoned through divine purpose and the acts of god(s), angels and demons, and other supernatural powers. However, these beliefs began to be questioned after the Scientific Revolution, the emergence of modern science, developments in mathematics, physics, and other branches that influenced the age of Enlightenment, which, along with the Renaissance and the Reformation, resulted in the beginning of the separation of religion from science (Turner, 2015). Views about nature, the universe, and society that were once dictated by the

Church were transformed and refuted by scientists. Thus, since reason became the unique source of knowledge, theology began to be questioned. Reason, science, and the scientific method became the primary way of gaining knowledge on all aspects of life and understanding these aspects, instead of the religious scriptures, which were formerly accepted as the only resource of knowledge (Tierney, et al, 1992). Natural events were begun to be explained by cause and effect relation instead of supernatural course. Therefore, they were no longer thought to be unknown or mysterious (Hughes, et al., 1995). Weber describes rationalization and intellectualization resulting from the reformation and scientific developments as 'the disenchantment of the world' (Weber, 1946, 155). The rise of rationalism and increase in technological developments "undermined the foundations of faith in the supernatural, the mysterious, and the magical" (Norris & Inglehart, 2004, 7) and triggered the distance between human being and supernatural powers; hence, the influence of religion on people's lives declined gradually (Schultz, 2006).

After this transition in the method of seeking knowledge, scholars have begun adopting Humanism as a way of interpreting the world. "The emphasis on the individual found in both the Reformation and the Enlightenment" has lead "to a major shift […] in worldview" (Stevens, 2012, 28). Moreover, the vicissitudes of industrial revolution, capitalism, and urbanization have been effective on the decline of religious impact as well as the Renaissance, Reformation and the Scientific Revolution, as they hindered protecting the conservative structure of the society. Urbanization has decreased the functions of religion such as the authority of God in the lives of people strengthening the commitment to a community (Wilson, 1976). Industrialization has "made religion less arresting and less plausible" (Bruce, 2002, 36). Privatization in the capitalist system has diminished the power of the state, which had a religious identity in the past. Furthermore, since the nineteenth century, three intellectual developments, the idea of evolution, Marxist social theory, and the emergence of modern psychology have affected the perception of what it means to be human, and therefore, "how we think about spirituality" (Sheldrake, 2007, 171). The founders of sociology and nineteenth century philosophers such as Weber, Marx, Durkheim, and Comte, are the key theorists who all noted the gradual modernisation of societies and the decline (and finally disappearance) of the (social) importance and prestige of religion in modern times with the advent of industrial society, and considered religion as an illusion (Giddens, 1997; Norris & Inglehart, 2004; Prothero, 2007). In brief, all these philosophical, educational, and economic changes have had an impact on Christianity, on the place of religion in people's lives; and

therefore, the ideological influence of religion has declined and religious beliefs have not been as effective on people's lives as previously.

2. 4 Spirituality untethered from religion

All major human societies have been affiliated with a religion throughout the human history and spirituality has been traditionally identified with religion, and therefore, it has been used as a religious term, as mentioned earlier. In the past, they have been regarded as overlapping and intertwined, and therefore, they have been used interchangeably (Spilka & McIntosh, 1996); and religious beliefs, practices, and tradition have been the most common ways and forms of experiencing and expressing spirituality. Spirituality is considered as "most central function, […] heart, and soul of religion" (Pargament, et al., 1999, 12). In fact, spirituality is claimed as being "kidnapped by religion. Indeed, more than a few [Christian] religious sects and cults define spirituality as exclusively particular to themselves" (Solomon, 2007, 26). Moreover, the psychologists of religion have not distinguished spirituality and religion traditionally (Wulff, 1998; Zinnbauer & Pargament, 2005). There are some scholars from other fields as well who argue that spirituality and religion are intertwined constructs and cannot be differentiated (Salander, 2006; Greenfield, et al., 2009; Koenig, et al., 2012). For these scholars, separating spirituality from religion creates ambiguity. Accordingly, defining it in numerous ways depending on each individual's definition for themselves, and considering everyone spiritual including secular people and atheists makes the concept difficult to measure for research purposes. Especially, defining spirituality in terms of positive psychological and social states, such as having values, strong relationships with others, and meaning and purpose in life, positive character traits, such as being compassionate and generous, which are the indicators of mental health, and measuring spirituality in this sense and correlating it with other mental health constructs provides tautological results (Koenig, et al., 2012). Likewise, Salander (2006) questions this new trend and states,

> The concept 'spirituality' is not linked to any theory and lacks a systematic meaning, with the implication that it is open to too many connotations and personal meanings. This automatically raises the question whether we are in need of such a diffuse concept –whether it is in fact meaningful. (p. 647)

However, during the late twentieth century and in the beginning of the twenty first century, a transformation in religion has insidiously started, and organised religion has come to be viewed negatively in Western culture and society (Boehme, 2015), even though "a

majority of people in the United States and a considerable number in Europe use "spirituality" in association with "religion"" and identify themselves as both religious and spiritual (Zinnbauer & Pargament, 2005, 29; Hood, et al., 2009; Streib & Hood, 2016, 3).

Yet in the beginning of twentieth century, the first *Humanist Manifesto,* including fifteen points, was published in 1933 announcing religious Humanism as a 'new religion/ religious movement/ belief system', as an alternative to previous religions. This new philosophy claims that the religious forms and ideas of the ancestors are no longer adequate and are powerless to find solutions to the problems of the twentieth century; and therefore, religion must be shaped for the needs of a new age. The religious humanists declare that the universe is not created and "man has emerged as a result of a continuous process" as a part of nature (Humanist Manifesto I, 1933). Thus, they deny creation, which is one of the fundamental essences of the Abrahamic religions. They regard religious worship and prayer as old attitudes and replace them with a sense of personal life and an effort to promote social wellbeing. The second *Humanist Manifesto* was published in 1973 in order to update the previous one. One of the signers of the second manifesto, Paul Blanshard, abstracts their mission and the denial of religious beliefs, doctrines, and rituals, "We have an obligation to expose and attack the world of religious miracles, magic, Bible-worship, salvationism, heaven, hell, and all the mythical deities" (Neuhaus, 1984, 23). One year after the first *Humanist Manifesto*, Dewey (1934) emphasizes a humanistic understanding of spirituality separating it from religion.

Organized religion has been gradually declining since then as people began to be less associated with religion and even denying any bond of religion including religious dogmas, doctrines, institutions, and communities. As a result of the increasing number of people in America and Europe claiming that they are atheists or agnostics, it is argued that "the modern Western civilisation may be moving toward religionlessness" (Moberg, 2012, 7). On the other hand, there has been an incremental rise in interest on spirituality, which has been separated from religion and religiousness in popular thinking, since the highly privatized age requires a need for new alternative ways and perspectives to religious ideas and matters (Roof, 2003, 139), although the concept of religiousness historically embraced all the elements that are currently used by many to define spirituality (Pargament, 2007). Furthermore, even though Christianity was weakened, it is argued that religion was not going away (Schultz, 2006). New religions, even more orthodox ones, and spiritualities began existing as alternatives to the traditional organized ones with the emergence of a new culture, mainly based on Eastern

beliefs and practices, and a few of them grounded in Abrahamic religions, such as Judaism, Christianity and Islam (Herrick, 2003). People have become interested in new forms of spirituality such as privatized spirituality and New Age spiritualties that are outside the boundaries of traditional organized religion (Heelas, 2002), and there has been a "spectacular increase in popularity [in] self-identification as "being spiritual"" (Streib & Hood, 2011); even it has increasingly become common that people self-identify as spiritual but not religious (SBNR).

It has been apparent that a growing number of people have started identifying themselves as more individually religious, or spiritual and religious, or spiritual but not religious, or more spiritual than religious (Boehme, 2015; Streib & Hood, 2016). Even though, for some, polarizing the two as positive, good and negative, bad "impoverishes spirituality and religion and is not helpful" (Boehme, 2015, 31), more recently, the concept of spirituality has begun to be used in a broader sense including a secular dimension. It has become famous and popular and has been used frequently in the western society without any reference to religion. Indeed, the numbers of people who find meaning without relating spirituality to any kinds of religious forms are increasing (Richards, 2012; Tacey, 2004). However, there are a limited number of empirical qualitative studies conducted in order to explore participants' definitions of spirituality and religiousness and their self-identifications. These studies ask two coherent questions to the participants such as "To what extent do you consider yourself to be a religious person?" and "To what extent do you consider yourself to be a spiritual person?" (Ammerman, 2013), or "Do you consider yourself religious? and "Do you consider yourself spiritual?" (Roof, 1999). In addition, some studies offer four statements to the participants such as "I am both religious and spiritual," "I am religious but not spiritual," "I am spiritual but not religious," and "I am neither religious nor spiritual" (Zinnbauer et al., 1997). Alternatively, a less oppositional language is also used for comparison; such as "I am more religious than spiritual" and "I am more spiritual than religious" (Streib & Hood, 2008). To mention some of these studies, Zinnbauer et al. (1997) found out that among the total number of 346 research participants from different religious backgrounds 19% of the participants identified themselves as spiritual but not religious, 74% identified themselves as equally religious and spiritual, and 38.8% participants considered spirituality a broader concept than religion which might include religiousness. According to the findings of The Religion Monitor project from Bertelsmann Stiftung Foundation (2009), which conducted a quantitative survey with 21000 participants around the world, 31.3% of the

population in the United States identified themselves as more spiritual than religious, and 45.5% identified themselves as equally religious and spiritual. Even though the numbers are smaller in Germany, it was found that there was an increase of self-description of people as spiritual with 9.7% indicating that they were more spiritual and 17.5% identifying themselves as equally religious and spiritual (Stiftung, 2009; Eisenmann, et al., 2016).

Ammerman (2013) points out that the increase in the spiritual-but-not-religious phenomena arises from the secularization theory, which claims the more societies become modern, the more organized religion disappears. Indeed, "historically, spirituality was not distinguished from religiousness until the rise of secularism" in the twentieth century (Zinnbauer, et al., 1997, 550). The western societies faced the dynamics and developments mentioned in the previous section, so that their viewpoint turned to a worldly direction from the religious one, and it is claimed "without a shared language, spirituality will continue to be privatized" (Hunt, 2003, 168). Moreover, this transformation is considered a major revolution, described as the spirituality revolution by Tacey (2005): "The movement away from traditional religion to new forms of spirituality is a major revolution, part of the general zeitgeist as Western culture moves into a postmodern age" (Elkins, 1998, 15).

A "religionless spirituality", especially among young adults, has existed in which various rituals are common, such as, meditation, fasting, using sacraments, myths, and symbols from diverse traditions (further information about the popular references to contemporary spirituality will be explored in a later section on popular spiritual practices) (Tacey, 2005, 110). Many researchers still accept that religion and spirituality are related, overlapping, and intertwined phenomena, as stated earlier. These scholars argue that they have similar concerns such as they both refer to an individual's search for the sacred, and sacred is their substantive core (McCullough, et al, 2003, Hill & Pargament, 2003; Zinnbauer & Pargament, 2005; Streib & Hood, 2011), and as a common feature, religion and spirituality are both grounded in faith (Damon & Lerner, 2006). However, "spirituality has become a wide and multi-vocal concept" (Swinton, 2003, 12). Furthermore, they have been differentiated, and dramatically polarized. Religion is considered as having a collective, social, organizational, institutional, organized, and therefore, restrictive, dogmatic, and negative structure and being related to a person's attachment to and participation in a religious tradition and institution, group, communal and social doctrines and practices. On the other hand, spirituality is regarded as being individual, personal, subjective, psychological, life enhancing, and positive, and being grounded on personal beliefs, values, experiences, and

behaviours (Zinnbauer et al., 1997; Pargament & Mahoney, 2002; Saroglou, 2003; Fontana, 2003; Pargament, 2007; Hood, et al, 2009; Doka, 2011). In addition, religion is accepted as "substantive, static, institutional, objective, belief-based, (and) bad" and spirituality is thought to be "functional, personal, subjective, experience-based, (and) good" (Zinnbauer & Pargament, 2005, 24). This polarization is conceptualized with different categories by theorists, such as theistic and secular spirituality (Shaw, 2005, 354), religious and nonreligious (secular) spirituality (Emmons, 1999, 94).

With this regard, religion is no longer seen as the only way or path to spirituality and spiritual development anymore; on the contrary, more and more people are in search for alternative ways and new forms of spirituality; they realize that being spiritual and nurturing the soul is possible without being religious (Elkins, 1998). In the course of these changes (the shift from religion to modern spirituality), alternative ways to religious traditions and new forms of faith under the label of spirituality have become popular (Pargament et al, 1999). The new label of spirituality sets people free from all responsibilities of compulsory religious beliefs and rituals (Shulman & Meador, 2002).

> For many people, spirituality has replaced religion as old allegiances and social identities are transformed by modernity. However, in a context of individualism and erosion of traditional community allegiances, 'spirituality' has become a new cultural addiction and a claimed panacea for the angst of modern living. (Carrette & King, 2005, 2)

However, this change/transformation has not been towards "a disappearance of the sacred, but its dramatic relocation from Christian heaven to the deeper layers of the self" (Houtman & Aupers, 2008, 114). Therefore, it cannot be argued that those who are less religious or non-religious are less spiritual, since they might still search for the sacred, meaning, and spiritual fulfilment.

In the process of secularisation, people in the Western world who did not practise religion still needed to believe in, take refuge, and be attached to the sacred (Yapici, 2009). Even though "a few decades ago, an interest in the sacred would typically not be separated from being religious" (Young-Eisendrath & Miller, 2000, 3), today the term sacred is relocated from organized religion to privatized individualistic forms and understandings of religion and spirituality:

> The change from archaic, primitive, traditional and, less radically, from pre-industrial modern times to our contemporary situation in which industrial, bureaucratic and capitalist principles of social organization (in its several

> varieties from West to East) are dominant, is characterized by the emergence of what may be parsimoniously called privatization of personal existence. Accompanying this is the privatization of the sacred cosmos. (Luckmann, 1979, 123)

The Christian churches have been characterised as authoritarian and dogmatic, and the freedom of choice and liberty of individuals have been emphasized using various discourses. To speak of some of them are do-it-yourself-religion (Baerveldt, 1996), pick-and-mix religion (Hamilton, 2000), a spiritual market (Lyon, 2000), religious consumption a la carte (Possamai, 2003), and consumer-oriented spirituality (Douthat, 2012), all of which include "multiple traditions, styles and ideas simultaneously, combining them into idiosyncratic packages" (Houtman & Aupers, 2010, 5). In other words, some have turned from "life-as religion," in which transcendence is important and has the authority over persons, to "subjective-life spirituality," which presents the significance of inner self and its authority (Heelas & Woodhead, 2005). Religious individualism has become significant over the past several decades. An important number of Americans have thought that they could believe in what they believe and they could do this independently; they have argued that attending a church or a synagogue is not necessary for being a good Christian or Jew; they have denied the authority of any religious structure:

> […] churches and temples do not have a monopoly on spirituality or on the values that compose it. These belong to humanity and are not the exclusive possession of organized religion or of traditionally religious persons. An enlarged definition and understanding of spirituality would recognize its human and universal nature and would extricate it from the narrow definitions sometimes assigned to it by traditional religions. (Elkins, et al., 1988, 6)

The self has become the authority instead of God and most Americans started to manufacture their own belief system and practice it (Newport, 1998).

> Many individuals today are on a personal path outside formal religion. They do not attend church or profess membership of any denomination, but are nonetheless 'religious' in a broad sense, and often draw on traditional religious ideas, scriptures, practices and beliefs in their spiritual lives. (Tacey, 2005, 109)

James' conception of religion and religious life and experience has also an individualistic sense and experience of spirituality. He notes that:

> The visible world is part of a more spiritual universe […] Union and harmonious relation with that higher universe is our true end. Prayer or inner communion with the spirit thereof is a process wherein work is really done, and spiritual energy flows in and produces effects, psychological and material […] (James, 2002, 374)

He differentiates institutional and personal religion. While institutional branch is related to the divinity, and the essentials of it are "worship and sacrifice, procedures for working on the dispositions of the deity, theology and ceremony and ecclesiastical organization," the personal branch is associated with humankind, "his conscience, his deserts, his helplessness, his incompleteness" (James, 2002, 28). Then, he defines personal religion (spirituality) as "the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine" (James, 2002, 29-30).

Religion and spirituality were two neglected, avoided, and abandoned or pathologized topics in the modern science, such as psychology; for instance, Freud negatively commented on religion and he regarded God as an illusion (Freud, 1961). Some psychologists had the tendency to ignore spirituality or to accept it as pathological or to consider it as a process that can be reducible to basic psychological, social, and physiological functions (Pargament & Mahoney, 2002). However, in the 1950s and 1960s, religion and spirituality became popularised both in research and in clinical practice with the rise of humanistic psychology. Allport (1950) revived religion and he examined the phenomenon in his book, *The Individual and his Religion*. Abraham Maslow, one of the pioneers of the humanistic psychology, acknowledged spirituality as a fundamental element for self-actualization; he placed the higher spiritual needs at the top of his *Hierarchy of Needs*. Moreover, he differentiated spiritual values from organized religion. Even though he was not against organised religions and institutional religious structures, he did not accept their monopoly on spirituality, and he stated that the "essential core religious experience may be embedded in either a theistic, supernatural context or a non-theistic context" (Maslow, 1976, 28). Like Maslow, Fromm (1966) also promoted personal understanding of religion and individualized forms of spiritual experience.

In the 1960s and 1970s, organized religious involvement declined especially among 'baby boomers'; there has been an "extraordinary weakening of organized Christianity in the United States and a fundamental shift in America's spiritual ecology" (Douthat, 2012, 62). Nevertheless, according to surveys, Americans have not become less spiritual or less religious (Principe, 1983; Pargament et al, 1999), but instead they tended to turn to new religious movements, such as New Age, Eastern religions, and some forms of spirituality and spiritual healing, which made them identify themselves as spiritual but not religious (SBNR) (Roof, 1993; Zinnbauer, et al., 1997; Elkins, 1998; Douthat, 2012). This transition is described as a

"significant cultural shift" (Hunter, 1983, 94). It is also considered as a "spiritual turn, especially evident among the younger and more highly educated" (Zappala, 2009, 12), which belongs to a specific elite class (Carette & King, 2005; Mercadante, 2014). "Since the 1960s, a multitude of beliefs and practices have emerged under the umbrella of "New Age" in contemporary western society," and this type of spirituality is called post-Christian spirituality (Van Otterloo, 1999, 191). This movement began in England in the 1960s, quickly spread to the world, and became international (Casey, 2013). In the late 1970s, the "internalization or privatization of religion" was thought to be "one of the most momentous changes that have ever taken place in Christendom" (Mead, 1977, 4). In fact, it is arguably stated that "contrary to predictions that New Age would go mainstream, now it's as if the mainstream is going New Age" (Sutcliffe & Bowman, 2000, 11).

By the 1980s, the New Age movement spread to America and attracted its society. Since then, it has become a spiritual mosaic accommodating several different trends, including spiritual therapies and healing, channelling, reincarnation, astrological guidance, crystals, beads, music, videos, tapes, books, and articles. For example, a journal named *New Age Journal* was published and grew to hundreds of thousands, followed by bestsellers on New Age products, all of which has turned to be the icons of the New Age (Elkins, 1998). In a more general sense, new spirituality, which is called post-Christian spirituality is described as "standing on its own two feet and broken from the moorings of Christian tradition" (Houtman & Aupers, 2007, 305). It is an arguable idea that post-Christian spirituality is "fully privatized" and "purely individualistic" (Aupers & Houtman, 2007). However, some research on spirituality among well-educated professional psychologists, even in 1980s, indicates that the majority of them did not prioritize traditional organized religion as a source of spirituality and they had a tendency to believe in personal spirituality without relating it to religious involvement (e.g., Shafranske & Gorsuch, 1984; Shafranske & Malony, 1985). Elkins and colleagues (1988) conclude their research stating that the status of spirituality that is closely related to religion in Western society might be changing; therefore, they believe that unlike traditional organized religion, an enlarged nonreligious humanistic approach to spirituality might meet the spiritual needs of many people. Referring to the reasons like individualism and antagonism against institutional structures and traditional authority, religion and spirituality have become dramatically polarized (Pargament, 2007, 30). However, it is also argued that, despite this polarization, "world religions continue to furnish both a background resource and a dialectical partner of 'new spiritualities' even in the secularised contexts of Western Europe" (Davies, 2009, 1).

It is important to note that by the end of the 1980s and in the 1990s, privatised spirituality was administered in practice in public institutions in the United Kingdom and United States (Carrette & King, 2005). Growing interest in spirituality has even "affected the terminology of the scientific study of religion" (Streib & Hood, 2011, 434), for instance, the American Psychological Association has started quarterly publishing the *Journal of Psychology of Religion and Spirituality* since 2009. Spirituality and religion began to be used side by side or with a slash in between, and many scientists even replaced religion with spirituality; they began referring to spirituality more than religion in some fields such as health (Streib & Hood, 2011). Although religion and spirituality have been two phenomena of concern and interest in social science for more than a century (Zinnbauer & Pargament, 2005), spirituality is continuously grabbing increasing scientific and popular attention, interest, and focus (Roof, 1993; Zinnbauer, Pargament & Scott, 1999; Zinnbauer & Pargament, 2005). Many psychological professionals separate spirituality from religion, as it "is emerging today as a new psychological reality, concept, and research subject, partially distinct from religiousness" (Young-Eisendrath & Miller, 2000; Hill & Pargament, 2003; Blando, 2006; Saroglou & Munoz-Garcia, 2008). Some researchers, such as Koenig (2012), are sceptical about whether spirituality can be measured, and therefore, they argue against using the term in empirical research. However, spirituality has become a concept that is differentiated from religion and is applied in various other fields, such as medicine, health care, psychotherapy, psychiatry, counselling, nursing, anthropology, sociology, education, business, and aesthetics as well as religious studies; and defined by numerous scholars and writers**.** This growing interest in spirituality, along with individual spiritual well-being and spiritual growth in these modern days has been embraced by not only religious institutions but also by many non-religious ones such as hospitals and business centres, and popular books and films (Roof, 2003). Moreover, numerous kinds of spiritualities related to "higher human sensibilities" (Rose, 2001, 196) have existed, such as "Creation spirituality, Eucharistic spirituality, Native American spirituality, Eastern spiritualities, Twelve-Step spiritualities, feminist spirituality, earth-based spirituality, eco-feminist spirituality, Goddess spirituality, and men's spirituality, as well as what would be considered traditional Judeo-Christian spiritualities" (Roof, 1993, 243).

2.5 Major Themes in Contemporary Spirituality

Spirituality has been accepted as a universal human characteristic, quality, capacity, experience, concern, and need (Stephenson & Berry, 2014; Tacey, 2004; Emmons, 1999; Elkins, 1998); which "is fully embedded in the fabric of life" (Pargament, 2007, 21) as a part and parcel of human nature and existence (Solomon, 2007). It is even argued that spirituality (spiritual awareness) is a biologically inbuilt constituent of human beings (Hardy, 1966). It is an inner, interior, inherent (Mok et al., 2010; Nixon & Narayanasamy, 2010) and concealed dimension which "has been linked to the best in human nature" (Pargament, 2007, 31). The spiritual dimension can be felt through its existence and absence; spirituality exhibits itself in a plenty of ways (Pargament, 2007, 17). Therefore, the spiritual can be found in everyday life, such as "in a piece of music, the smile of a passing stranger, the colour of the sky at dusk, or a daily prayer of gratitude upon awakening" (Pargament, 2007, 3), as well as "in feelings of loss and emptiness, in questions about meaning and purpose, in a sense of alienation and abandonment, and in cries about injustice and unfairness" (Pargament, 2007, 4). However, it might be hard to recognize and be aware of it, since worldly matters and busy everyday life might detain people noticing its existence (Underhill, 1999).

In addition, even though people might recognize spirituality, they might be reluctant to talk about it or express what it means to them since spirituality is a complex, vague, ambiguous, nebulous, unbounded, multidimensional, rich, and comprehensive concept (Elkins, et al., 1988; Moberg 2002; Cook, 2004); it is also considered as slippery and *fuzzy* (Spilka, 1993; Zinnbauer, 1997). Moreover, it has been understood, expressed, and defined in numerous diverse ways by different people, including psychologists (Zinnbauer, Pargament & Scott, 1999; Pargament & Mahoney, 2002; Tacey, 2004; Bregman, 2006), and there is not a consensus about it (Tanyi, 2002; Richards & Bergin, 2005). Therefore, it is a debated and contested term in the academic world (McSherry & Cash, 2004), which makes it hard to define universally (see Table 1. for a selection of various definitions of spirituality). Spirituality has several major themes, elements, and connotations despite the fact that there is not an agreed on definition of spirituality across different countries, cultures, and traditions in both popular and academic sense. Some of these major themes apart from private or organized

religious commitment, affiliation, attendance, participation, involvement, beliefs, practices, rituals, worship, attitudes, and/or sentiments will be examined in this section.

As mentioned earlier, the new form of spirituality is considered as not only different from organized religion and institutional affiliation, but it is also understood as different from personal form of spirituality based on any religious belief system in the West. Therefore, it is argued that new spirituality "has come to represent individuals' efforts at reaching a variety of sacred or existential goals in life, such as meaning, wholeness, inner potential, and interconnections with others" (Zinnbauer & Pargament, 2005, 24-25). Elkins and colleagues (1988), in their review of the literature of scholars such as, James, Jung, Maslow, Otto, Dewey, Allport, Eliade, Buber, Fromm, and Frankl, state that none of these scholars defined spirituality comprehensively, yet only mentioned certain elements of the concept. They provide a list based on the works of these scholars. This list consists of nine major components of (humanistic) spirituality: transcendent dimension; sacredness of life; meaning and purpose in life; mission in life; material values; altruism; idealism; awareness of the tragic, such as human pain and death; and fruits of spirituality. In addition, they define spirituality as

> A way of being and experiencing that comes about through awareness of a transcendent dimension and that is characterized by certain identifiable values in regard to self, others, nature, life, and whatever one considers to be the Ultimate. (p. 10)

Likewise, Roof emphasizes four major themes of spirituality as "a source of values and meaning beyond oneself, a way of understanding, inner awareness, and personal integration" as the most important ones (Roof, 1999, 35). Tisdell (2003) also claims that spirituality is associated with the development of self-awareness, relationship with an ultimate power and purpose, and a sense of interconnectedness of all things, stating that "such a definition gives a sense of the psychological aspects of spirituality as broadly related to meaning-making" (p. 30). In his descriptive study of 265 books and papers on spirituality and addiction published between 1966 and 2001 through MEDLINE and PsycINFO, Cook (2004) identifies thirteen conceptual components of the definitions and descriptions of spirituality as follows:

1. *Relatedness*: interpersonal relationships
2. *Transcendence*: recognition of a transcendent dimension to life
3. *Humanity*: the distinctiveness of humanity

4. *Core/force/soul*: the inner ‘core’ or ‘soul’ of a person
5. *Meaning/purpose*: meaning and purpose in life
6. *Authenticity/truth*: authenticity and truth
7. *Values*: values, importance and worth
8. *Non-materiality*: opposition of the spiritual to the material
9. *(Non)religiousness*: opposition of spirituality to, or identity with, religion
10. *Wholeness*: holistic wellness, wholeness or health
11. *Self-knowledge*: self-knowledge and self-actualization
12. *Creativity*: creativity of the human agent
13. *Consciousness*: consciousness (p. 543)

Chiu and colleagues (2004) analysed 73 articles published between 1990 and 2000, and they found four categories for definitions of spirituality: connectedness and wholeness, transcendence, existential reality (meaning and hope), and the presence of unifying power/force/energy. Sessanna and colleagues (2007) conducted another study on 73 articles published between 1983 and 2005, in which they revealed four types of definitions of spirituality: based on religion, connections, metaphysical, and transcendental. A similar study was carried out by Coyle (2002) where he reviewed articles published between 1990 and 2000, and categorised the definitions into three groups: transcendence, values, and behaviours. All examples of definitions of spirituality given above and in Table 1 comprise strong and similar emerging themes and elements of the concept, among all of them; relatedness, transcendence, meaning and purpose, and popular spiritual practices will be briefly explored here.

Table 1. Examples of definitions and descriptions of spirituality

Tart (1975, p. 4)	That vast realm of human potential dealing with ultimate purposes, with higher entities, with God, with love, with compassion, with purpose.
Shafranske and Gorsuch (1984, p. 231)	A transcendent dimension within human experience . . . discovered in moments in which the individual questions the meaning of personal existence and attempts to place the self within a broader ontological context.
Grof (1987, p. 12)	True spirituality is experiential, universal, and mystical … It emerges when a person connects with certain levels of his or her unconscious and superconscious … [S]pirituality or numinosity thus appears to be an intrinsic quality or characteristic of the deeper dynamics of the human psyche.
Booth (1987, p. 27)	Being a positive and creative human being in all areas of our life.
Johnson et al. (1987, p. 5)	If spirit means either a positive or negative essence or energy, then spirituality is the presence of such energy. A person's spirituality represents his state of being –either lively, hostile, or empty.
Elkins, Hedstorm, Hughes, Leaf, and Saunders (1988, p. 10)	A way of being and experiencing that comes about through awareness of a transcendent dimension and that is characterized by certain identifiable values in regard to self, life, and whatever one considers to be the Ultimate.
Benner (1989, p. 20)	The human response to God's gracious call to a relationship with himself.

Berenson (1990, p. 59)	Spirituality, as opposed to religion, connotes a direct, personal experience of the sacred unmediated by particular belief systems prescribed by dogma or by hierarchical structures of priests, ministers, rabbis, or gurus.
Fahlberg and Fahlberg (1991, p. 274)	That which is involved in contacting the divine within the Self or self.
Vaughan (1991, p. 105)	A subjective experience of the sacred.
Doyle (1992, p. 302)	The search for existential meaning.
Hart (1994, p. 23)	The way one lives out one's faith in daily life, the way a person relates to the ultimate conditions of existence.
Miller (1995, p. 142)	In our spirituality, we reach for consciousness, awareness, and the highest value.
Armstrong (1995, p. 3)	The presence of a relationship with a Higher Power that affects the way in which one operates in the world.
Alpers (1995, p. 50)	Genuine spirituality touches our entire being and affects every dimension, principle, facet and action of our lives. It implies a constant and conscious process of expanding, deepening, and heightening our capacity to know, to love, and to create. Spirituality … is a journey toward integrity-wholeness. It is the 'fruit' of human evolution –it is maturity.
Walsh (1998, p. 72)	An internal set of values – a sense of meaning, inner wholeness, and connection with others.

Schneiders (2000)	The experience of conscious involvement in the project of life integration through self-transcendence toward the ultimate value one perceives.
Zinnbauer and Pargament (2005, p. 35)	A personal or group search for the sacred.
Cloninger (2007)	A search –and a means of reaching- something beyond human existence, creating a sense of connectedness with the world and with the unifying source of all life – an expression of a profound need of people for coherent meaning, love, and happiness in their lives.
Puchalski et al (2009)	The aspect of humanity that refers to the way individuals seek and express meaning and purpose and the way they experience their connectedness to the moment, to self, to others, to nature, and to the significant or sacred.
Cook (2004, p. 548)	A distinctive, potentially creative and universal dimension of human experience arising both within communities, social groups and traditions. It may be experienced as relationship with that which is intimately 'inner', immanent and personal, within the self and others, and/or as relationship with that which is wholly 'other', transcendent and beyond the self. It is experienced as being of fundamental or ultimate importance and is thus concerned with matters of meaning and purpose in life, truth, and values.
Singleton, Mason & Webber (2004, p.250)	A conscious way of life based on a transcendent referent.

2.5.1 Relatedness/connectedness

Since spirituality is considered as a universal human concern, connections and relationships take an important place in the definitions and descriptions of the concept. “The centrality of self, others, and God (however that is defined by the individual), and the relationships between those elements clearly emerges from within the literature” (Dyson, Cobb & Forman, 1997, 1185); and they are regarded as being the heart of spirituality (Hunglemann et al., 1985). Relationships in the definitions of spirituality are categorized into three interrelated groups (Figure 1): (1) *transpersonal*, which is a sense of relatedness to the unseen, connectedness/oneness to God, greater/higher/supreme power than the self, transcendent nature, (2) *intrapersonal*, which is relationship with the self, consciousness, awareness, authenticity, self-knowledge/inner knowing and inner strength, inner peace, harmony and search in life and (3) *interpersonal*, which is the relationship with others, natural environment, nature or the world, (et al., 1988; Reed, 1992; Fry 1998; McColl et al., 2000; Young-Eisendrath & Miller, 2000; Elkins, Gall et al., 2011).

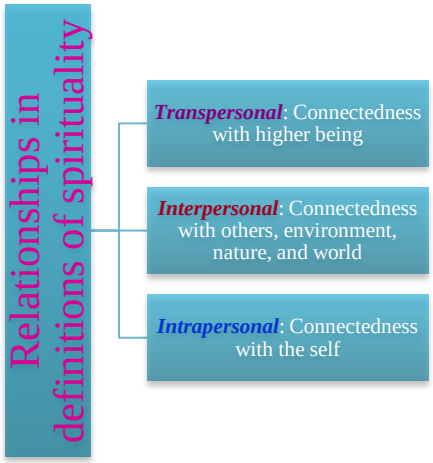

Figure 1. Three categories of relationships in the definitions of spirituality

Dyson and colleagues (1997) argue that God, which might be in any form depending on individuals’ highest value in their lives, others, and the self are the important central elements of the definitions of spirituality, and other themes such as relatedness, meaning, hope, etc. “can be articulated in the context of those three key elements” (God, others and the self) (Dyson et al., 1997, 1183).

Stoll (1989) also explains spirituality in terms of relationships distinguishing two related dimensions (1) vertical dimension referring to an individual's connection with the transcendent and (2) horizontal dimension referring to the individual's connection with himself or herself, with others and with the world (Figure 2).

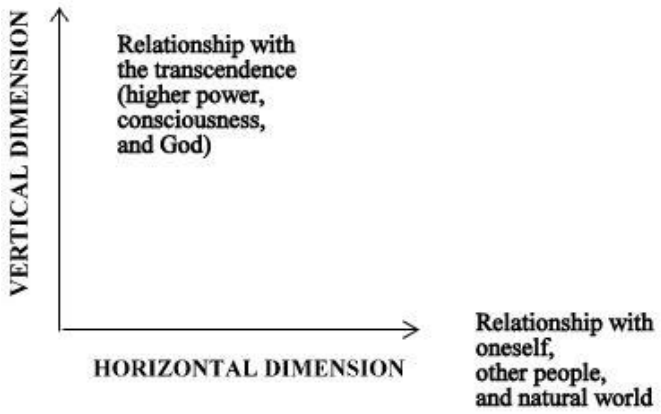

Figure 2. Stoll's vertical and horizontal dimensions of spirituality

2.5.2 Transcendence

Transcendence is considered as one of the essential elements of spirituality in literature (Rich & Cinamon, 2007; King et al., 2014). "Spirituality refers to a way of being in the world that acknowledges the existence of, and the desire to and to be in relationship with a transcendent dimension or higher power" (Burke & Miranti, 2001, 602), and commitment to this transcendence (Belzen, 2002). In short, it is a "human experience beyond material" (Miller, 2010, 35), which does not only consist of "a static, frozen set of beliefs or practices. It is instead a process of searching, a search for the sacred" (Pargament, 2007, 52) and "a subjective experience of the sacred" (Vaughan, 1991, 105), which is called in different ways, such as the numinous experience (Otto, 1958, 1917), the I and Thou relationship (Buber, 2010, 1923), Rolland's conceptualization of oceanic feelings (Freud, 2010, 1927), hierophany (Eliade, 1963), and a peak experience (Maslow, 1994, 1964). Pargament (2007) regards sacred as "the heart and soul of spirituality" (p. 32).

However, sacred is argued to not be limited to the traditional forms of divine, transcendence, ultimate/higher power, Supreme Being, God, and supernatural, reality, as stated earlier. In addition, it can be defined in a broader sense; "by sacred things one must not

understand simply those personal beings which are called Gods or spirits; a rock, a tree, a spring, a pebble, a piece of wood, a house, in a word, anything can be sacred" (Durkheim, 1915, 52). Culliford (2012) explains the inclusiveness and unifying feature of spirituality stating, "Each person is part of and pervaded by the sacred, by the spiritual dimension. It applies to everyone, including those who do not believe in God, a higher being, named or unnamed, or a spiritual realm or dimension of existence" (p. 52). Furthermore, Pargament (2007) claims that "those who do not believe in a theistic God have their own ways of experiencing the sacred: they may experience what they perceive as encounters with angels or departed loved ones; they may experience a sense of transcendence through the language of music or art; or they may gain inner enlightenment through meditation" (p. 87) and "from mountains, music and marriage to vegetarianism, virtues, and visions" everything can be regarded as sacred (p. 32). Stoll (1979) also embraces a more liberated view of God stating, "Whatever a person takes to be the highest value in life can be regarded as his God. […] the God around whom his life revolves may be his work, physical activity or even himself" (p. 1574). Moreover, Pargament (2007) explains the sacred qualities as (1) transcendence that "speaks to the perception that there is something out of the ordinary in a particular object of experience, something that goes beyond our everyday lives and beyond our usual understanding," (2) boundlessness, which "involves a perception of endless time and space," and (3) ultimacy "essential and absolute ground of truth, the foundation for all experience" (p. 39).

Similar to Stoll's conceptualisation of spirituality, Streib & Hood differentiate vertical and horizontal dimensions of transcendence, vertical dimension refers to God, but horizontal dimension does not need to be referred to God, and it "may be purely secular" (Comte-Sponville, 2007; Streib & Hood, 2011, 444). Fry (1998) also makes a distinction between two types of transcendence; he argues that *transpersonal transcendence* refers to feeling a relationship and oneness with a higher power, consciousness, or God, while *intrapersonal transcendence* is a capacity for self-knowledge and source of individual's inner strength. The broader view of transcendence "as any firmly held value or principle" is believed to give individuals meaning and purpose in life (Stoll, 1979; Halstead & Mickley, 1997, Dyson et al, 1997; Coyle, 2002, 590), and meaning and purpose are two other central themes of spirituality.

2.5.3 Meaning and purpose

Another fundamental element of spirituality is search for meaning and purpose in life (Coyle, 2002; Burkhardt & Nagai-Jacobson, 1985), which is focused on by the humanistic and existential approach (McSherry & Cash, 2004). Meaning is the primary concern of human beings rather than gaining pleasure and avoiding pain (Frankl, 1959, 115). Seeking and discovering meaning and purpose is considered an inner and existential journey (Nixon & Narayanasamy, 2010; Mische, 1982) and a quest (Elias, et al., 2008). "Spirituality represents our efforts to create meaning and purpose for our lives. This need for meaning is seen as an intrinsic universal human capacity" (Piedmont & Leach, 2002, 55). Dalmida and co-authors (2012) define spirituality as "an individual's search for meaning and purpose in life that may be guided by a set of beliefs in a higher power and involve a personal connection with that higher power, others or self […]" (p. 737-738).

Meaning and purpose are important components of spirituality throughout one's life span. People seek answers to questions about existence and creation, and spiritual concepts and spiritual language help them understand and explain what gives meaning and purpose to their lives, especially in situations such as stress, illness, loss and death, regardless of any religious commitments (Shih et al., 2009; Culliford, 2012; Stephenson & Berry, 2014). Furthermore, meanings they attribute to something might have negative and positive effects on spirituality. Negative influence on spirituality reflects viewing meaning in one's life negatively which leads to suffering (Chio et al., 2008). On the contrary, finding positive meaning in life results in being a good person, and therefore, it has positive impacts on individuals (Mok, Wong & Wong, 2010).

2.5.4 Spiritual practices

Spiritual practices, which help promote and improve spiritual growth, are distinguished into two categories: mainly religious and mainly non-religious (Culliford, 2012). Mainly religious spiritual practices can be described as "belonging to a faith tradition, ritual practices and other forms of worship, meditation and prayer, reading scripture, listening to, singing and playing sacred music, pilgrimages and retreats" which are still applied by both religious and spiritual individuals within or outside the boundaries of organized religion (Culliford, 2012, 220-221). Underhill mentions the recommendations of earlier spiritual writers on the two

regular spiritual practices as mortification and attending to God, and she interprets and translates these activities as dealing with ourselves and as prayer (Underhill, 1999). Culliford states that these activities might be retranslated as honest self-inquiry and meditation or mindfulness (Culliford, 2012), which are both related to religiousness.

On the other hand, mainly non-religious (secular) spiritual practices are not based on or dependant on any traditional organized religious affiliation; and therefore, do not have a religious focus. They might be explained as follows:

> Contemplation, yoga, t'ai chi and similar disciplined practices, contemplative reading of literature, poetry, philosophy, etc., engaging with and enjoying nature, appreciation of the arts and engaging in creative activities, including artistic pursuits, joining clubs and societies, co-operative group or team activities, sporting, recreational or other, involving a special quality of fellowship, maintaining stable family relationships and friendships, and acts of compassion. (Culliford, 2012, 220-221)

Mainly non-religious spiritual practices are the popular references to spirituality in the contemporary Western world (religionless spirituality is mentioned briefly in Section 2.3.2). There is a wide range of modern beliefs and practices unrelated to religion. For instance, Ahlin defines spirituality as "a belief in a higher power/ energy, in a god that you can find everywhere, in reincarnation, in astrology, in ghosts, in sooth-saying, practicing meditation, practicing prayer"; and he associates spirituality with some activities, such as "holism, channelling, chakra, clairvoyance, chi, aura, karma" (Ahlin, 2008). Cohen (1990) suggests that "appreciation of music, food, wine, sex, literature and humour can all reflect spirituality" (Dyson, et al., 1997, 1186). It is also argued that as having an individualistic dimension and content, and as being a personal practice, experience and exercise; being spiritual describes various categories such as, "sex, science, science fiction, technology, humanism, transhumanism, drugs, tattoos, and atheism" (Boehme, 2015, 32). According to Zinnbauer and colleagues, other elements comprise popular references to spirituality as well, "such as interest in angels, New Age interest in crystals and psychic readings, and evangelical or Pentecostal religious experiences" (Zinnbauer et al., 1997, 550). Furthermore, "winning a sports event, enjoying nature, seeing a sunset, eating "heavenly food," and euphoric experiences of happiness, beauty, altruism, eroticism, and other feelings are labelled 'spiritual'" (Moberg, 2002, 47-48). In short, anything that come to mind related to human experience can be regarded as spirituality and spiritual; however, while the concept of spirituality is applied to increasing variety of everyday experiences, its meaning and definition is becoming more vague and harder to pinpoint.

CHAPTER 3

FACTORS IN TURKISH SPIRITUALITY

3.1 Introduction

Turkey is considered one of the most secular countries in the Muslim world. Even though a predominantly Muslim country, it is usually regarded as the most democratically advanced in the Middle East, alongside Israel (Puddington & Roylance, 2016). Moreover, Turkey is a pioneer of modernism in the Islamic world; and the influence of religion is noticeably decreasing in people's lives. The country's high level of urbanization, considerable economic and technological improvements, and socio-political circumstances in recent decades are some of the indicators of its ability and will to keep pace with the latest developments in the West. Furthermore, the national education system is based on rationalist/positivist principles; and the education level of Turkish citizens is higher than most in the Islamic world. Female participation in state administration, bureaucracy, business, sports, and other fields is also approaching Western standards. In addition, Turkey has come a long way in striving to achieve gender equality, human rights, and freedoms. Turkey is regarded as a model country by a majority of under-developed Muslim countries; thus the developments (political, economic, social etc.) are followed closely (Altunisik, 2010; Akgun & Gundogar, 2012). One good example is the recent boom of Turkish TV shows in the Arab world, where some effects are already visible in numerous areas, such as fashion, culinary art and others.

Turkey occupies a strategic cultural and geographic position between the West (Europe) and the East[4] (both Middle East and Far East) forming a bridge between world's major

[4] Refer to Muramoto (2005) for a detailed information about the concepts of 'the West' and 'the East' and general differences between them.

> But when these words are written with capital letters as in 'the East' and 'the West', they become important basic concepts in history. East and West have never referred to any fixed geographical area. Areas called the East or the West have changed in the course of history. For Europeans, the East at first was only the region we today call Arabia or the Near East. With the campaigns of Alexander the Great, the area meant by the East was

civilizations. Eastern religions, doctrines, practices, mysticism, and spirituality have become widespread in the West and some spiritual practices and alternative therapies such as yoga, meditation, reiki, and bioenergy are gradually becoming widespread in Turkey as well. Even the middle-class in Turkey can learn and practise them easily by attending courses such as NLP (Neuro Linguistic Programming) courses and reading books; for instance, books on personal growth/self-development are very popular on the national best-selling lists, such as *the Monk Who Sold his Ferrari*. Even though Turkey is geographically (and probably culturally) closer to the sources of these practices than the rest of the Europe, its 'import' of these practices is mainly through the West. Once again, this signifies the fact that general trend in Turkey is towards one end of this bridge, and that is the West.

The impacts of secularisation on the perceptions of the concept of spirituality in the Western world were discussed in the previous chapter. Accordingly, spirituality has become an important yet debated concept in the West, and its meaning is not limited to the religious domain. Along the lines of the previous paragraph, it might easily be argued that the newly emerging concept of spirituality in Turkey is very similar to its Western counterpart. This becomes even more obvious when we consider corresponding changes in personal and social domains, namely abandonment of religion as the sole point of reference or the main source of value. Therefore, this dissertation focuses on the perceptions of spirituality of a group of university students in Turkey in order to explore their descriptions of the concept and to discover if it is similar to the western understandings as argued by the researcher. Consequently, it is essential to show some of the main features of the social structure in Turkey in order to help the reader understand the mind-set of the subjects of the study. Here, hence, firstly, secularisation in Turkey and its impacts on the individual and society are broadly shown in order to provide detailed information about the current Turkish social structure. Accordingly, several dynamics such as scientific developments and urbanization are explained in detail since the understandings of religion and spirituality arguably might have been changed by the intellectual developments and social change along with the process of secularisation, westernization, and modernity. Then, a general overview of religious life in Turkey with statistical data is followed by a discussion on the notion of 'religion' in Islamic tradition in general and in the context of Turkish Islam in particular, and this explanation is expected to provide a deeper insight into participants' narrative about their spiritual

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expanded to include India. Later China was discovered and called the East, until Japan became the Far East, i.e. the farthest country of the East. (Muramoto, 2005, 20)

experience. At that juncture, general information on spirituality in Turkey including historical background of spiritual beliefs, religious spirituality, and non-religious spirituality is presented. Following these introductory material, finally, Turkish literature on spirituality is reviewed in detail in this chapter.

3.2 Secularisation in Turkey

The movements such as the Renaissance and Reformation in the Western world have not taken place in Muslim societies. Turkey has not experienced the same processes that Western Europe passed through during the Renaissance and Reformation. Since 1923 however, Turkey has been experiencing the process of secularisation and modernity whose impact on people has not been very strong compared to Western countries at the beginning of these movements, and therefore, the concept of spirituality has not been used as an alternative or opposite term to religion until recently. After a certain level of secularisation is reached through scientific developments, industrial capitalism, and urbanization (Bruce, 2002) in Turkey, it can be argued that non-religious spirituality appears as a consequence.

After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire[5] in 1923, the modern Republic of Turkey was established with a secular, democratic, constitutional, and unitary republic structure. All institutions including caliphship and Islamic schools "were replaced by European-inspired political, legal, and educational systems" (Esposito, 2010, 2). Any religion, including Islam, is not allowed to interfere in state affairs by the secular constitution. However, religious tradition (Islam), Islamic spirituality, and mysticism are dominant in Turkey.

> Despite the secularization and the restrictions on religious practices, Islam has remained one of the major identity references in Turkey and it continues to be an effective social reality, shaping the fabric of Turkish society. The equation between being Turkish and being Muslim is a hallmark of Turkish identity (Kucukcan, 2003).

Modernization[6] did not cause the failure of Islam and religious attachment in Turkey, but rather "transformed traditional Islamic beliefs and groupings and moved Muslims into the

[5] See Gunay (2001) for detailed information about the social and political changes in the Ottoman Empire, which had an impact on the process of secularisation of modern Turkey and about religion, society, culture, tradition, and change in modern Turkey.

[6] Modernization is a contested concept like religion, spirituality, and secularisation. Therefore, Bruce's definition of modernization is grounded on in the dissertation:

public sphere" (Yavuz, 2004). In recent years however, there have been changes in perspectives and attitudes of people towards religion and their religious lives because of the social changes accompanied by secularisation and modernity (Yapici, 2007b). Even though theological, political, economic, and psychological factors did not allow Muslim Turkish society to become secular as understood in Western thought, there were serious changes in political and social life caused by the West and westernization in the last century of the Ottoman Empire and onwards (Birekul, 2010). These changes continue in the modern Republic of Turkey; therefore, traditional Turkish society, including institutionalised religion and traditional religious life, is continuously affected by Western civilisation (Gunay, 2001; Gunay, 2010; Yapici, 2012). In this period, Turkish society is neither traditional as it was previously, nor modern as is desired (Yapici, 2009).

In spite of the fact that the Renaissance, the Reformation, and the age of the Enlightenment pertain to the Western world and its history, other dynamics such as scientific developments, industrial capitalism, and urbanization that trigger the process of secularisation have occurred in non-Christian modern countries such as Turkey. Bruce (2002) argues that if these dynamics emerge in a society regardless of the dominant religion and culture, secularisation is expected.

Secularisation has been one of the most discussed topics in the field of Theology and Sociology of Religion in Turkey. Rather than meaning a social process however, the word itself has mostly been used to mean laicism (*laiklik* in Turkish) and secularism (*sekülerizm* or *sekülerlik* in Turkish) in Turkish language (Darende, 2015). Some confuse the concept of secularisation, which is a process, with laicism and secularism, which is an ideology or political principle (Ertit, 2015). Laicism and secularism have different contexts. Laicism is derived from *lai* in French, which is *laique* in contemporary usage, and it means 'of the people' in contrast to 'of the clergy'; thus, *lai* can be used in order to describe religious people (Davison, 2003). Laicism is understood as the separation between religious and state matters in Turkey (Hazir, 2012). Secularism is derived from *saeculum* in Latin and means 'of the world' in contrast to 'of the church'; it refers to the separation between church and state or

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> Modernization is itself a multifaceted notion, which encompasses the industrialization of work; the shift from villages to towns and cities; the replacement of the small community by the society; the rise of individualism; the rise of egalitarianism; and the rationalization both of thought and of social organization. (Bruce, 2002)

religion and politics; therefore, it cannot originally be used in order to define religious people and it conveys a distance between worldly and religious matters (Davison, 2003).

Darende (2015) conducted bibliographical research on studies related to secularisation, secularism, and laicism in Turkey written by Turkish and foreign scholars since 1928. He claims that the interest in these subjects has considerably increased since 1995. According to the research, 268 books and 343 journal articles were published, 35 papers were presented, and 178 MA dissertations and 45 PhD theses were written; 808 out of 869 studies were written by Turkish researchers. Darende (2015) argues that it was expected that the word "secular" was going to be gradually replacing "laicist" in Turkish literature because the difference in the meaning and connotation between the two is better known in Turkey. Nevertheless, no such shift has yet been discerned.

Ertit (2015) claims that theologians in Turkey monopolize the concept of secularisation and many of them define it as non-religiosity, lack of religion and religious practice, something that is out of Islam, profane, the disappearance of religion through modernization, becoming worldly and profane (*sekülerleşme, dünyevileşme, dünyevilik* in Turkish) (Hazir, 2012; Ertit, 2015). Ertit (2015) asserts that some Turkish theologians dislike the concept and the theory of secularisation so they try to prove that there is no such thing in Europe, in the USA, and in Turkey, claiming that religion is not losing its importance. Because of the fact that they define secularisation as non-religiosity, they argue that the theory of secularisation fails, as there are believers not only in Turkey but also around the world (Ertit, 2015).

The general perception about Turkey in Turkey, and even in the other countries, since The Justice and Development Party (Ak Parti/AKP) won the 15th general election in 2002, has been that Turkey has gradually turned into a more conservative and religious country, even heading rapidly towards the *Shari'a* law system like Iran or Malaysia. It is claimed that the influence of religion on the lives of people and on society has increased since that date; some argue that the increase has begun even earlier, since the 1980s (Yapici, 2012). Moreover, secular people, living in the Anatolian cities feel under community pressure and they are not happy as a result (Ertit, 2015). The scholars who defend the argument that Turkish society is gradually becoming more religious depend on the results of some research, which investigate religious life only within the context of pillars of faith and Islam. Accordingly, these studies measure variables such as belief in God, the Prophet Muhammad, the Qur'an, unseen creatures such as angels and jinns, and the hereafter, and religious

practices, such as daily prayers (*salah*), fasting, and prayer (*dua*) as if they are the only indicators of religiosity. In addition, some argue that despite the fact that some studies indicate the decrease of the practice of daily prayers (*salah*), trust in religion in Turkey remains (Yapici, 2012). Accordingly, it is asserted that for young people in Turkey institutional religion and religiousness are important, and this situation leads to a gradual increase in the religiousness levels of young Turkish adults. However, it is appropriate to claim that religious life does not consist only of belief and physical religious rituals in the Islamic tradition, but also any actions done by humankind are considered to be related to religion[7]. Therefore, religiousness should not be limited solely to faith, practices and worship. In fact, there are numerous reports and studies demonstrating the opposite, which indicate that people in Turkey do not refer to religion as it is supposed and argued to be by some scholars. Some of these reports will be discussed in detail in the following paragraphs.

Modernization has an impact not only on state institutions, politics, and economics, but also, and even more deeply, on culture, lifestyle, and identity (Gole, 2011). Even though it is argued that the universality of religion and its centrality play an important role in the lives of lives and help us comprehend fully the past and present of the Muslim world (Lewis, 1993), the role of religion as being a central motivation in the lives of people living in Turkey who are greatly secularized should be re-examined. Indeed, considering the changes in socio-moral relationships, the perceptions of worldly comfort and happiness, and its significance in life, the way of spending leisure time, the structure and functions of educational institutions over the past three decades, it can be strongly argued that Turkey is dramatically secularized, and that the secular life-style has become one of the main cultural characteristics of Turkish society, despite the fact that religious and traditional groups and "living religion" still exist (Ertit, 2015). Accordingly, religion seems to have been evolved to be an individual identity rather than a social characteristic. Moreover, it should be noted that the impact of secularisation on every individual and group, and in every part of Turkey is not believed to be the same (Ertit, 2015). There is a general tendency however towards the profane, which indicates that the role and prestige of religion in the lives of individuals has been replaced with worldly affairs. Nevertheless, this does not mean that religion has been abandoned completely or that religion has come to an end in Turkish society (Batur, 2015).

7 See section 3.4 The Meaning of Religion in Turkish for an in-depth discussion about religion.

Since the 1960s, scientific developments, industrial capitalism, and urbanization have increased in Turkey. In 2014, The Institute of Population Studies of Hacettepe University published the last of its reports on the demographic transformation process of Turkey, which have been published every five years since 1968 (Hacettepe Universitesi Nufus Etutleri Enstitusu, 2014). These reports present information about the change in population, population increase rates, educational level, immigration and industrialization, privatization and capitalism, welfare levels and income distribution, the change in age of marriage, the health of mother and children, death of babies and children under age of five and other factors. Accordingly, in the last forty years, fertility rates have dropped, education level has increased, there has been an intense migration from rural areas to cities, the economic structure has changed from agriculture to industry and service sector, poverty has decreased, the age of marriage has risen and health care has increased. Ertit (2015) interprets these reports as demonstrating a gradual rise in three main dynamics including scientific developments, industrial capitalism, and urbanization, which indicates that secularisation is under way in Turkey. Moreover, he argues that if in a society, scientific developments become sufficiently widespread as to penetrate daily life, industrial capitalism becomes the dominant economic model, and urbanization rates increase, which ultimately indicates that the country is becoming secularized and more modern (Ertit, 2015).

Ertit (2015) explains the mechanisms behind these three dynamics as followed: scientific developments displace religion and cause religion to lose its prestige, power, and popularity. The more people have higher education the more they are aware of scientific developments and their merits. The new generation does not attribute spiritual meanings to natural phenomena and events that happen in nature, such as gravity, rain, snow, thunder, nor does it perceive these natural events as messages from supernatural powers as much as their ancestors did. On the contrary, he continues, scientific developments help understand these events in a cause and effect relation and increase the rational level of consciousness. The more people are able to demystify the *unknowable,* the more they become strong and the less they need to turn to religion. In ancient times, spiritual powers were asked for help with natural events. For instance, people prayed for rain during a drought, today however solutions are produced using other methods, such as constructing a dam (Ertit, 2015).

Education might be considered as another important factor that is related to secularisation and change in perceptions of religion in a country. The numbers of literate people and level of education increase in Turkey regardless of gender (Koc, et al, 2009), and

it is argued that the more people have higher education the less they practise religion (Amman, 2010; Uysal, 2006; Akdogan, 2004; Celik, 2002). The education system is under the control of the Ministry of Education in Turkey and has been secular since the Westernizing reforms in the time of Ottoman Empire (Mardin, 1993). Positivist education in Turkey and higher education in particular, secularizes people by changing their frame of mind, making them rational and interrogative (Kirman, 2005).

Furthermore, Ertit (2015) asserts that the speed of technological developments depending on scientific developments and the welfare of the country such as in the health sector also brings new ways of understanding and treating illnesses. New hospitals with highly qualified personnel and technological machines have been established across the country. Consequently, treatment becomes widespread and increasingly less expensive in Turkey. Therefore, Ertit (2015) claims that a decline is expected in the need for religious rituals, visits to temples, and asking help from the cleric in order to cure the ill, as practised before the opportunity of easily accessing medical treatment in hospitals. However, people tend to appeal to sacred places and persons, supernatural powers, religious rituals, and alternative medicine if medical intervention does not solve their health problems (Ertit, 2015).

The decline of religion is witnessed in capitalist societies as well, where rationalism, the division of labour and individualism are dominant. Everyone has become a part of the labour force, including women and sometimes even the young in modern societies. Therefore, Ertit (2015) states that the traditional family structure which was generally based on religion earlier changes. In addition, in such communities, the age of pre-marital sexual intercourse decreases (Finer, 2007), the number of children in a family decreases (Yew, 2012), marriage rates decline, divorce rates increase and the number of children that are born to unmarried couples rises more than in societies where a capitalist system is not dominant (Swinford, 2013). These changes not only occur in Western countries but also in Turkish society (Turkiye Istatistik Kurumu, 2013; Civil & Yildiz, 2010; Dincer, 2007). It is claimed that the level of welfare increases the probability that people disconnect from any kind of authorities, including religion; therefore, they do not practise religious rituals in daily life (Norris and Inglehart, 2008). In addition, it is argued that the authority and jurisdiction of the governments in the countries in which the capitalist system is dominant weakens because of the compartmentalization and privatization policies; therefore, governments lose the authority to dictate certain kind of beliefs or values to society. Privatizations in Turkey begun in 1983 and have increased rapidly since 2002 (Dogan, 2012). Furthermore, it is argued that in the

highly increasing economic area, people tend to ignore religious regulations. For instance, many of the applications that are forbidden by religion (Islam), clearly stated in the Qur'an become permissible; the number of people purchasing houses, cars and business establishment with interest increases (Ertit, 2015). In addition, Demirezen (2015) argues that one of the five pillars of Islam, *hajj* that can be performed by financially capable Muslims, or *umrah* pilgrimages to Mecca, which can be undertaken by Muslims at any time of year, seem to become a touristic visit. Wealthy Muslims prefer performing these rituals repeatedly to give to charity, to provide business opportunities to more employees, and to help people who cannot afford marriage (Demirezen, 2015).

Urbanization is another dynamic that brings about secularisation to a country and it has a significant role in reducing the importance of religion in the life of its population. The process of secularisation has more impact on people in towns and particularly in big cities in Turkey (Batur, 2015). The majority of the Turkish population (91.8%) lives in cities (TUIK, 2015). Ertit (2015) argues that people migrate from rural to urban areas, from one town to another, or within a town, and this situation results in social change. People get used to living with others whose life style is very different from theirs, and they develop a social tolerance towards others. Migrants realise that they do not have the possession of a single truth when they encounter people from other backgrounds. Moreover, Ertit (2015) claims, they have the opportunity to obtain several different information resources and learn about other values and beliefs. Ertit (2015) points out another important factor and he states that people become far from religious temples and sacred places in urban areas, which might have just been in walking distance in their previous villages or towns. Furthermore, they have a new social environment that keeps them busy so that the time they could spend on religious worship and practices decrease. In a competing life with long working hours, extra workshops, socialization, and holidays which are even more necessary after all hard work make people concentrate on this life more than death and afterlife. Individual private space widens in urban life so that people become freer, away from family and neighbourhood; therefore, they make decisions on their beliefs, friends, clothes, choice of spouse all based on freewill, they do not refer to religion as earlier (Ertit, 2015). Since the 1950's, there has been intensive migration from rural to urban areas in Turkey; accordingly, workforce in agriculture has declined from 82% (in 1955) to 23.6% (in 2014), while the workforce in the industry and service sector has increased from 18% (in 1955) to 77% (in 2014) (Koc et al., 2009). Therefore, as the welfare of the society has increased, the purchasing power also has increased. There has been a rapid

increase in purchasing rates of durable goods such as cars, laptops, televisions, mobile phones and home appliances such as washing machines, dishwashers, microwaves from 1998 to 2014 (Hacettepe Universitesi Nufus Etutleri Enstitusu, 2014). Ertit (2015) argues that purchasing power is also one of the indicators of secularisation in a country. All of these factors lead to the decline of the prestige of religion in lives of numerous numbers of people in Turkey. In short, the effect of religion on society weakens when the three dynamics (scientific developments, industrial capitalism, and urbanization) bring about social change in a country.

In addition to the factors such as scientific developments, education, technological developments, capitalism, compartmentalization and privatization policies, economy, and urbanization, Ertit (2015) argues that other indicators have an impact on the decline of the influence of religion in Turkey, addressing a great number of reports and statistical data published by several polls. He examines the data provided by various studies on the attitudes of the two generations (the older and the new one) on a number of issues such as pre-marriage dating and intimacy, the importance of virginity, divorce, interfaith marriages, clothing styles, tolerance towards different identities and sexual preferences, child-naming tendencies, and more. Ertit (2015) goes on to show an evident dissolution of the old conservative values and a swift sway towards more liberal perceptions. To give some concrete examples it can be argued that "sex talk" is not a taboo anymore (Celikoglu, 2007) and reactions to adultery are not as outrageous as they used to be in Turkey (Dincer, 2007; Civil & Yildiz, 2010; Amman, 2010). Research on the transformation of the Turkish family including on issues such as religious life, parent-children relationships, and dressing style found out that the new generation has a life less bounded to religion than the older generation (Yilmaz, 2005). The majority of the participants from the older generation believed that the new generation is apathetic about religious affairs (84%), that the western values affect the new generation negatively (87%), and that the free upbringing of the new generation constitutes a problem for Turkish customs (80%) (Yilmaz, 2005). Furthermore, Ertit (2005) argues that the increase in the level of education, the increasing use of the mass media and internet, and the easy adaptation of the new generation to the rapid changes in technology have changed the new generation's daily life.

Leisure time might be regarded as another indicator of how secularisation has an impact on the life-style of people. Batur (2015) states that in a traditional religious society, people tend to spend spare time reading religious books, attending religious meetings, visiting relatives and neighbours, and worship. In our secular time however, people prefer spending

free time on mobile phones, internet, and social media, on holiday, sport activities, music, and concerts, in supermarkets, cafes and restaurants, all of which are related to consumerism. He continues arguing that Islamist groups also accommodate themselves to the changing situation, for example going on holiday in luxury hotels, which are 'appropriate' for religious people having separate beaches for men and women, going to alcohol-free restaurants, and attending Islamic fashion shows (Batur, 2015).

Moreover, political and/or social life are believed to be experiencing an intensive process of westernization and modernization; however, some argue that Turkish society is still linked to religio-socio-cultural values (Yapici, 2012). If religion is considered as surrounding all aspects of life including politics, culture, and social, which indeed cannot be separated in Islamic tradition, changes in politics and social life do necessarily affect the religious tendencies and traditional cultural structure of a society[8]. Furthermore, the process of secularisation has a profound impact on social relationships; accordingly, relationships have become distant (Kizilcelik, 2004). Batur (2015) affirms that the traditional religious culture teaches individuals moral values such as righteousness, sincerity, Islamic brotherhood, being content with little, benevolence, being compassionate and respectful. These values are however being replaced by other human characteristics such as being free, independent, wealthy, competitive, powerful, selfish, pragmatist, and consumerist, which are required by the secular world and lifestyle (Batur, 2015).

Moreover, Ertit (2015) affirms that people have more freedom in presenting their opinions and life styles than before in Turkey. For example, homosexuality, which is strictly forbidden in Islam, has become more obvious in the society; it is easily mentioned in newspapers, magazines and on television programs. In addition, the activities of LGBT people (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) such as forming associations and the pride parade with more than a hundred thousand participants (in 2014) are carried out publicly, not only in big cities such as Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir, but they have also become institutionalized in small towns (Ertit, 2015).

Ertit (2015) claims that the results provided by the polls, information obtained from the other research and the statistical data on social demographic changes in Turkey (Hacettepe Universitesi Nufus Etutleri Enstitusu, 2014) altogether (discussed above) indicate that religion (Islam) is gradually losing its authority in social and private life. Accordingly,

[8] See section 3.4 The Meaning of Religion in Turkish for an in-depth discussion about religion.

religion and religious values are less significant, and play a restricted role in the lives of individuals and have little power over the society. This statement directly contrasts with the belief that Turkey is heading towards the *Shari'a* law and will become like Iran. Therefore, it might strongly be the decline and loss of authority and reputation of religion which reverberates in many ways including the meanings that are attributed to spirituality by people in Turkey.

3.3 Religion in Turkey

Islam is the dominant religion in Turkey. The majority (99.8%) of Turkish citizens are Muslim (the World Factbook, 2016). "Although Turkey is a national and secular state, religion lies at the core of its political landscape and identity" (Yavuz, 2000, 21). Religion is controlled by the state through a branch of the Turkish government, the Presidency of Religious Affairs, which was established in 1923 in order to regulate Islam. Its mission is "to administrate the affairs related to faith and worship of the religion of Islam" (web site of the Presidency of Religious Affairs, 2016), assuring that the public expressions of the religion accord with and meet the need of the government, and guaranteeing its harmless position for the state (Yavuz, 2000). Therefore, Islam has been interpreted within the context of the Turkish state's ideological vision in the region (Yilmaz, 2005).

Turkey, with the population around eighty million people, is a secular state, and people do have freedom of religion. People from different Islamic sects live alongside each other in Turkey, including Sunni Hanafi, Sunni Shafi'i and the Alevis (the Shiite tradition, a group of non-orthodox Muslims) (Shankland, 2007). Their perceptions of Islam and its practices are different from each other. However, even though there is the diversity of Islam and there are different religious movements in Turkey, this dissertation does not explore all Islamic sects including the Shafi'is and the Alevis and the perceptions of spirituality in these sects since the participants of our study are Sunni Hanafis[9] and thererefore the other sects are beyond the limits of the dissertation.There are also different Christian denominations including Oriental Orthodox, Roman Catholics, Orthodox, and Protestants, and some Sufi practitioners in Turkey. Turkey is a cosmopolitan country. There are Turks (76.0%), Kurds (15.7%) and other major ethnic groups (8.3%) living in Turkey. These ethnic groups include Bosniaks,

[9] See Table 3 on p. 118.

Abkhazians, Arabs, Albanians, Pomaks (Bulgarians), Laz, Assyrians, Hamshenis, Circassians, Georgians, Armenians, Greeks and Jews (The World Factbook, 2016). Here, it is important to note that this dissertation does not focus on the ethnic groups such as Kurds and Bosniaks living in Turkey since the participants of our study consist of Turkish students only.

A survey conducted by KONDA Research and Consultancy[10] in 2007 in Turkey explored the perceptions of Turkish people with regard to religion and secularism in daily life (Figure 3). According to this report, 96.8% of the population claimed that they adhere to a religion, while the remaining 3.2% did not. 52.8% of respondents defined themselves as a religious person who attempts to fulfil all religious duties; 34.3% as a believer who does not fulfil religious duties; 9.7% as a fully devout person fulfilling all religious duties; 2.3% as a non-believer who does not believe in religious duties; and 0.9% as an atheist with no religious belief. "The majority of society (86.1%) defined themselves as believer and religious" (KONDA, 2007).

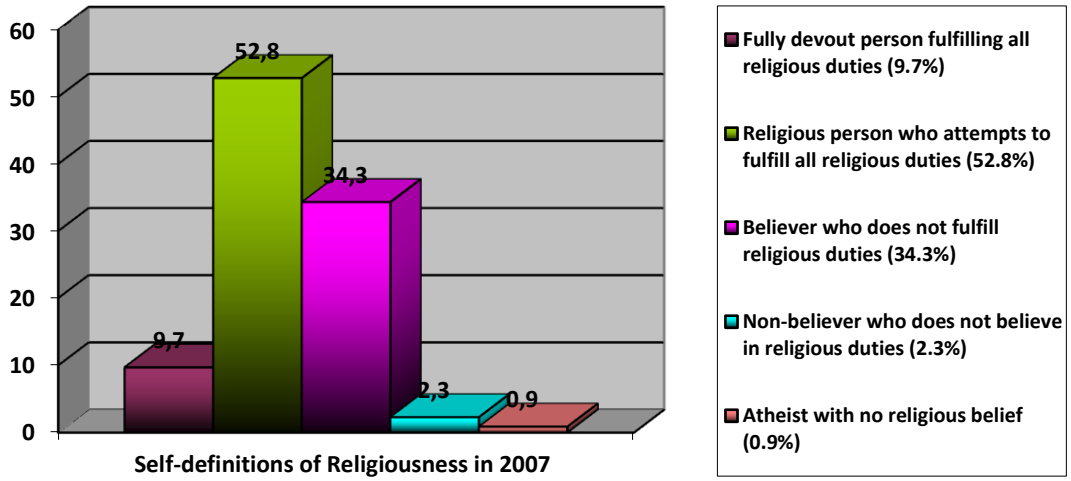

Figure 3. Self-definitions of religiousness in Turkey in 2007

The Presidency for Religious Affairs commissioned the Turkish Statistical Institute to conduct a poll[11] on religious affiliation in Turkey in February 2013 (Figure 4). This research shows that 9% of the population is deeply religious, 63% is religious, 21% did not respond,

10 KONDA is a private research institution in Turkey.
11 This poll is currently unpublished.

4.7% is not deeply religious, and 1.1% is not religious at all. 92% of respondents indicate that they are knowledgeable about religious issues. Younger people (age group was not given) seem to be more religious than older people, women are more religious than men, married individuals are more religious than single individuals, students at high school are more religious that students at the university.

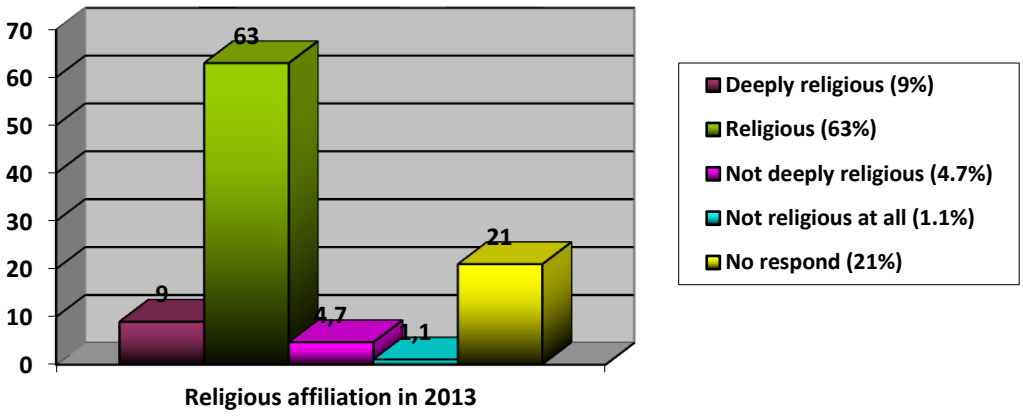

Figure 4. Religious affiliation in Turkey in 2013

A more recent research is conducted with collaboration between Turkish Statistical Institute and the Presidency of Religious Affairs in 2014. Accordingly, "64.9% of respondents lived their lives completely in accordance with religious principles, 28.3% sometimes lived their lives based on the religious code, and 4.6% did not live in accordance with any religious code" (Eksi, et al., 2016).

Hendrich (2011) divides Turkey's religious pluralism and diversity into two main groups "intra-Islam pluralism" and "historic and (post-)modern non-Muslim currents" (Hendrich, 2011). The first group (intra-Islam) consists of three categories; state-controlled Islam, Islamic mysticism (*tasavvuf*) including Mawlawi, Naqshibandi orders) and minorities (such as Alevis, Sabbateans, and Baha'is). The second group has six subgroups: different denominations of Judaism and Christianity, the Kurdish Yezidis, people those interested in Buddhism, atheists, and finally collectives and individuals who base their religious identity on Shamanistic heritage, belief in UFOs and spiritual practices, and a combination of several

elements not necessarily affiliated with one of the aforementioned religions[12] (Hendrich, 2011).

Karakas (2007) however offers a different classification of Sunni Islam in Turkey. He argues that there are three categories: state Islam, popular Islam, and Islamism. The mode of organization of the first category, state Islam, is the Presidency of Religious Affairs (*Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı*), religious schools, namely *Imam Hatip* schools, state mosques, Qur'an classes and public media. This group's adherents are approximately 40 million Turks and Kurds. Karakas (2007) argues that the objectives of state Islam are modernization of state and society, preservation of the republican laicist order and territorial integrity. Its source of legitimacy is the Qur'an and Kemalist ideology; and the dogma is positivism/ rationalism. In the second category, popular Islam, there are groups such as the Naqshibandi, the Suleymanci, and the Nurcu. Their aim is the preservation of the faith and Islamic identity. Its source of legitimacy is Qur'an, Anatolian custom and popular culture; and the dogma is mysticism/ Sufism. Accepting laicism depends on each individual group. Approximately 10 million Turks and Kurds are adherents of this category. The third category, Islamism, compromises Milli Gorus and radical groups operating clandestinely, such as IBDA-C and Turkish Hizbullah. The objective of this category is the introduction to an Islamic state that subjects politics, the economy, and society to the norms of the Qur'an and *Shari'a*, rejecting laicism. Its only source of legitimacy is the Qur'an and its dogma is orthodoxy/ fundamentalism. Its adherents are approximately 7 million Turks and Kurds (Karakas, 2007).

3.4 The meaning of Religion in Turkish

Din is the Turkish word used for religion. It is defined as a social foundation that systematizes belief in and worship of God, supernatural powers and sacred existence; it is a system that includes rules, institutions, symbols, law, and ethics in the dictionary of Turkish Language Institution (*Güncel Türkçe Sözlük TDK*). The Turkish word *din* is taken from the Arabic word *din*. Even though *din* in Arabic is related to religion, its Qur'anic meanings are numerous, including way of life of Muslims guided by the Qur'an and Sunnah, religious law

12 This last subgroup including collectives and individuals who base their religious identity on Shamanistic heritage, belief in UFOs, spiritualistic practices, etc., a combination of several elements not necessarily affiliated with one of the aforementioned religions will be explained under the title of 'spirituality in Turkey'.

(*Shari'a*), the authority of God, submission, and obedience to God, punishment and award from God for the servants' deeds[13] (Al-Mawdudi, 1979, 122).

The root of the Arabic term of *din* is d-y-n. *Din* refers to the way to be followed or the following of the Way and its subject is humankind. Furthermore, it can be considered identical with *shari'a* (literally, way or path), which means, "The ordaining of the Way" whose "proper subject is God" as both are related to each other through the way and its content (Rahman, 1979, 1000). The *shari'a* includes "the concrete embodiment of the Will of God, how God wants them (Muslims) to act in this life to gain happiness in this world and felicity in the hereafter […] The life of the Muslim from the cradle to the grave is governed by the *Shari'a*" (Nasr, 2003, 75), which is "a single legal code" (Bennett, 1997, 127). Several meanings of *din* are revealed in the Qur'an:

1. Subjugation, authority, ruling and having charge (the authority belongs to God)
2. obedience and submission due to subjugation (to the authority by the followers of din)
3. the method and means of life (established by the authority)
4. punishment, reward and judgement (by the authority to the disobeyers and followers)

These four meanings imply a comprehensive system of life (Khatami, 2012, 71). In short, *din* is submission and worship by man to the authority (God) in all aspects of life, such as belief, practical, moral, intellectual, political, and economic matters.

Din has various interconnected main significations; four of them are indebtedness/ mutual obligation, submissiveness/ submission or acknowledgement, judicious power/ authority, and natural inclination or tendency (Al-Attas, 1993, 52). There are some words that derive from the word *din*, which are connected to these significations. For instance, *dana* means being indebted, while *da'in* refers to (contraries) debtor and on the other hand creditor;

13 *Din* is used in the Qur'an (*ad-deen*) for religion in general (meaning lifestyles, ideologies, and worldviews) and for God's true religion in specific. Some verses are quoted from the Qur'an in this section since they are intended to work as typical sources of authority that are used by Muslims in Turkey.

"You shall have your religion, and I shall have mine (to you be your way, and to me mine)" (Qur'an, 109:6).

"Then turn thy face straight to the right religion before there come from Allah the day which cannot be averted; on that day they shall become separated" (Qur'an, 30:43).

one finds oneself being in debt and under obligation, one subjects oneself to commands and law governing debts, to the creditor. *Dayn* stands for obligation, which "naturally involves *judgement; daynuna*, and *conviction: idanah*", while *madinah* implies a town or city. Moreover, *dayyan* means judge, ruler or governor of a town, while *maddana* infers "to *build* or *found cities*: to *civilize*, to *refine* and to *humanize*, from which is derived another term: *tamaddun*, meaning *civilization* and *refinement* in *social culture*" (Al-Attas, 1993, 52-54). Humankind is indebted to God who is the Creator, Provider, Sustainer, Cherisher and Master of the judgement (*din*)[14] for his/her creation and existence; and he/she must repay the debt with himself/herself as he/she has got nothing but

> *his own consciousness* of the fact *that he is himself the very substance* of the debt"; and "returning the debt means to *give himself up in service*, or *khidmah*, to his Lord and Master; to *abase himself* before Him – and so the rightly guided man sincerely and consciously *enslaves himself* for the sake of God in order to fulfil His Commands and Prohibitions and Ordinances, and thus to live out the dictates of His Law. (Al-Attas, 1993, 57)

The Qur'anic concept of covenant with God[15] "is the starting point in the Islamic concept of religion" (Al-Attas, 1993, 85). It is the cognition of being indebted to the Creator for existence, with full, total, complete submission to Him and obedience to His ordinances. Humankind is not created without any purpose[16], and his/her prayer, sacrifice, living and dying are for God[17].

The religion of *Islam* (the word comes from the Arabic root s-l-m, means peace; and *teslim* derives from the same root and it refers to submission) is accepted as the only true[18]

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14 "In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds. The Beneficent, the Merciful. Master of the Day of Judgement." (Qur'an, 1:1-4)

15 "Those who break Allah's Covenant after it is ratified, and who sunder what Allah Has ordered to be joined, and do mischief on earth: These cause loss (only) to themselves." (Qur'an, 2:27)

16 "What! Did you then think that We had created you in vain and that you shall not be returned to Us?" (Qur'an, 23:115)

17 "Say. Surely my prayer and my sacrifice and my life and my death are (all) for Allah, the Lord of the worlds." (Qur'an, 6:162)

18 "He it is Who sent Apostle with the guidance and the true religion that He may make it prevail over all the religions; and Allah is enough for a witness" (Qur'an' 48:28)

din in the sight of God from the Islamic perspective (the Qur'an, 3:19)[19]. Moreover, it is stated that other religions will not be accepted (the Qur'an, 3:85)[20]. Islam conveys the meaning of submission to the Will of God, piety, and fear of Him (Hussain, 1998). "The whole life, if lived in harmony with God's will, is sacred. This is what being 'Muslim' means: to live in conformity with the divine will, at peace with God and with neighbours" (Bennett, 1997, 127-128). Islam and the teachings of God are articulated by the Qur'an, which is believed in as the verbatim word of God. Accordingly, Muslims believe in God and believe that the purpose of existence is to worship Him (the Qur'an, 51:56)[21], who is One (the Qur'an, 112:1)[22] and Single (the Qur'an, 2:163)[23]. Muhammad is accepted as the last prophet and messenger of God and he is unique and special for Muslims, however, Muslims do not worship him; therefore, Islam cannot be described as Muhammadianism (Abdalla & Patel, 2010).

> Islam is both belief and faith (*iman*) as well as submission in service (*islam*); it is both assent of the heart (*qalb*) and mind (*aql*) confirmed by the tongue (*lisan*) as well as deed and work (*'amal*); it is the harmonious relationship established between both the soul and the body; it is obedience and loyalty (*ta'ah*) both to God as well as to the Holy Prophet (may God bless and give him Peace!); it is accepting whole-heartedly the truth of the Testimony (*kalimah shahadah*) that there is no God but Allah, and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah – Islam is the unity of all these, together with what they entail, in belief and in practice, in the person of the Muslim as well as in the Community as a whole (Al-Attas, 1993, 72).

There have been debates on what Islam is and what the fundamentals of Islam are; therefore, too many perceptions of Islam have existed throughout history (Behrouznia, 2001; King, 1995). For instance, in *The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam*, Asad (1986) states "The

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19 "The Religion before Allah is Islam (submission to His Will): Nor did the People of the Book dissent therefrom except through envy of each other, after knowledge had come to them. But if any deny the Signs of Allah, Allah is swift in calling to account." (Qur'an, 3:19)

"Surely this Islam is your religion, one religion (only), and I am your Lord, therefore serve Me." (Qur'an, 21:92)

20 "If anyone desires a religion other than Islam (submission to Allah), never will it be accepted of him; and in the Hereafter He will be in the ranks of those who have lost." (Qur'an, 3:85)

21 "I have only created Jinns and men, that they may serve Me" (Qur'an, 51:56)

22 "Say: He is Allah, the One." (Qur'an, 112:1)

23 "And your God is One God. There is no god but He, Most Gracious, Most Merciful." (Qur'an, 2:163)

idea that Islam is simply what Muslims everywhere say it is … will not do, if only because there are everywhere Muslims who say that what other people take to be Islam is not really Islam at all" (p. 1-2). However, actually, it is the fact that, "There are as many *Islams* as there are situations that sustain it" (Al-Azmeh, 1996, 1). Even el-Zein (1977) notes that the term Islam might be replaced by *islams*. As explained earlier, Geertz (1968) examines the diverse cultural expressions of Islam and shows how Islam is experienced in different socio-cultural contexts (Moroccon and Javanese Islam) revealing the presence of Islam and *islams* and he "builds up the diverse patterns of existential meaning in these local *islams"* (el-Zein, 1977, 231). Even though they both depend on the same sets of religious symbols, the stories of the two are entirely different. The basic beliefs however are agreed upon by a variety of schools of thought and sects for whom politics and historical events might have different meanings (Joshanloo, 2013).

There are similarities and differences between the understandings and interpretations of the concept of *din*/religion in Islamic and Western religious traditions. "The modern discipline of religious studies in Western scholarship […] interprets religion as a cultural phenomenon and considers myriad variety of religions to be mere socio-historical events"; on the other hand however, the Qur'anic notion of religion suggests the essential unity of all religions (Khatami, 2012, 67) thus, one single religion of God is continuously present throughout history. It has a more extensive meaning than church and institutional religion in the Islamic sense (Al-Attas, 1993). The differences will specifically be addressed in this section in order to help understand the place of religion in Turkey.

The core of Islam is *tawhid*, the oneness of God, which refers to Islamic monotheism, unity, balance, harmony (Bennett, 1997). The "principle of *Tawhid*, the Islamic belief in God is considered to be unitarian" (Philips, 2005, 11). Christianity is considered as trinitarianism, belief in One God who exists in three persons; Father, Son and Holy Spirit (The Trinity) and Judaism as a subtle form of idolatry (Philips, 2005).

Tawhid:

> is the belief that Allah is One, without partner in His dominion (*Rububiyah*), One without similitude in His essence and attributes (*Asma' was-Sifat*), and One without rival in His divinity and in worship (*Uluhiyah/ Ibadah*). (Philips, 2005, 17)

The opposite of *tawhid* is *shirk*, idolatry, polytheism, ascribing, associating or establishing of partners with God or beside Him. *Shirk* is repudiation of the purpose of human being's creation, which is to worship God (Philips, 2005). It is denial of human being's covenant/bond with God[24]. A human being who does not obey the commands of God, and lives a life forgetting his covenant with God is described in the Qur'an as a humankind who makes his/her own desires his/her deity[25]. This is also a type of *shirk*; associating humankind's own desires with God. It is stated in the Qur'an that the greatest sin in Islam is *shirk* and it is not to be forgiven[26].

All prophets including Muhammad and Jesus are considered messengers, but not divine beings in the Religion of Islam[27]. The Holy Spirit (*Ruhu'l-Quds*) is identified as the Angel Gabriel who came to the Messenger of God, Muhammad, in order to give Him the Qur'anic verses. A human being is born sinless in a natural disposition (*fitrah*); there is no original sin; therefore, there is no need for vicarious atonement in Islam. In addition, it is believed that Jesus was not crucified[28], yet he was raised to God by God[29].

The life of the world is *hayat'ud-dunya* in Arabic and the root of the word world (*dunya* in Arabic) is *dena* which stands for to cause to become close. Therefore, it might be argued that all the creatures in this world are the means that cause human beings to become

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24 "Those who break Allah's Covenant after it is ratified, and who sunder what Allah Has ordered to be joined, and do mischief on earth: These cause loss (only) to themselves" (Qur'an, 2:27)

25 "Have you seen him who takes his low desires for his God?" (Qur'an, 25:43)

26 "Surely Allah does not forgive that anything should be associated with Him, and forgives what is besides that to whomsoever He pleases; and whoever associates anything with Him, he devises indeed a great sin." (Qur'an, 4:48)

27 "Certainly they disbelieve who say: Surely, Allah – He is the Messiah, son of Marium. Say: Who then could control anything as against Allah when He wished to destroy the Messiah son of Marium and his mother and all those on the earth? And Allah's kingdom of the heavens and the earth and what is between them; He creates what He pleases; and Allah has power over all things." (Qur'an, 5:17)

"Say: We believe in Allah, and in what has been revealed to us and what was revealed to Abraham, Ismail, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, and in (the Books) given to Moses, Jesus, and the Prophets, from their Lord: We make no distinction between one and another among them, and to Allah do we bow our will (in Islam)." (Qur'an, 3:84)

28 "And their saying: Surely we have killed the Messiah, Isa son of Marium, the apostle of Allah; and they did not kill him nor did they crucify him, but it appeared to them so (like Isa) and most surely those who differ therein are only in a doubt about it; they have no knowledge respecting it, but only follow a conjecture, and they killed him not for sure." (Qur'an, 4:157)

29 "Nay! Allah took him up to Himself; and Allah is Mighty, Wise." (Qur'an, 4:158)

close to God, the Creator, and the life of the world cannot be thought as independent of *din* in the Islamic understanding (Altintas, 2005). Islam "is the code of real life" (Khatami, 2012, 74). The Islamic worldview conveys a complete way of life; and "its ideal is a religio-economic-political unit governed by a single legal code" (Bennett, 1997, 127):

> As a complete way of life, the Islamic intellectual tradition did not distinguish a separation between church and state, as characterizes civil society in modernity […] (A)ll affairs are under the sovereignty of Allah's will. Muslims must not only believe that Allah's sovereignty is over all things, they must accept their responsibility as agents of Allah (Wadud, 2006, 34).

Islam as a complete way of life that covers all aspects of life: spiritual, individual, social, political, economic and familial (Joshanloo, 2013; Fares, 2003; Esack, 2002). It permeates the totality of life as "an integral part of everyday life," as "the fundamental motivating force in most phases and aspects of culture" (Patai, 1954, 234), and as a "powerful sustaining influence" (Patai, 1954, 252). Therefore, it does not only address and govern individualistic matters, but also societal contexts. Furthermore, any action that is done in order to satisfy God becomes sacred. For example, a just business transaction in the marketplace or greeting someone is considered as holy as the so-called organized rituals such as daily prayers and fasting (Bennett, 1997).

> Islam is the subjective, personal religion of the individual as well as the objective, pervading self-same religion of the Community – that it operates as the same religion in the individual as a single entity as well as the society composed collectively of such entities Al-Attas, 1993, 71-72).

Hence, religion forms all custom and tradition in Islamic society as the dominant normative force (Patai, 1954). Islam "is equally concerned with this world and with the Beyond" (Patai, 1954, 251).

Moreover, "what makes Islam different from the other religions is that the submission according to Islam is sincere and total submission to God's Will" (Al-Attas, 1993, 63). The true submission occurs along with the oneness of God, *tawhid*, which refers to "realizing and maintaining of Allah's unity in all of man's actions which directly or indirectly relate to Him," and therefore, it is fundamental to life of a Muslim as a whole (Philips, 2005, 17).

3.5 Spirituality in Turkey

3.5.1 Historical Background of Spiritual Beliefs in Turkey

Shortly after its emergence in the Arab peninsula in the seventh century, Islam had spread very quickly to Egypt and North Africa in the West and to Transoxiana and Central Asia in the Middle East. Even though most of the conquered world converted to the new religion almost immediately after losing the war (some even without waging one), the first Turkic tribe that underwent a mass conversion was Kara-Khanid in the tenth century. One important aspect of the phenomenon of mass conversion (especially when it is also motivated by political gain) is that it usually happens in a formal or superficial manner; a more complete transition from older beliefs and convictions to a new consciousness takes long periods, or never happens completely (Yavuz, 2004). Commonly elements of older religion and culture continue to exist by adopting new meanings supplied by new religion, or introduce their own religions/cultural context to the rituals of the new religion. Surely, the coincidence of the earliest mystical traditions in Islam with the Persian and Turkic conversions respectively, constitutes a good example of this interplay (Yavuz, 2004).

After the settling of the Turkish people in Anatolia in the eleventh century, they also adopted some local beliefs and cultural elements of Hellenic origin. This too contributed to the emergence of a distinctive Turkish religious identity (Altinli-Macic & Coleman III, 2015). One of the examples of pre-Islamic traditions that continue in the new environment is attributing sacredness to living people such as dervishes and combatants and turning their burial places to shrines after their death; therefore, living and deceased people as well as their shrines were considered sacred and spiritual (Kose & Ayten, 2010, 20-28). Visiting the shrines, circuiting around them, performing some forms of rituals inside the shrines, tying tatters on scarecrows, and putting papers with written requests on them are other examples. It is believed that the spirits of dead dervishes can help people cope with hardship in life, as well as cure any physical and mental disease (Kose, et al., 2009; Canel-Cinarbas, et al., 2013). Other common spiritual beliefs are ‘the evil eye’ and ‘fate’ beliefs (Ozbasaran, et al, 2011).

Spirituality can be categorized into two groups in Turkey: religious spirituality, which is the traditional religious form, and non-religious spirituality, which has begun to emerge in the contemporary era.

3.5.2 Religious Spirituality

Religious spirituality is more common than non-religious spirituality in Turkey. Sufism is one of the most salient examples of religious spirituality in this country. In Sufism (*tasawwuf*), which is a special form of mysticism in Islamic tradition, mystical understanding of religion is considered as "the heart of Islam" (Haeri, 2004, 9), esoteric dimension of Islam (Nasr, 2002), "Islamic mysticism" (Schimmel, 1975, 3) and "the religion of Love" (Davis, 1912, 29). Sufism can be described as "the spiritual path and mystical way in Islam that leads the seekers toward the divine knowledge (*haqiqa*); while *shari'a* is the Islamic law organizing the actual social life in Muslim societies, as a religious authority producing the structure of these societies" (Akman, 2009, 47). Further, it can be argued that Sufism "strives to harmonize the outer dimensions of Islamic law and worship with the inner dimension of spiritual disciplines firmly rooted in the Qur'an and Prophetic tradition" (Aslandogan, 2007, 663). Some examples of Sufi orders in Turkey are the Naqshibendi order, the Sulaimani Jamia, and the Ismailaga Jamia. In addition, spiritual persons going to shrines without being followers of any specific order, *jamia,* or group could be another notable example of religious spirituality in Turkey.

Religious spirituality in Turkey might be better understood in terms of Islamic spirituality. "There are two dimensions to the meaning of spirituality in Islam; the word *ruhaniyyat* in Arabic and *ma'nawiyyat* in Persian, both of which deal with the nature of the spirit and inwardness as opposed to the outward aspect of things" (Nasr & Jahanbegloo, 2010, 171). The root of the word *ruhaniyyat* is *ruh* meaning spirit (Dogan, 2005), and the root of the word *ma'nawiyyat* is *ma'na* conveying inward features (Nasr, 2010).

Spirituality is the essential and inner part of the religion of Islam, and this is true for most of the other religious traditions as well. Indeed, spiritual components in Islam seem to be more fundamental than its organizational dimension (Ozdogan, 2005) in the sense that the bond between God and believer is immediate. As mentioned above in the previous section, *din* is total submission and worship by believer who is in debt to God for his creation and

existence. Believer is the very substance of the debt and he/she has nothing but his/her existence to repay his/her debt to his/her Creator and Sustainer. Therefore, believer (Muslim) who is grateful for his/her creation submits and enslaves himself/herself for the sake of God and he/she fulfils His ordinances willingly.

> All of Islam is in fact based on the central doctrine of Unity (*al-tawhid*), but what can specifically be called Islamic spirituality is the experience and knowledge of this Unity and its realization in thoughts, words, acts, and deeds, through the will, the soul, and the intelligence. This spirituality is one's whole being, and finally to know Him through that knowledge which integrates and illuminates and whose realization is never divorced from love nor possible without correct action. (Nasr, 1991, xiii)

Moreover, humankind possesses a divine dimension as God breathed of His spirit into him/her when he/she was created[30], so that there is a connection between human beings and the Creator. All commands by God, which can be categorized having an organized structure, are to help strengthen this relationship. In Islamic tradition, "Islamic ritual (and praxis in general) is not just 'empty ritualism' and cynical 'letter of the law' compliance but, rather, is the surface of a deeply 'spiritual' experience" (Powers, 2006, 64). For instance, obeisance and prostrating in adoration before God makes human beings draw close unto God[31]; and it is believed that remembrance of God brings true happiness and peace to human beings[32].

The religion of Islam "is not ultimately, a manual of rules which, when meticulously followed, becomes a passport to paradise. Instead, it is a package of social, intellectual, and spiritual technology whose purpose is to cleanse the human heart" (Murad, n.d.). The purpose of human being's existence and life is to worship God, to have a heart free of evil or a sound heart[33], to be well pleased with God and to make Him well pleased, and to win the reward of heaven (gardens of eternity)[34]. Therefore, spirituality links the behaviours, actions, and

30 "So when I have made him complete and breathed into him of My spirit, fall down making obeisance to him" (Qur'an, 15:29)

31 "… and make obeisance and draw nigh (to Allah)." (Qur'an, 96:19)

32 Those who believe and whose hearts are set at rest by the remembrance of Allah; now surely by Allah's remembrance are the hearts set at rest." (Qur'an, 13:28)

33 "But only he (will prosper) that brings to Allah a sound heart." (Qur'an, 26:89)

34 "Their reward with their Lord is gardens of perpetuity beneath which rivers flow, abiding therein for ever; Allah is well pleased with them and they are well pleased with Him; that is for him who fears his Lord." (Qur'an, 98:8)

experiences of man to this purpose. Without this purpose, actions do not make any sense in the Islamic tradition. Hence, Khan (2009) argues, all actions are undertaken for the pleasure and sake of God; otherwise, they cannot be regarded as spiritual. Spirituality is possible with understanding and implementation of the purpose and meanings of the actions, so that they have an impact upon the individual. For instance, praying without pondering the recitations is a robot-like action and cannot be described as spiritual (Khan, 2009).

Furthermore, belief in the Hereafter and resurrection is important in Islamic spirituality (Husain, 2006). God is Self-Sustainer and all living creatures on earth are bound to pass away[35]; yet the creatures do not decay after their death; they are brought back to God. It is the day of resurrection, meeting, coming together and gathering, standing, reckoning, separation and conquest, reward and punishment. In the day of Judgement, man is judged according to his relationship with God and according to his behaviours, actions, deeds and experiences; and the eternal life begins. Muslims live a whole life with consciousness of God and the Hereafter, knowing that there is no escape from justice (Husain, 2006).

Spirituality is also defined as "a science (*'ilm*) that deals with the cleansing of the heart of all spiritual diseases such as malice, envy, hate and arrogance, to name just a few" (Abdalla & Patel, 2010, 114). The cleansing of the heart is conceptualized as the purification of the self/heart (*tazkiyat al-nafs*) in Islamic tradition.

> A practising Muslim would not experience any "existential vacuum" that would need to be filled by embarking on a journey to find "existential meaning." Islamic spirituality is not one of "existential quest," or "inner motivation" but is an inner quest of relationship and prescription. (Ahmad & Khan, 2016, 834)

Consequently, spirituality in Islam cannot be separated from religion, and it can be interpreted as the inner part of religion. It conveys belief in God and His prophet Muhammad, and performing the five pillars of Islam, and all the other ordinances of God (Moberg, 2002; Tiliouine, et al., 2009, 60). Therefore, human being is a spiritual creature inherently, his/her relationship with God, and other creatures, and his/her devotedness to God and obedience to God's orders are all consistent with the concept of spirituality in the Islamic tradition and it is strongly linked to the concept of *din*.

"O soul that art at rest! Return to your Lord, well-pleased (with Him), well-pleasing (Him), so enter among My servants, and enter into My garden." (Qur'an, 89:27-30)

[35] "Everyone on it must pass away. And there will endure for ever the person of your Lord, the Lord of glory and honour." (Qur'an, 55:26-27)

3.5.3 Non-religious Spirituality

Non-religious spirituality can also be called 'new spirituality' or 'imported spirituality from the West' as opposed to 'traditional religious spirituality' in Turkey. A new version of spirituality has emerged in recent decades in Turkey. There are a small number of people[36] defining themselves as spiritual persons believing in one God without identifying themselves as related to a religion. Their spiritual practices are yoga and meditation. They are also interested in psychic phenomena. A group of such people can be given as examples who are the followers of Bedri Ruhselman (1898-1960) who was the founder of neo-spiritualism[37]

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[36] The exact number of people cannot be provided as there is no research on them in the literature.

37 There is an ambiguity and complexity in the understanding of the concept of spiritual/spirituality in Turkey. Four words are used to translate it into Turkish; these are *manevi*/*maneviyat*, *ruhsal*/*ruhsallık*, *tinsel*/*tinsellik*, *spiritüel*/*spiritüellik*/*spiritüalite*. These words will be fully examined in the following section.

The abovementioned small number of people identifying themselves as spiritual use the word *ruhsal* and *spiritüel* in brackets. They are also inspired by mystical stories. However, by using the word *ruhsal*, they not only express that they are spiritual, but they also mean that they are spiritualists and even spiritists. Spirituality and spiritualism (the idea of spirit communication) are two separate notions, which, as far as seen, are not be properly differentiated by this group. There seems to be a general confusion about these concepts in Turkey. The word 'spiritual' is also used to refer to psychic in the English booklet of Metapsychic Investigations and Research Society, which was founded by Bedri Ruhselman in Turkey in 1950.

On the other hand, as discussed in the previous chapter, spirituality is related to the development of self-awareness, relationship with a higher power or purpose, and a sense of interconnectedness of all things (Tisdell, 2003, 30). It is "the experience of conscious involvement in the project of life integration through self-transcendence toward the ultimate value one perceives" (Schneiders, 2000). Spirituality is "a search –and a means of reaching- something beyond human existence, creating a sense of connectedness with the world and with the unifying source of all life – an expression of a profound need of people for coherent meaning, love, and happiness in their lives" (Cloninger, 2007).

In the light of the abovementioned definitions, it is possible to argue that these individuals are the seekers of meaning, love and happiness, and they have the features of spirituality that are mentioned in these definitions so that these individuals can be called spiritual. This sort of spirituality is not Christian nor Islamic spirituality, it is not even secular.

Since, as yet there has been no research conducted on this type of spirituality in Turkey, there is a need to conduct research in order to explore the meanings of spirituality attributed by people belonging to specific groups in Turkey. Based on the results of his research on therapists in Denmark, Ahlin (2008) argues that "certain beliefs are characteristic of spirituality"; these are "a belief in a higher power/ energy, in a god that you can find everywhere, in reincarnation, in astrology, ghosts, and sooth-saying, and also in practices such as meditation and prayer"; and spirituality is associated with some other concepts, such as "holism, channelling, chakra, clairvoyance, chi, aura, and karma" (Ahlin, 2008). It might be argued that the majority of these beliefs are embraced by non-religious

(New Spiritualism) in Turkey in 1946. He was the leading metapsychic researcher in Turkey, and he conducted individual and institutional works. He wrote several books, such as the Spirit and Universe (1946), Among Spirits (1949), and Allah (1952).

There are also spiritual research organizations in Turkey, such as MTIAD (Metapsisik Tetkikler ve Ilmi Arastirmalar Dernegi - Metapsychic Investigations and Scientific Research Society MISRS), BILYAY[38] (Insani Birlestiren Bilgiyi Yayma Vakfi - the Foundation for Spreading the Knowledge to Unify Humanity), IRAD (Izmir Ruhsal Arastirmalar Dernegi - Izmir Spiritual Research Foundation) in Izmir[39], ARAD (Ankara Ruhsal Arastirmalar Dernegi - Ankara Spiritual Research Foundation) in Ankara[40], AKRAD (Adana Ruhsal Arastirmalar Dernegi - Adana Spiritual Research Foundation) in Adana[41], KRAD (KKTC Ruhsal Arastirmalar Dernegi - Northern Cyprus Spiritual Research Foundation) in Northern Cyprus and Ergun Arikdal[42] Ruhsal Arastirmalar Enstitusu (Ergun Arikdal Spiritual Research Institute) in Istanbul[43].

MISRS is a scientific, philosophical, and ethical association that was founded by Dr Bedri Ruhselman in Istanbul in 1950. The purpose of its establishment as stated on its web site is: "broadcasting information regarding spiritual phenomena explainable through experiment and objective knowledge." The aims of the foundation are:

> To research and scientifically explain every sort of psychic phenomenon, by conducting various spiritual experiments and investigations, to study the nature of human existence and to prevent the misinterpretation of the knowledge thus

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spiritual people in Turkey who are also interested in spiritualism. Accordingly, some understandings of spirituality in Denmark may arguably be similar to the non-religious spiritual people's perceptions of spirituality in Turkey.

38 www.bilyay.org.tr/eng/about.asp

39 www.irad.org/Default.aspx

40 www.arad.gen.tr/index.htm

41 www.adrad.org/

42 Ergun Arikdal (1936-1997) is the previous president of Metapsychic Investigations and Scientific Research Society MISRS.

43 www.enstitu.biz/

> obtained, to serve the promotion of higher moral principles and spiritual values[44].

The society organizes regular free public conferences on Tuesday evenings in Istanbul, meetings, monthly lectures in other parts of Turkey (mainly in Ankara and Izmir), on-going three-month long seminars covering various aspects of psychical research and courses. The organisation also publishes books, magazines, audio and video tapes; and exchanges knowledge with other similar organizations, both in Turkey and abroad. Theoretical and practical parapsychological work has been conducted only at MISRS in Turkey. The society has got around 100 members. In general, its objectives:

> To study spiritual (psychic) phenomena and explain them in a scientific way, to carry out all kinds of psychic experiments and research in order to investigate human existence, to conduct various practical studies with the purpose of helping people psychically and spiritually; to work towards the expansion of higher moral principles and help bring to light superior values, to advance the understanding of events and abilities commonly described as 'psychic' or 'paranormal', in a scientific spirit without prejudice[45].

ARAD and IRAD were established in 1990, ADRAD and KRAD were established in 1992. In 1993, radio channels were created. Between 1995 and 1996, television programmes on related issues were broadcast. BILYAY has its roots in MISRS and was established in 1994. Finally, in 2013 the Ergun Arikdal Spiritual Research Institute was established. All of these foundations have the above-mentioned purposes. They organize conferences and publish monthly bulletins including the Turkish translations of texts on related issues; however, they are not academic references. These bulletins and articles are on spirituality, positive thinking, death, near death experiences, consciousness, incarnation, parapsychology, paranormal activities, telepathy, psychometry, dreams, shamanism, modern science and spirituality, health, meditation and yoga, imagination, occultism, power of love, UFOs, and New Age movements.

There are other spiritual beliefs in Turkey. Tanyu (1976) analyses 195 of these in his study. He states that these beliefs can be categorized as those that are not dangerous or harmful, those that are neither harmful nor beneficial, those that can give hope and meaning to life, those that are not against Islamic principles, those that are compatible with Islamic principles, those that are against Islamic principles, those that are compatible with scientific

44 www.bilyay.org.tr/eng/about.asp

45 www.bilyay.org.tr/eng/a2.asp?id=&kat=5&sf=2

principles, and those that are against scientific principles. Some of the examples are beliefs related to fate, witches, whirling, clothes, sacrifice, angels, death, and stars (Tanyu, 1976).

Moreover, the interest in astrology, tarot, reiki, meditation, yoga, precious stones, and feng shui is increasing gradually; such beliefs are not considered strange in Turkey. Moreover, the words, such as energy and awareness, are used more often in daily life. Positive thinking, inner journey, love, acceptance, forgiveness, purification, and conscience are other concepts that are being used in new forms and meanings in Turkish society (Mirza, 2014).

3.6 The Meaning of Spirituality in Turkish

The human being is represented as a whole by the first personal pronoun "I" or "me" that consists of *qalb* (heart), *ruh* (spirit, soul, or breath of life), *nafs* (ego, soul, psyche, the person, the self) and body. The inner self of man has four dimensions including *qalb* (heart, soul), *ruh* (spirit), *nafs* (psyche), and *a'ql* (intellect) (Husain, 2006). These are the four psychospiritual structures that compose the human personality based on al-Ghazali's Qur'anic understanding (al-Ghazali, 1995). According to al-Ghazali, *nafs* refers to "the lower part of humans which is responsible for their desires, primitive emotions (e.g., anger) or their undesirable qualities, and the self or the person" (Abu-Raiya, 2012, 222). This part also experiences happiness, comfort, love, fear, worry, anxiety, sorrow, grief, and palpitation (Javed, et al., 2009), as human being is regarded as "not a thing or an object, but a process" (Husain, 2006, 9). *Nafs* is translated into English as pneuma, psyche, and soul (Medical dictionary; cited in Abu-Rayia, 2012). Even though *nafs* (psyche) is used in some Qur'anic verses referring to *ruh* (spirit) and depending on the context, the former is a broader phenomenon than the latter (Deurash & Abu Talib, 2005). The distinguishing feature of the term *ruh* is that it "does not constitute the personality component, but refers to the power of various passions or lusts and instincts inherent in the individual which always urge him to satisfy the soul" (Deurash & Abu Talib, 2005, 76). Al-Ghazali attributes two meanings to the term *ruh*: life and soul. In a verse in the Qur'an, it is said: "They ask thee concerning the Spirit (*ruh*): Say: The spirit descends by the command of my Lord: of knowledge it is only a little that is communicated to you" (Qur'an, 17:85). All these concepts exist in Arabic and

have been taken from this language, and translated into Turkish, and used with the same meanings.

The term *ruh* (cognate of the Hebrew word *ruach*: wind), one of the four psychospiritual structures categorized by al-Ghazali (1995) as *qalb*, *ruh*, *nafs* and *a'ql*, is the root of spirituality (*ruhsallık*) in Turkish. In modern Turkish, three other words are used instead of *ruhsallık* in academic literature on the psychology of religion, nursing, business, and others. These are *maneviyat*, *tinsellik*, and *spiritüellik*/*spiritüalite*. *Ruhaniyet*/*Ruhanilik* is another word that has the same root *ruh* as *ruhsallık,* which means spirituality, but it is not used in the academic literature. Some examples of the studies that employed one or more of these words are in the field of Psychology of Religion (Ok, 2006; Turkyilmaz, 2008; Uysal, 2009; Guler, 2010; Yapici, 2012a; Yapici, 2012b; Duzguner, 2013; Ayten & Altinli-Macic & Coleman III, 2015), in which the words are generally examined in a religious context. There are also studies conducted in other fields such as health, nursing, arts, and philosophy (Aktas, 2005; Arican, 2006; Altunoz, 2007), business, leadership, and organization (Seyyar, 2009; Ayranci & Semercioz, 2011; Orgev & Gunalan, 2011; Seyyar & Evkaya, 2015; Berzah-Cakir & Cakir, 2015). The majority of the studies employ the concept of spirituality in a broader context than religion in Turkish academic literature (Yilmaz & Okyay, 2009; Kostak, et al, 2010; Emhan & Cayir, 2010). In the following sections of the chapter, the concepts of *maneviyat*, *ruhsallık, tinsellik*, and *spiritüalite*/*spiritüellik* will be examined in detail.

3.6.1 Maneviyat

Maneviyat is the most commonly used word among the others in everyday language; it means nonmaterial, abstract, morale, inwardness, (in good/low) spirits, and sensate, sensual, and mental processes of the social or individual experiences (The online dictionary of the Turkish Language Association)[46]. As cited earlier, the meaning of *ma'nawiyyat* (spirituality) in Persian which is "the nature of the spirit and inwardness as opposed to the outward aspect of things" (Nasr & Jahanbegloo, 2010, 171) is similar to the meaning of *maneviyat* in Turkish. *Maneviyat* derives from the noun *mana* and the adjective *manevi*. The root *ma'na* in

46 The definitions of the words maneviyat, ruhsallık, tinsellik, spiritüalite, maneviyatçılık, ruhçuluk, and tinselcilik are retrieved from the online dictionary of the Turkish Language Association: http://www.tdk.gov.tr/
Turkish Language Association is the official regulatory body of the Turkish language, established in 1932.

Arabic means inward aspect (Nasr & Jahanbegloo, 2010, 171), inner content, concept, meaning and notion (Shirazi, 2008). The adjective *manevi* means invisible, sensate, spiritual, nonmaterial, backbone, mood, moral, and strength. Some examples of the usage of the noun *maneviyat* and the adjective *manevi* (spiritual) in Turkish are spiritual knowledge, spiritual damages, spiritual child (adopted or foster child), spiritual compensation, spiritual support (moral or emotional support), spiritual power (inner power) and demoralisation (Güncel Türkçe Sözlük TDK). It is also argued that there is not an exact Turkish word to translate spirituality, so the Arabic term *maneviyat* is used (Dastan, & Buzlu, 2010).

Maneviyat is the most commonly used concept among the four words (*maneviyat, ruhsallık, tinsellik* and *spiritüalite*) in Turkish academic studies (such as, Ergul, & Bayik, 2004; Asti, et al., 2005; Ergul, & Bayik-Temel, 2007; Yapici, 2007a; Ayten, 2010, Horozcu, 2010; Guler, 2010; Akgun-Kostak, Celikkalp, & Demir, 2010; Akgun-Kostak et al., 2010; Dastan, & Buzlu, 2010; Orgev & Gunalan, 2011; Yapici 2011; Kose, & Ayten, 2012; Karagul, 2012; Yapici, 2012a; Yapici, 2012b; Ok, 2012; Eryilmaz, 2012; Ugurlu & Basbakkal, 2013; Kavas & Kavas, 2014; Eglence & Simsek, 2014; Celik, et al., 2014; Mirza, 2014; Kirac, 2014; Kavas & Kavas, 2015; Sevinc et al., 2015; Altinli-Macic & Coleman III, 2015; and Eksi, Takmaz & Kardas, 2016).

Kayiklik (2006) uses the word *maneviyat* and he asserts that spirituality is individual religiousness and when the term spirituality is used in Turkey, a sincere relationship with God (Allah), fulfilling practices faithfully, and religiousness come to mind (Kayiklik, 2006). Moreover, Ok states that people correlate their spirituality (differently than Western Europe) with a traditional religion (mostly with Islam) in Turkey. However, there is a slight number of individuals (called ‘deconverts’ in the original text) who left organized institutional religion and who understand spirituality without associating it with religion. He argues that ‘psychology of faith’ or ‘psychology of spirituality’ is a broader concept than ‘psychology of religion’ (Ok, 2006).

Ergul & Bayik (2004) preferred using the word *maneviyat* in their theoretical article on the spiritual dimension of humankind and nursing, holistic and spiritual care. They emphasize that the spiritual need of people/patients is overlooked in health care since it is an intangible dimension of human beings, and thus, it is difficult to define and evaluate. They state however, that the interest in this dimension has been growing since the 1960s and nursing theorists have given more importance to spirituality and spiritual care than religious and

denominational beliefs and practices. Ergul & Bayik (2004) provide the definitions of spirituality and spiritual care citing references from Western studies. Accordingly, spirituality is described as to seek inner peace, to find purpose and the meaning in life beyond religious affiliation, without having strong religious faith, or without believing in God (Ergul & Bayik, 2004). They provide information about the roles of nurses in spiritual care and the principles of providing spiritual care. They assert that 61.3% of nursing academicians stated that nurse training in Turkey is insufficient to provide nursing students with the knowledge and ability for spiritual care. They assert that, in order to improve the health care system, the holistic and spiritual care should be included in the curricula of nursing schools in Turkey and the graduate nurses should be informed through in-service training (Ergul & Bayik, 2004). Another article published by the same authors (Ergul & Bayik-Temel, 2007) explores an empirical research, which investigates the validity and reliability of a rating scale designed to assess spirituality and spiritual care (the 17-item scale that was developed by McSherry, Droper, and Kendrick[47]). The Turkish translation of the scale and a questionnaire form were applied to 144 nurse academicians who had at least a PhD degree. 56% of those responded to the distributed postal surveys and the validity and reliability of the Turkish version of the scale was found to be satisfactory. In this research paper, they preferred to use *maneviyat* among the four spirituality words.

Yapici employs the word *maneviyat* in all of his relevant books and articles. In his book on mental health and religion, Yapici (2007a) states that differentiation of institutional and individual religion is made within Turkish literature based on a theoretical approach. The opposite is true in empirical studies however, possibly a result of the difficulty of separating individual religion from the institutional religion. He defined spirituality as the presentation of individual faith and affiliation that gives meaning to existence, emotions, and thoughts that denote internal, emotional, and individual adherence to the sacred. Spirituality is also defined as almost the entire individual search for meaning and purpose in life having faith without any particular religious connection and belonging within a religious group by practising religious rituals (Yapici, 2007a, p. 43). In addition, he argues that spiritual values have positive functions to protect health and to reduce stress and anxiety (Yapici, 2011).

47 McSherry, W., Draper, P. & Kendrick, D. (2002). The construct validity of a rating scale designed to assess spirituality and spiritual care. The International Journal of Nursing Studies, 39, 723-734.

Ayten (2010) also uses the word *maneviyat* in his books and articles such as Empathy and Religion: A Psycho-Social Research on helping each other and Religion in Turkey (2013). Moreover, *maneviyat* is preferred in a variety of translated academic books and articles from English into Turkish, such as Handbook of the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality[48] and Advances in the Conceptualisation and Measurement of Religion and Spirituality: Implications for Physical and Mental Health Research[49] and Religion, Spirituality, and Medicine: Research Findings and Implications for Clinical Practice[50].

Horozcu (2010) reviews research on religiousness, spirituality, and mental and physical health. He aims to explore the effects of religion and spirituality on health according to worldwide studies. He concludes that the majority of research found a positive relationship between spirituality, religion, and health. In addition, Guler (2010) reviews the relationship between religious beliefs and psychological health in her article. She provides definitions of spirituality by Western researchers and theorists. She concludes that the religious beliefs could not be neglected in mental health care due to the association between mental health and religiousness variables.

Kostak and colleagues (2010) conducted a study on the nurses and midwives' perceptions of spirituality and spiritual care with 110 hospital personnel using the Spirituality and Spiritual Care Grading/Rating Scale, which was developed by McSherry, Droper and Kendrick and used in a study conducted by Ergul and Bayik-Temel (2007) earlier in Turkey. They aimed to determine the factors that influenced their participants' perceptions of spirituality. The results of their study show that nurses regarded spirituality as a religious term, and the knowledge of nurses and midwives about spirituality and spiritual care was insufficient, therefore, they suggested that they should be trained on this topic. Furthermore, Eglence and Simsek (2014) conducted research with 103 nurses (using the same scale) to explore the level of knowledge about spirituality and spiritual care, and caring skills of the

48 Paloutzian, R. F. & Park, C. L. (Eds.) (2005). Handbook of the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality. New York London: The Guilford Press. Translated into Turkish in 2015.

49 Hill, P. C. & Pargament, K. I. (2003). Advances in the Conceptualization and Measurement of Religion and Spirituality: Implications for Physical and Mental Health Research. American Psychologist, 58:1, 64-74. Translated into Turkish by Mustafa Ulu in 2015.

50 Koenig, H. G. (2004). Religion, spirituality, and medicine: Research findings and implications for clinical practice. Southern Medical Journal, 97, 1194-1200. Translated into Turkish by Nurten Kimter in 2013.

nurses. They conclude that nurses had adequate knowledge about spiritual care; however, they could not meet the spiritual needs of patients due to the lack of time and personnel. Some nurses reported that they listened to the patient and talked with them to provide spiritual care. At the end of their paper, the authors offer suggestions such as spiritual care courses should be included in nursing education and in-service training programs should be given to nurses. There are other studies on the same issue in which the same scale was used and these studies provided similar results (i.e. Celik, et al., 2014). Ugurlu and Basbakkal (2013) conducted interviews with 20 mothers of hospitalized children in intensive care units to find out their spiritual care requirements. The participants stated that their spiritual needs were not met by any of the personnel, including doctors and nurses.

Dastan & Buzlu (2010) reviewed the research published about the effects of spirituality on illness, specifically on breast cancer. The authors stated that there was not an approproiate word in Turkish in order to translate spirituality; however, the Arabic word *maneviyat* was used; and they provided the definitions of spirituality taken from Western theorists. Similarly, Orgev and Gunalan (2011) preferred to use the word *maneviyat* in their article on workplace spirituality, and they borrowed the definitions of spirituality from some Western researchers.

Mirza (2014) used the words *maneviyat* (more often) and *ruhsallık* (sometimes) in her unpublished PhD thesis titled 'new 'religionization' tendencies and spirituality pursuits'. She aimed to understand the individuals' tendency towards spirituality, and the conditions and pursuits that shape the process. She conducted in-depth interviews with 22 people. One participant in her research believed that religion did not meet the needs and requests of the modern day individual. Mirza (2014) states that the inefficiency of religion was emphasized very often during the conversations with the participants who had a secular world-view. However, she argues that the inefficiency of religion leads to spirituality and sacredness. Her participants did not perceive religion as a search for meaning; instead, religion was comprehended in relation to the spiritual needs, which increase due to negative circumstances and life events. She adds that spirituality and sacredness were separated from religious matters by her interviewees. One participant implied that yoga was an alternative way of purification for people who were seeking ways to purify their souls to some practices such as going to a mosque and praying with others in Islamic traditions. Consequently, she argues that yoga schools are being opened in every district and a great number of people realize a

spiritual emptiness and they need a place to listen to themselves, thus, they attend these yoga schools (Mirza, 2014).

Kirac (2014) utilizes the word *maneviyat,* and defines it as meaning and purpose in his research. He also found a positive relationship between intrinsic religiosity and meaning in a previous study (2007) conducted with Turkish Muslim university students. He conducted a survey of 382 Turkish gay and bisexual males who were affiliated with Islam. Two main groups emerged in the study, first, participants who accepted their sexual orientation and second, participants who rejected their sexual orientation. Accordingly, the latter group scored higher in religiosity but lower in purpose in life (spirituality), while the former, scored higher in purpose in life (spirituality) and lower in religiosity. This research showed a negative relationship between religiosity and meaning and purpose in life (spirituality).

Kavas & Kavas (2015) employed the word *maneviyat* in their article on the doctors, midwives, and nurses' perceptions of spiritual support and the spiritual care of the patients. They applied the Spiritual Support Perception Scale (SSPS) (a 15-item scale that was developed by Kavas & Kavas in 2014) to a sample of 463 participants. They discovered that the study participants had a positive attitude towards spiritual care without regard to gender, age, profession, and seniority. The participants believed that providing spiritual care might psychologically help the patients; it might increase life resistance and self-confidence of the patients and might support medical treatments. They argue that midwives and nurses have not been trained effectively on spirituality and spiritual care, and spiritual care has not been provided to the patients sufficiently; therefore, they suggested that spiritual care personnel should be trained adequately in order to be qualified in the field. They also recommended that interdisciplinary studies and workshops should be organized collaboratively among institutions within departments such as Psychology, Psychiatry, Counselling, Psychology of Religion, Social Service, and Health Sciences. Moreover, they added that students should be educated with new curricula and training programs designed and offered by such collaboration, and students should have at least a master's or PhD degree.

Sevinc et al. (2015) published quantitative research on atheism. They aimed to explore the validity and reliability of the Nonreligious-nonspiritual Scale (developed by Cragun,

Hammer and Nielsen in 2015[51]) and its adaptation into Turkish. They conducted online pilot surveys with two versions of the translation of the scale. In the first one, the word *spiritüel* (spiritual) was used, and in the second one, the word *manevi* (spiritual) was employed. The results indicated that the second version was clearer; therefore, the main research was carried out with the second version of the translation of the scale.

Altinli-Macic & Coleman III (2015) published an article on spirituality and religion in Turkey. The data were based on a survey (conducted with 220 university students) that was collected and analysed in 2011. The survey document included a background information form, two open-ended questions (i.e. "What does spirituality mean to you?", and "What does religion mean to you?"), and two scales to assess participants' levels of spirituality (the Self-transcendence subscale (ST) of the Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI))[52] and religiosity (the Brief Islamic Religiosity Measure (BIRM))[53]. The research found that ninety-three respondents perceived spirituality in a religious sense; forty-five participants defined spirituality as piety to God, living a life for His sake in the direction of His commands, and practising Islam sincerely. Religion and/or religious affiliation were not mentioned in the definitions of spirituality given by fifty-two participants; spirituality was described in several ways and some definitions given by the participants were:

> Peace, which could be reached during the process of seeking God, sincerity, prospering spirit with values, nonmaterial, intrinsic satisfaction, being simple-hearted, listening to heart instead of mind, the place and situation where money has disappeared, intuitional aspects, belief and commitment, love, comprehending the meaning of life, viewing life optimistically, living life at the same time as considering death, believing in something, search for one self, or for the sacred, sensibility, conscience, believing in an existence and communicating with that existence, sincere commitment to people we love.

One participant in their research noted that spirituality was a more comprehensive concept than religiosity. The results of the study showed that the majority of the respondents had a tendency towards religious spirituality.

Eksi and colleagues (2016) published an academic paper written in English on spirituality and psychology, specifically examining the experiences of health professionals in

51 Cragun, R., Hammer, J. H. & Nielsen, M. (2015). The NonReligious-NonSpiritual Scale (NRNSS): Measuring Everyone from Atheists to Zionists. Science, Religion & Culture, 2:3, 36-53.

52 This scale was developed by Cloninger et al. in 1993.

53 This scale was developed by Ayten in 2009.

their profession. In the abstract of the article in Turkish, they translated spirituality into Turkish as *maneviyat*. The purpose of the research was to explore the role of spirituality in psychotherapy through conducting interviews with eight psychological counsellors/therapists. It is revealed that the participants acknowledged the significance of discussing topics related to spirituality with the patient and they utilized a variety of methods and techniques in the therapy sessions. They were not, however, educated on spirituality; some had not even read anything on the topic. Some participants did not believe that education on spirituality is necessary to work with it; some thought that it is not within the realm of psychiatry, and it is impossible to master all dimensions of spirituality and help the client with every aspect of spiritual matters and needs. The authors stated that research conducted in other countries showed similar results.

As has been demonstrated, the majority of studies on spirituality, which employed the word *maneviyat*, are conducted in the field of nursing and spiritual care; however, these studies are few (Kavas & Kavas, 2015). In these studies, the definitions of spirituality are generally taken from the Western theorists, as mentioned earlier. The results of these studies show that nurses and midwives are not trained sufficiently on spirituality and spiritual care during their undergraduate and postgraduate university education; they neglect the spiritual needs of patients, and therefore, do not meet their requirements.

A Turkish psychiatrist Kemal Sayar (2012) also uses the word *maneviyat*. He criticises the New Age books for giving material targets to the reader instead of spiritual tranquillity and belief. According to him, these books give the idea of importance of the power of (positive) thinking without requiring action, which makes people less likely to work hard to achieve their goals. He states that an individual who forgets his or her responsibilities becomes a slave to consumerism and capitalism. Furthermore, he argues, these books instil in people an idea of life that is full of material pleasures. Therefore, he believes that people are afraid of death because it is the end of life, and if they do not believe in the Hereafter, they might not be able to avoid depression and therefore they cannot flourish. In short, when the perception of life as a ‘test’ changes, this influences human health, he adds. In addition, he asserts that capitalism and new age beliefs change the meaning of happiness. He also affirms that money, a good career, and wealth have been conceived as prior necessities for happiness according to the doctrine of new age spirituality, contrary to Islamic principles. Therefore, he continues, Muslims, specifically young adults have big dreams in order to reach those high

levels, which they believe are necessary to be happy. However, they are extremely impatient and they do not confine themselves to the things they have, which leads to psychological and social problems. In addition, he points out that it is clear that material things do not fill spiritual gaps. Moreover, he states that the readers of those books are mostly the depressed middle class in society. Those people tend to commit suicide easily even if they have faith in God, even though suicide is strictly forbidden in Islam. Thus, it can be argued that new age nonreligious spirituality might be harmful for psychological welfare (Sayar, 2012)[54].

3.6.2 Ruhsallık

Ruhsallık and *ruhaniyet* derive from the noun *ruh* in Arabic, which represents spirit (Nasr & Jahanbegloo, 2010, p. 169). The word also means soul, essence, scent, and sentiment and it derives from the adjective *ruhsal* in Turkish, meaning mental, spiritual, psychological, and psychic, and another adjective *ruhani*, meaning spiritual, immaterial, unfleshly, ghostlike, and ghostly in Arabic. Some examples of the usage of the adjective *ruhsal* and *ruhani* are mental (*ruhsal*) illness, psychological (*ruhsal*) breakdown, emotional (*ruhsal*) health, psychic (*ruhsal*) unity, and spiritual (*ruhani*) leader. *Ruhsallık* and *ruhaniyet* both refer to spirituality (Ozdogan, 2005; Uysal & Ayten, 2009); although the former is used academically while the latter is not. In several academic studies, *ruhsallık* has been employed to represent spirituality (Ozdogan, 2005; Uysal & Ayten, 2009; Ayten, 2010; Arslan, 2010, etc.).

Ozdogan (2005) used the term *ruhsallık* in her article on spiritual approach to humankind, in which she explains the processes and outcomes of her observation to help the prisoners avoid re-offending for a year by giving individual counselling and in-group sessions. The main themes that were covered in the meetings were repentance (reading verses from Qur'an about repentance), forgiving one's self, doing good deeds, and positive thinking. She defined *ruhsallık* as the connection of a person with his/her Creator, so that its source is divine. She states that the essential foundation of Islam is spirituality; accordingly, it centralizes the eternal happiness of the human being with its holistic approach. She cites Akdemir's (2000) argument that the function of *the real religion* is to rotate humankind to his/her nature and to hinder him/her from alienating his/her nature; therefore, to make him/her

[54] www.zaman.com.tr/cmts_prof-dr-kemal-sayar-insanlar-light-maneviyat-istiyor_1342187.html

realize the divine breath in himself/herself, and to bring love and peace to the world using his/her endless capability. He grounds his ideas on spirituality in the verse

> So set thou thy face truly to the religion being upright; the nature in which Allah has made mankind: no change (there is) in the work (wrought) by Allah: that is *the true religion*: but most among mankind know not. (The Qur'an, 30:30)

He states that the attribution of the nature of humankind as *the real religion* in the Qur'an is not a coincidence because organized religion without any spiritual sense leads people to walk away from their nature and they become unhappy, which is the reason humanists break off relationship with religion (Akdemir, 2000). Moreover, Ozdogan argues that if a religion consists of only physical rituals it loses its relation to the spiritual, and therefore, it cannot meet an individual's spiritual needs. Moreover, religion without spiritual sense becomes a worldly institution that exploits its adherents. The reason for that, Ozdogan (2005) argues, is the structure of an organized religion that consists of hierarchical systems focusing on worldly affairs such as power, politics, money, and property. Ozdogan asserts that such an organized religion does not want its followers to live a spiritual life, and it aims to dissuade them from activities that might lead them to spiritual experiences, since spiritual experiences foster freedom and cannot be controlled by organized religion. Therefore, she affirms that *real spiritual life* continues in mystical fields, cults, and friaries. She believes in the universality of *real spirituality*; it is based on individual mystical experience not on any dogma or religious direction (Ozdogan, 2005).

Uysal & Ayten (2009) preferred using the word *ruhsallık* in their research on spirituality and hopelessness. They noted that spirituality is a complex concept and it should be assessed separately from religiosity (Ayten & Uysal, 2009). They defined *ruhsallık* as a search for meaning and sacred, self-transcendence, and unity with the sacred. They conducted a survey with university students and applied the Self-transcendence subscale (ST) of the Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI) to assess spirituality. They found that the participants who were students from the department of Theology perceived spirituality as spiritual and moral values. They discovered that spirituality had three meanings: mystical thinking, the perception of wholeness, and identification. There was a negative relationship between these three meanings and hopelessness, and the results indicated that two factors including self-loss and transcendence of intuition-emotion decreased motivation and led to hopelessness for the future. Arslan (2010) used the word *ruhsallık* in his article on sacred

requests in secular societies, which is a sociological analysis of the relationship between religion and magic in late modern-era societies.

3.6.3 Tinsellik

Tinsellik derives from the noun *tin*, which means spirit, anima, and peak. Its adjective form is *tinsel*, which refers to immaterial, spiritual, and moral. Some of the examples of the adjective *tinsel* are moral (*tinsel*) sciences such as philosophy, philology, history, theology and religion, and moral doctrine. Although this term is used in some research papers (Karairmak, 2004; Tuncay, 2007; Bozhuyuk, et al., 2012, etc.), it is unfamiliar to Turkish society.

Karairmak (2004) used the word tinsellik in her theoretical article on spirituality and counselling and psychotherapy. She emphasizes the difference between religion and spirituality and states that spirituality is one of the powerful dimensions and strengths of humankind that supports his/her existence in the universe; it offers inspiration, and it motivates the search for purpose and meaning in life. She stated that spirituality provides appreciation of the truth, unity, sacred and beauty in life, and the feeling of benevolence. Furthermore, she adds, spirituality represents "feeling a tie with the universe, feeling part of nature, and believing in the balance in the world and in nature" (Karairmak, 2004).

Tuncay (2007) used the term *tinsellik* in his theoretical article on spirituality and coping with chronic illnesses. He states that spirituality is translated into Turkish as *ruhaniyet*, *maneviyat*, and *tinsellik* in the dictionary of the Turkish Language Association, and he preferred using *tinsellik*, yet he does not give the reason for his choice. He notes that spirituality refers to an individual's spiritual space, which is a place where he/she finds meaning and purpose in life. It might be a private and subjective relationship with a supreme power, or with nature, art, music, family, or social environment in which he/she confers value and belief (Tuncay, 2007). Emhan and Cayir (2010) used the word *tinsellik* in their study, which found that spiritual values were important in coping with stress for their participants; spiritual values decreased anxiety and protected mental health.

In another study on healthy life-style and family medicine that explores spirituality, nutrition, exercise, stress management, and interpersonal relationships, *tinsellik* is defined as the power beyond the individual and his existence, individual awareness, relationship with the

self, others and transcendental purposes, existentialism including individual experiences and the meaning of life (Bozhuyuk, et al., 2012). In this study, when spirituality is translated into Turkish as *tinsellik*, another term *spiritualizm* is given in brackets after *tinsellik*. *Spiritualizm* is the Turkish word used for spiritualism. The other two words that stand for spiritualism in Turkish are *tinselcilik* and *ruhçuluk*[55], which differ from *tinsellik* and *ruhsallik* but have the same root *tin* and *ruh*. This may be because of the authors' confusion or misunderstanding of the concept, because all the definitions in their research paper are related to spirituality not spiritualism.

3.6.4 Spiritüalite

The term *spiritüalite/spiritüellik* is directly translated into Turkish from Western languages and used by some scholars (Algier, 2005; Akgun-Kostak, 2007; Cetinkaya, et al., 2007; Arslan & Konuk-Sener, 2009; Dedeli & Karadeniz, 2009; Korkut-Owen, & Owen, 2012; Hicdurmaz & Oz, 2013). The aim of using a direct translation of spirituality into Turkish might be to prevent the confusion that derives from the use of other words such as *maneviyat*, which might be understood as a religious term.

Algier (2005) and Dedeli & Karadeniz (2009) translated spiritual into Turkish as *spiritüel* in their articles on palliative care in children and on an integrated psychosocial-spiritual model for cancer pain management. Akgun-Kostak (2007) preferred using *spiritüel* with *manevi (*spiritual*)* in brackets, and spirituality as *spiritüalizm* (spiritualism) in the research paper on nursing care. The author stated that even though *spiritualizm* (instead of using the word spirituality) and religion are used synonymously there are important differences between them. She defined *spiritüalite* and *spiritüalizm* in a different way; however, she used the word *spiritualizm* (spiritualism) for spirituality in the beginning of her paper. According to the author, *spiritüalizm* (*ruhçuluk/tinselcilik*) is a metaphysical notion based on the foundation that the universe is spiritually grounded and the existence has a spiritual structure independent of body. She states that spirituality refers to the search of an individual for a relationship with a divine being and expression(s) of that search (Kostak,

55 *Tinselcilik/Ruhçuluk/Spiritüalizm* (Spiritualism in English) is defined by the online dictionary of Turkish Language Association as the metaphysical teaching, which asserts that the essence of the truth is spirit; each truth is spiritual; and the material is only the appearance of the spiritual or it is just a design. This teaching also refers to the existence of the spirit essentially separated from the material body; human being and all other creatures have a spiritual structure separated and independent from and the physical one. http://www.tdk.gov.tr/

2007). There seems to be a misunderstanding of the terms as in the case referred above (see the footnote 34 for a discussion on *tinselcilik*/*spiritüalizm*).

Hicdurmaz and Oz (2013) preferred using *spiritüalite* in their article on spirituality and coping. They treated spirituality as a method of coping, arguing that spirituality is a broader concept which might involve religion. They state that spirituality might be found in many aspects of life. It is a structure that covers metaphysical beliefs and practices that can be experienced in a divine or secular way (Hicdurmaz, & Oz, 2013). Oz (2004) asserted that spirituality is a way of coping and it is helpful when a person is trying to find answers to his/her questions about life and eternity, and when he/she is incapable of finding sources for the meaning of life, hope, and power (Oz, 2004). Oz (2004) also highlights nurses' insufficient training and recommends that they should be aware of their own values, beliefs, and life philosophies. Cetinkaya and colleagues (2007) and Arslan & Konuk-Sener (2009) used the term *spiritüalite* in their theoretical papers on spiritual care and nursing and stigma, spirituality, and comfort. They define spirituality as humankind's attempt to understand and accept his/her relationship with himself/herself and other people, his/her place in the universe, and the meaning in life. It is also defined as the result of knowledge earned throughout life. They stated that spirituality includes meaningful elements that form the purpose of life; and it might be defined as what we do rather than what we are; moreover, it is to feel life. Accordingly, even though religion could be one of a number of foundations of spirituality, spirituality cannot be limited to religious beliefs and rituals; it is a broader concept than religion (Cetinkaya, et al., 2007; Arslan & Konuk-Sener, 2009).

Korkut-Owen & Owen (2012) used the word *spiritüalite* in their research paper on the development, application, and evaluation of the well-star model of wellness (WSM) which has five dimensions: physical, psychological/emotional, social, intellectual/occupational, and spiritual. This model was developed to be used in counselling and was found to be easy to use and applicable to Turkish society. Yilmaz (2011) also used the term *spiritüalite* on her study on the nature of spirituality as a dimension of holistic care in nursing, and she highlighted that nurses should be trained on this topic in order to be able to provide sufficient holistic care to the patients.

The majority of the definitions of spirituality (*maneviyat*, *ruhsallık*, *tinsellik*, and *spiritüalite)* that have been used in Turkish academic writings are borrowed from non-Turkish researchers. Another important point is that none of the Turkish words that stand for

spirituality is defined in a religious frame in the online dictionary of the Turkish Language Association. Even though spirituality is closely related to religion in Islamic Turkish tradition and many of the researchers highlight this relationship, they emphasise the necessity of separating the two phenomena; spirituality and religion. The majority of the studies consider spirituality as a broader concept than religion. However, there are also studies that regard spirituality as a religious concept. For instance, in a study conducted by Ozbasaran and her colleagues (2011), they used 'The Spirituality and Spiritual Care Rating Scale' and found that 83.7% of nurses believe in the evil eye and 89.7% believe in fate. They also found that 59.6% of nurses ignored the "spiritual practices of patients (e.g. praying, wearing a blue bead against the evil eye or an amulet)", 29.2% of them supported these practices, while 11.3% did not. Moreover, the majority of the nurses participated in this study thought that spirituality involves only going to a mosque or to a place of worship and spirituality does not apply to atheists and agnostics. They also believed that nurses could provide spiritual care by having respect for privacy, dignity, and the religious and cultural beliefs of patients. In addition, they noted that nurses could help patients by spending time with them, giving support and reassurance especially in time of need. Moreover, they pointed out that spiritual care could not be provided by arranging a visit by a religious official or the patient's own religious leader even if it is requested by the patient (Ozbasaran, et al, 2011). Similarly, another study in which the same scale was used shows that spirituality is associated with religion for the participants (Yilmaz & Okyay, 2009), and nurses reported that they understood spirituality as religious need (Kostak, et al, 2010).

To conclude, the review of Turkish literature on spirituality indicates that research on this topic in Turkey is limited, and further research on spirituality is greatly needed to augment the existing Turkish literature. The literature review shows that spirituality and spiritual care are mainly studied on a theoretical level. In the majority of studies, spirituality is defined without reference to religious context, and it is regarded as the connection of the individual with him/herself and/or others, the attempt to understand and accept his/her place in life. It is also described as seeking inner peace, purpose, and the meaning in life beyond religious affiliation without having strong religious faith or without believing in God. As stated earlier, a minority of the published research consists of empirical studies in a variety of fields. In the majority of the empirical studies, quantitative methods were mainly used. Moreover, the scales to measure spirituality are limited. Three scales were employed in these studies. These are: (1) Self-transcendence subscale of TCI (Temperament and Character

Inventory) that includes 33 items on a five-point Likert-type scale by Robert Cloninger (Turkyilmaz, 2008; Uysal & Ayten, 2009). (2) Spirituality and Spiritual Care Rating Scale (SSCRS) that includes 17 items on a five-point Likert-type scale by McSherry et al (Ozbasaran et al, 2011; Kostak et al 2010; Yilmaz & Okyay 2009; Ergul & Temel, 2007;). (3) A questionnaire, which includes questions prepared by the researcher (Emhan & Cayir, 2010). This situation indicates the urgent need for adaptation and employment of different spirituality measurements. Furthermore, since the empirical studies are scarce, research using qualitative methods is also greatly needed in the literature. In other words, due to the weaknesses of the existing literature on spirituality in Turkey, academicians should study this concept more in order to better understand its meaning and its role in individuals' life in order to properly integrate spirituality to treatments and therapies.

Studies reveal positive and negative relationships between health and spirituality. In some research, it is stated that people find spirituality helpful when they are under emotional stress, or having an existential crisis or physical illness, and when a loved one dies. Spirituality is found to be helpful when a person is trying to find answers to his/ her questions about life and eternity, and when he/she is incapable of finding sources for the meaning of life, hope, and power. In addition, spirituality helps the individual accept illness and make plans for the future. Spiritual values have positive functions to protect health, to reduce stress and anxiety. On the other hand, it is indicated by the minority of studies that spiritual experience may cause spiritual pain, spiritual anxiety, spiritual guilt, spiritual alienation, spiritual anger, spiritual loss, spiritual hopelessness, disappointment, dissatisfaction, sorrow, and emptiness. The literature review also highlights the insufficient training on spirituality in the fields of Nursing and Psychiatry, which disables nurses to provide help patients. Therefore, nurses should have be trained on the nature of spirituality, its positive effects on health, and its application, spiritual and holistic care in order to gain necessary professional knowledge and ability to determine patients' spiritual needs and proper treatments.

CHAPTER 4

STATEMENT OF THE SIGNIFICANCE, PURPOSE, AND PROBLEM OF THE STUDY

4.1 Introduction

After discussing the different conceptualizations of religion and spirituality in the West and Turkey, this chapter presents the importance of the study, research questions, and the position of the researcher in the study. Western spirituality, including the historical understandings of spirituality within a religious context, the social and religious changes in Western societies because of the Renaissance and Reformation movements, Scientific Revolution, the age of the Enlightenment, the process of secularisation, with ensuing detachment from religion, and the contemporary understandings of spirituality were briefly explained in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 focused further on Turkish spirituality, including religion in the modern Republic of Turkey, the process of secularisation and its impacts on Turkish society, the historical background of spiritual beliefs in Turkey, religious and non-religious spirituality and studies conducted on spirituality in Turkish literature. These chapters aimed to give background information on both western and Turkish spirituality in order to gain a better understanding of the research questions, methods, and results, and clarify the discussion of the findings of the dissertation. These two chapters are intended to the outline of the theme and nature of the issue and what might be done in order to better understand the current state of young people's perception on spirituality in Turkey.

4.2 Significance of the study

Spirituality, as stated earlier, is a multidimensional concept; however, its multidimensionality, vagueness, and impreciseness do not make the concept, its cognates, and connotations insignificant (Swinton & Pattison, 2010). In this section, the generic reasons for studying spirituality and particular reasons for studying spirituality in Turkey are discussed in

detail. Since spirituality is an important and prominent topic of conversation in both the popular and academic contexts, which cannot be disregarded (Moberg, 2002), it deserves the interest of every researcher in this area, and it is worth exploring and investigating in detail. Accordingly, this section focuses on the importance of spirituality in health care, the lack of existing literature on spirituality in different cultural settings, and specifically why it is important to study spirituality in a Turkish sample.

Firstly, there is a strong connection between spirituality/religion and health; and, spirituality might have both negative and (mainly) positive impact on human's mental and physical health and well-being as a result of this relationship (Pargament et al., 2001; Hodges, 2002; Miller & Thoresen, 2003; Koenig, 2004; Pargament et al., 2004; D'Souza, 2007; Fiori, et al, 2004; Koenig, et al., 2012). Although this suggestion is supported with increasing numbers of scientific papers, many physicians and other healthcare professionals are uncomfortable and they abstain from addressing spirituality and spiritual matters in health care. This may lie in the lack of familiarity, knowledge, and experience of spirituality (McCormick, 2014), lack of training in medical education system on how to deal with them in practice (Mariotti et al., 2011; Pargament & Lomax, 2013), unwillingness of physicians to spend "additional time with patients and over-stepping ethical boundaries" by imposing their own personal views, and/or lack of information on the existence of the recent explosion of research on spirituality and health (Koenig, 2004, 1194, McCormick, 2014). However, spirituality and religion are very important for patients under medical treatment (McCormick, 2014) the majority (nearly 90% of patients in the US) of whom identify themselves as being both religious and spiritual, and some who do not have any religious affiliation consider themselves as spiritual (Koenig, 2004). Moreover, in general, at least 90% of the world population practise some form of religious and/or spiritual rituals (Koenig, 2009).

Furthermore, spirituality might play an important role in patients' decision making regarding their health and treatment choices; in addition, spiritual beliefs and practices and spiritual reassurances might be utilized to cope with disease and life stressors, and spirituality may also give comfort to patients, and it might enhance recovery (Puchalski, 2001). Therefore, the spiritual aspect of care that is "part of whole person health care" cannot be completely ignored and the physician should give the patient the choice to allow the physician to provide it (Puchalski, 2001; Koenig, 2004, 1199). Besides, patients would like to be able to bring up spiritual issues in the conversation with their doctors (Cook, et al., 2011; McCord, et al., 2004). Moreover, they would like counsellors to address spiritual issues in

therapy (Belaire & Young, 2000; Rose, et al., 2008). Spirituality also "holds promise not only for understanding a neglected dimension of life but also for practical efforts to help people enhance their well-being" (Pargament & Mahoney, 2002, 655). Pargament (2007) explains the importance of spiritually integrated psychotherapy; in this context, he states that therapists and clients do not leave their spirituality outside the room when they begin the therapy if they are spiritual and/or religious people. Clients have many different religious, cultural, and social backgrounds, which they bring to therapy, and therapists themselves may have different levels of spirituality and spiritual integration. In treatment, the spirituality of both therapists and clients is consequently affected. Spiritual problems can cause psychological problems and vice versa (Pargament, 2007). Spirituality might draw the individual closer to knowledge, transcendence, connectedness, wholeness, meaning, peace, wellness, love, compassion, and hope, and it might lead human beings to grow and develop a value system and to be creative (Burke & Miranti, 2001) or it might be a source of spiritual anxiety, pain, and anger (Sulu, 2006). Spirituality might act as a source for discovering potential solutions to problems, or it might make it more difficult to reach potential solutions. Therefore, spiritually integrated psychotherapy may help clients by providing new perspectives and solutions to their psychological problems (Pargament, 2007, 177).

It is important to meet the spiritual needs of both religious and non-religious patients in the healing process, therefore, health service providers including physicians, psychiatrists, psychologists, nurses, and other professionals should be aware of patients' understandings of spirituality, spiritual beliefs and practices, and what function they serve (Koenig, 2009). Pargament (2007) argues that secular people also use spirituality as a coping method. He states that many therapists consider spirituality as 'a cause of problems' and avoid it because of being unsure about how to handle spiritual affairs and not to intrude on their clients' private lives. However, he continues, spiritual interventions have a significant place in psychotherapy, and clients use spiritual resources whether they are explicitly religious or secular in nature (Pargament, 2007). Furthermore, Vaillant (2013) argues

> It is important for psychiatry to appreciate and understand a person's religion as they would understand their parochial customs. It is important for psychiatry to appreciate a person's spirituality, as they would empathetically understand what is in their hearts –both literally and metaphorically. (p. 590)

Moreover, other reasons for the need of investigation on the definitions of the concept of spirituality are "the desire among health and social care professionals in secular

organisations to distinguish spirituality from religion" and "to incorporate spirituality into measures of well-being" (Nolan & Holloway, 2014, 40). Within this framework, the qualitative studies investigating the perceptions of the participants make different perspectives available to the health care professionals in order to enhance patients' abilities to face challenges in life.

Secondly, even though popularity and interest in the study of spirituality and empirical research on spirituality have increased (see Chapter 2 for a detailed discussion), studies are predominantly conducted within in the United States and other Christian majority countries (Worthington, 1996; Koenig, et al., 2012). However, the 'Majority World', non-Western countries, in which the majority of the human population lives (Kagitcibasi, 1996; Dasen, 2012), has received little attention and in fact has been neglected. Therefore, "a great deal more attention must be paid to the meaning, manifestations, and functional significance of religion and spirituality in the lives of non-Christians" (Peterson & Seligman, 2004, 620) in order to explore worldwide understandings of spirituality in different cultural settings (in non-Western contexts, such as Muslim, Hindu, and Buddhist) (Moreira-Almeida et al., 2014). In addition, Ubani and Tirri (2006) affirm, "In a pluralistic world it is important to study how different populations perceive religion and spirituality" (Ubani & Tirri, 2006, 368). Moreover, Streib and colleagues (2016) state that "further research is needed about the semantics of spirituality in a cross-cultural comparison" in order to understand what people mean by the word spirituality (p. 240). Spirituality is considered a cultural fact (Swinton & Pattison, 2010; Zinnbauer & Pargament, 2005; Shafranske & Malony, 1996) in addition to being an individualistic subjective construct and a significant universal human motive (Paloutzian, 2017; Emmons, 1999). It is argued that social context, culture, and ethnicity inevitably shape religious and spiritual life and identity (Swinton & Pattison, 2010; Peterson & Seligman, 2004, 620); and societal rules in a society and culture influence what people think, feel, and do (Willig, 2008). Moreover, Tanner (2009) points out that "the practices of spirituality will always be largely an individual interpretation within the paradigms of their culture" (p. 316). Therefore, it is necessary to gain an understanding of the meanings of concepts that is peculiar to a culture in order to understand people of this specific culture.

Bearing in mind these requirements, there is an urgent need for research to be conducted specifically, in Muslim majority countries (Ho & Ho, 2007). Few attempts have been made to study spirituality on Muslims living in Muslim countries and Muslims living in Western countries (Joshanloo, 2006, 2009; Amer & Hood, 2008; Tiliouine 2009; Abdel-

Khalek; 2011). What is more, the scales that are developed for participants from the Christian and Western world are used in research conducted on non-Western and non-Christian participants, which may provide insufficient or even incorrect data. This is also the case in Turkish literature; the definitions and scales of spirituality that are borrowed from Western sources are employed in articles, books and the studies about spirituality, which might limit the perspective and might avoid full comprehension on the subject. Furthermore, numerous definitions of spirituality are offered in the Western literature, yet only some of these conceptualizations of spirituality are examined, explored, or tested using limited number of empirical studies in Turkey. In addition, there are a small number of qualitative studies conducted mainly in the field of nursing to explore the thoughts of participants (mainly nurses) about the issue (see Chapter 3 for a detailed discussion). Therefore, there is an urgent need for the construction of new measurements that are suitable for other cultural contexts (for Turkey in this context) to be used in quantitative research, and an urgent need for in-depth studies applying a qualitative approach in different fields, such as psychology, sociology, and theology. In fact, "an increased use of qualitative methods could facilitate a greater dialogue between cultural contents of religion and spirituality in the psychological study of religion" (Selvam, 2011, 3).

Last but not least, it is important to study spirituality in a sample consisting of young people in Turkey. As discussed in Chapter 3, Islam is deeply ingrained in Turkey and the culture is still based on Islamic values; however, Turkey is also highly secularized and its approach to the world has Western traits. Accordingly, viewpoints and thoughts of people might change and people might evaluate issues and concepts from a different perspective or they might even decontextualize them due to the impact of changes on individuals and society. Therefore, spirituality might be considered as a concept that is affected by changes; and it should be examined in order to explore whether it is indeed considered from a Western standpoint in Turkey. As discussed in Chapter 3, the younger generation in general and university students in specific are one of the major groups in society that are affected by the social changes. They are being educated in a secular and positivist education system, and their increased exposure to sources such as books, articles, the media, and internet compared to the rest of the population in the country gives them more opportunity to pursue the news from the rest of the world. Moreover, Koenig and colleagues (2008) state

> Investigation into changes in spirituality would be an important contribution to the current literature, as it is possible that young adults may become less

> religious and less tied to a specific church but more spiritual and more likely to seek other forms of religious expression. (p. 541)

In fact, the majority of the research is conducted among adults and often those in difficult circumstances; "relatively few studies have investigated young persons' spirituality" (Rich & Cinamon, 2007, 10), even though "spirituality and religion are central to the lives of many young people" (Lippman & Keith, 2006; King et al., 2014, 187).

While studying spirituality, the similarities and differences between spiritual traditions might be ascertained, i.e. it might be possible to focus further on universal dimensions of spirituality and 'local' ones peculiar to each one of them separately. This knowledge might enable us to acquire better insights into cross-cultural interventions in the field of spiritual health care. Furthermore, it might allow people to understand each other better, which in turn shows that people might have similar experiences even though they have different social, cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. As far as the concept of spirituality is concerned, how well someone from the outside of a culture might understand the spiritual tendencies in another culture is open to interpretation. Hence, one must ask how applicable would a Western understanding and definition of the concept and literature based on this definition (as the majority of the literature is from the Western sources) be to other cultural contexts? Moreover, in the case it is applied, what level would be appropriate and to what extent might it meet the need? Perceptions and experiences of spirituality of an individual from another culture and the importance of spirituality in his/her life might be disregarded in the Western mental healthcare context, since human beings' background is shaped by their own cultural, societal, and religious settings, and they might not be easily understood by outsiders. If these are not well known and/or well understood by a stranger, the reasons behind a non-Westerner's thoughts and behaviours cannot be fully comprehended. Therefore, there is an urgent need for a better understanding of the concept of spirituality within a health-oriented context suitable for the specific needs of countries and cultures, and Turkey is one of these countries where research on this topic is scarce.

4.3 Research questions

The purpose of this dissertation is not to test a specific hypothesis, yet it is to discover and interpret the meanings attributed to the concept of spirituality. Therefore, this thesis explores the concept of spirituality in contemporary Turkey within the framework of

university students' perceptions and descriptions. On this basis, several research questions are formulated; this dissertation seeks to address the following questions:

1. Is the chosen sample of the current study familiar with the term spirituality?
2. Do the participants use it in daily language?
3. What role does spirituality play in their lives?
4. How do they perceive spirituality and what themes and sub-themes emerge from the data?

There are also related questions of interest, such as:

5. Is the concept of spirituality becoming separated from religion as it is in the Western world?
6. If so, what explains this separation? Is the process of secularisation one of the reasons for the separation of spirituality from religion?

The main purpose of the research is to gain a deeper understanding of the essence of spirituality as understood by university students in Turkey and to explore the separation of spirituality from religion (if there is a differentiation) and their relationship for the research sample. A qualitative approach is utilized to collect data through allowing the sample under investigation to express their own ideas and experiences.

4.4 Insider outsider researcher

The social and cultural background of a researcher might influence all of the procedures in a qualitative inquiry from the beginning to the end including data collection, interpretation, and discussion. Being an insider or an outsider, or both or neither to the community in which researchers conduct their research has been a debateable issue among qualitative researchers, since the status of a researcher indicates his/her personal motivation for his/her study, and he/she plays " a direct and intimate role in both data collection and analysis" (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). The appropriateness of being a member of a population that a qualitative researcher examines has been a topic of debate among social scientists and the notion of being an insider or an outsider to the research domain has become a strict dichotomy. The status of a researcher and his/her social position and identity have great importance for the sake of process and outcomes of any research. These opposite doctrines

have their sui generis advantages and drawbacks; and “the insider’s strengths become the outsider’s weaknesses and vice-versa” (Merriam et al., 2001, 411).

Insider researchers are those that belong to the community they study. They are a part of the community, which allows them to analyse it clearly and to truly understand the culture, situations, and what is happening within the community, and to produce a more authentic thick description of the culture. Moreover, insider researchers “are able to use their knowledge of the group to gain more intimate insights into their opinions” (Mullings, 1999, 340). In addition, insider researchers can find research participants easier than outsiders can do since outsiders are unfamiliar with the new situation (Sanghera & Thapar-Bjokert, 2008). Furthermore, participants accept insiders quickly and fully, so that researchers can access a greater depth of data (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). Insider researchers who might have empathetic understanding (Kusow, 2003) “interact naturally with the group and its members” and establish “greater relational intimacy with the group” (Breen, 2007, 163). Although engaging research participants, understanding and appreciating their experiences, and interpreting them is easier for insiders, they might not be able to separate their personal thoughts from the participants’ answers and this might influence their objectivity (Kerstetter, 2012; Kanuha, 2000). Additionally, as an insider the researcher is familiar with certain social and cultural norms and structures within the community, this situation might lead the researcher not to talk about these familiar issues, which could inhibit conversation (Keval, 2009).

Outsider researchers are those who are not from the community that they study. They are considered detached strangers (Merton, 1972); therefore, and even though complete objectivity is impossible, they arguably observe their sample from a more neutral perspective, which might give them a greater level of objectivity than insiders due to their emotional distance from the community and situations (Simmel & Wolff, 1950). Outsider researchers can observe social phenomena critically and intellectually (Keval, 2009), and “they observe behaviours without distorting their meanings” (Mullings, 1999, 340). On the other hand, they do not have the chance to experience the culture of that community like an insider; consequently, they cannot fully understand everything related to it (Kerstetter, 2012).

There is another position that researchers can place themselves where they occupy the “space between” or “a multidimensional space” (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009) that means “all researchers fall somewhere within the space between complete insiders and complete

outsiders" (Kerstetter, 2012, 101). "Insiders and outsiders, like all social roles and statuses, are frequently situational, depending on the prevailing social, political, and cultural values of a given social context", therefore "we cannot permanently locate individuals according to a single social status" (Kusow, 2003, 592).

> As researchers, we can only ever occupy the space between. We may be closer to the insider position or to the outsider position, but because our perspective is shaped by our position as a researcher (which includes having read much literature on the research topic), we cannot fully occupy one or the other of those positions" (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009, 61).

The researcher of the current study aims to locate herself in the space between as being an insider who can understand the cultural facts, values, and the language of the participants better than an outsider, and at the same time as an outsider who tries to examine the subject from different aspects without bias and to bring an external outlook with the knowledge and perspective she has received during her post-graduate education in the West. As aforementioned, full objectivity is impossible and it is not the major target of the research. Therefore, the researcher tries to avoid injecting her own beliefs and values into the collection, analysis, and interpretation of the data and at least she attempts to keep it to a minimum.

4.5 Emics and etics approach

Emics and etics are two distinct yet valuable approaches, perspectives, methods, and ways to investigate human beings and social behaviour in social sciences (Patton, 2010). Pike, who coined the term and who was the first to use it (Headland, 1990), considers etics as the emics of a researcher. He believes that outsiders and insiders can both deal with the research, with the former learning how "to act like an insider" and the latter learning how "to analyse like an outsider" (Pike, 1990, 34). However, Harris emphasizes the need for and the importance of the term etics, which is entirely different from emics. He argues that the emics of a researcher and the emics of a participant are distinct from each other (Harris, 1990, 49).

According to Harris (1976), sociocultural entities, events, and relationships can be categorised into two distinct types: human mental experiences including all thoughts, feelings, and physical experiences including all body motions. Researchers employ two concepts in order to make statements about these types: emic and etic. The former refers to

operations that are capable of accessing the inside of the heads of people to understand, explain, and discover patterns in mental experiences, while the latter refers to operations capable of exploring patterns in bodily motions such as behaviours (Harris, 1976).

The emic approach (inside perspective) is characterized as the imaginations and interpretations of local people in a culture (Kottak, 2006) whose thought, beliefs, behaviours, and experiences are being studied that are "best described by a native of the culture" (Morris et al., 1999). The etic approach (outside perspective) is characterized as what a researcher considers significant in the imaginations and interpretations of local people (Kottak, 2006) that are accepted as universally true generalizations (Morris at al., 1999). In short, "emic uses are viewed as data, and etic definitions" (Bender & McRoberts, 2012, 8).

The emic perspective has been considered more applicable in the studies related to the understanding and interpretation of a culture and cultural experiences (Godina & McCoy, 2000). The main concern of this type of cultural study is to explore the definitions of the concept of spirituality in a specific cultural context that is examined through interviews conducted with a Turkish sample. Therefore, the researcher must avoid the mistake of imposing a Western etic view of the concept to the participants and must be aware of and pay attention to the self-understandings and emic definitions and descriptions of the participants, while disregarding other theories. "Looking "West" for theory and "East" for data" is a patronizing conventional habit (Kagitcibasi, 1996, 105) and might not be perceived as relevant in all kinds of research. Hence, instead of applying any Western theory related to the concept of spirituality in the study, the researcher collects the actual data directly from the participants and attempts to explore the patterns, themes, and sub-themes that appear in the data. Moreover, Moberg (2002) suggests employing emic methodology that gives participants of a research the opportunity to express their own definitions of spirituality and their own ideas of what constitutes the term instead of imposing researcher's own definitions and opinions to the participants. This should be aimed, despite the fact that it might not always be possible to avoid researcher's own subjectivity owing to the fact that his or her experiences, thoughts, perspectives, feelings, and concerns might be inevitably included in all of the procedures in the study.

CHAPTER 5

A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF HOW THE CONCEPT OF SPIRITUALITY IS UNDERSTOOD BY STUDENTS IN TURKEY

5.1 Introduction

The main aim of this study is to gain a deeper insight and understanding of the students' perceptions of spirituality in a Turkish sample. At the same time, it will demonstrate how all parts and procedures of the research work together in a harmonious order to address the research questions and to give the reader enough information to replicate the study. Having outlined in detail the nature of the issue in Chapter 4 including what the study is about, what the research questions are, and why the study has been undertaken, this chapter encapsulates the method that was chosen and the reasons of choice of this particular method. It will then focus on the application of the specific research method, the procedures followed before, during, and after the data collection including pilot study, the selection of the participants, and the particular technique of data analysis. This chapter will be followed by the results of the study and a discussion of the findings.

5.2 Research design and strategy

Up until today, various methodologies have been developed and introduced to measure spirituality, which have their positive and negative aspects. In the majority of the studies, quantitative methods (positivist scientific inquiry) were considered more accurate and applicable for large research samples. It was decided however that the best method to adopt for this research was to conduct interviews within qualitative methods (naturalistic inquiry) since conducting interviews was the most appropriate approach that fits the purpose of this research topic and the most suitable method for exploration of the research questions.

Therefore, this research is a qualitative descriptive study, which "is the method of choice when straight descriptions of phenomena are desired", although it is described as a plain method and it is considered as being infamous, arguably less valuable and less scientific, and as "being on the lowest rung of the qualitative research design hierarchy" (Sandelowski, 2000, 334). In addition, as the aim of the study is to explore the meanings that the participants attribute to the specific phenomena, to understand the perspectives of the participants, and to observe their views in depth, and to contribute to the knowledge, interviews were deemed most applicable and useful because they are

> Particularly suited for studying people's understanding of the meanings in their lived world, describing their experiences and self-understanding, and clarifying and elaborating their own perspective on their lived world. (Kvale, 1996, 105)

Even though 'descriptive qualitative method' is slightly different from the other qualitative approaches such as grounded theory and narrative[56], it might have hues, tones, overtones and textures from the other qualitative approaches depending on the choices of researcher; for instance, depending on employing one or more combined methods and techniques associated with the other approaches (Sandelowski, 2000). Therefore, research does not have to be based on any specific methodological framework of such approaches (Lambert & Lambert, 2012; Sandelowski, 2000):

> Qualitative descriptive studies are arguably the least "theoretical" of the spectrum of qualitative approaches, in that researchers conducting such studies are the least encumbered by pre-existing theoretical and philosophical commitments. In contrast to phenomenological, grounded theory, ethnographic, or narrative studies, which are based on specific methodologic frameworks emerging from distinctive disciplinary traditions, qualitative descriptive studies tend to draw from the general tenets of naturalistic inquiry. […] in any naturalistic study, there is no pre-selection of variables to study, no manipulation of variables, and no a priori commitment to any one theoretical view of a target phenomenon. (Sandelowski, 2000, 337)

Quantitative methods are concerned with numbers, counting, and variables, whilst qualitative methods are concerned with deep explanations and definitions of specific phenomena (Smith & Dunworth, 2003), contexts, personal experiences and subjective interpretations (Heppner, et al., 1999). Moreover, "every spirituality scale reflects only limited aspects of a highly complex, multidimensional, and largely non-material ontological reality" (Moberg, 2002, 56). Therefore, "analysing multidimensional human phenomena

[56] Even though these two are also descriptive methods, 'descriptive qualitative method' is another specific qualitative method as explained by Sandelowski, 2000.

quantitatively may result in a superficial overview rather than an in-depth understanding of phenomena" (Carroll, 2001, 84). It would also be difficult to conduct quantitative studies on spirituality in Turkey with existing instruments developed for the use in largely Judeo-Christian cultures. Therefore, it might be argued that qualitative research is arguably a necessary first step to develop quantitative research instruments in Turkey.

In addition, qualitative research and quantitative research can be compared using the analogy of the map and video of a place, considering the former as the process of producing a video and the latter as the process of producing a map. Even though the map of a place is very detailed, the video of the very same place gives the actual sense of the place to the observer, as it is vivid (Camic, et al., 2003).

As stated earlier the purpose of this dissertation is not to test a hypothesis, yet it is to find answers to several research questions. Morse and Field (1996) state "As an inductive and holistic way of creating knowledge, qualitative research does not usually have an a priori conceptual framework or hypotheses to be tested" (p. 14). The main research questions of the study are how people perceive, experience, and express spirituality in general, what role spirituality plays in their lives, and what characterizes spirituality in the research sample (see Section 4.2 for the research questions). Accordingly, qualitative methods will be utilized for this research given that it focuses on "understanding something, gaining some insight into what is going on and why this is happening" (Maxwell, 2009, 220). Furthermore, "qualitative researchers pursue questions about people's desires, hopes, fears, and passions" (Marecek, 2003, 58). In addition, "qualitative research is better suited to subtler and more complex phenomena and contexts" (Krippner, 2001, 291), hence a qualitative design will be used for this empirical study to understand and interpret how individuals conceptualize and describe spirituality, which is a vague and complex concept.

5.3 Research method

Interviews are "personal and intimate encounter(s)" (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006, 317) as well as "active interactions between two (or more) people leading to negotiated contextually based results" (Fontana & Frey, 2005, 698). In addition, "semi-structured interviewing is the most widely used method of data collection in qualitative research in psychology" due to the fact that they are easier to conduct than other methods and they are

compatible with many data analysing methods (Willig, 2008, 23). Therefore, face-to-face, individual, semi-structured, qualitative interviews were chosen as research method to collect data because they are very flexible in application. The semi-structured interviewing format is generally used when in-depth investigation is desired as it elicits detailed stories of the interviewees through "open, direct, verbal questions" (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006, 317). Qualitative research "permits analysis of multiple aspects of a phenomenon" since it enables gathering detailed information from the participants (Camic, et al., 2003, 9). Even though the interview method is one of the most expensive, challenging, "rigorous and time-consuming intellectual endeavour" (Morse & Field, 1996, 15), both in terms of data collection and analysis, it allows the researcher to collect non-verbal data as well as a detailed understanding of the topic. This method helps researchers elicit interviewees' descriptions, specific thoughts, themes, and experiences through open-ended questions using conversational language.

5.4 Pre-pilot and pilot study

Even though pilot studies are generally "underdiscussed, underused, and underreported" in the research literature (Prescott & Soeken, 1989, 60), they are conducted in order to try out a specific research instrument (Baker, 1994) and to not risk the major study (De Vaus, 1993). Therefore, the interview schedule was pre-tested with one pre-pilot study (with five participants) and one pilot study (with three participants) in preparation of the main study.

The development of the interview schedule was based on the research questions in the light of the account of spirituality in two different contexts (the West and Turkey) given in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 and on discussions with the supervisors of the researcher and the suggestions given by them. A proposed interview schedule with general questions and probes was designed by the researcher in order to collect data and to explore the meanings of spirituality and the role of spirituality in the lives of university students in Turkey. The researcher developed the proposed interview schedule by selecting questions from the interview schedules employed in similar qualitative studies and by making amendments and adding other questions to them depending on the literature review. The questions focused on coping, positive and negative feelings, well-being, and spirituality, and aimed to find out what

role spirituality and religion played in the lives of the participants and how they defined the concept of spirituality. Accordingly, the interview schedule was designed to find out participants' perceptions of spirituality. For instance, several questions were taken from the study conducted by Zinnbauer et al. (1997), such as "How do you define spirituality?" "What beliefs do you have about God?" and "How do you view the conceptual relationship between religiousness and spirituality?" (p. 552). Moreover, some questions from a research conducted by Rose (2001) on professionals' understandings of spirituality from the big five religious traditions were helpful to shape our interview schedule, such as "Do you believe that most people have a similar idea of what spirituality meant? If you see differences, describe what you consider the most widely held different ideas." "Do you think that spirituality has the same characteristics in all religions or do you believe that it differs by belief?" "Do you think that all people experienced spirituality?" and "Could spirituality be experienced without relation to any religious belief?" Furthermore, in their study on spirituality in adolescence and young adulthood, Singleton and colleagues (2004) define spirituality as a way of life and therefore they asked several questions to their participants, some of them were about

> Activities and life experiences which are most concerned with the way people see themselves and what it is they value; questions about the time they felt most alive, the most fun they have ever had, their favourite activities and how they came to be involved in them (and how this makes them feel) and what is most important in their lives. (p. 254-255)

Such questions also gave an idea of how to enrich the questions in our proposed interview schedule. The loose interview schedule was discussed with the supervisors of the researcher and the wording of the questions was agreed with them. Then, it was applied to the sample of five university students through semi-structured interviews that were conducted for the pre-pilot study.

The interviews were conducted privately face-to-face with each participant, audiotaped, and then transcribed and translated into English in order to discuss the observations and the conversations with the supervisors of the researcher. Five university students were selected on the base of convenience, which was being an undergraduate student and having no serious health problems. They were third year students from various departments of 9 Eylul University, including the department of Theology, the department of Psychology, the department of Public Administration, the department of Physics, and the department of Architecture.

The subjects gave brief answers to the questions, and therefore, the interviews took less than 20 minutes. It was not possible to go deep into the conversation on the topics, such as negative and positive life experiences and spirituality. One of the reasons for this could be the number of the questions and probes; therefore, it was decided that questions that are more detailed might be asked to gain deeper information in the following interviews. Another reason could be that the undergraduate students do not have much to say on serious concerns due to, possibly, their limited life experience since they are young, unmarried, and not responsible for their own families, work, and other duties. Moreover, they are more dependent on their parents who act as a life buoy when their children are in trouble. Moreover, their understanding of spirituality might be limited to the traditional religious context, which they have briefly learnt and experienced from their parents. Therefore, having a sample of mixed group including undergraduate and postgraduate students believed to be more useful for the target of this research in the next step. Another limitation of this pre-pilot study was the difficulty of talking about religion, spirituality, and private affairs in Turkish culture.

Two of the transcriptions of the pre-pilot interviews were discussed with the supervisors of the researcher, and then, the interview schedule was modified to be used in the pilot study according to the results and observations gained from the pre-pilot study and the recommendations of the supervisors about the structure of questioning and conversation style.

The pilot study was conducted with three graduate students from three different departments, including the department of Computer Engineering, the department of Psychology, and the department of Theology. The semi-structured interviews lasted between 28 and 45 minutes. The participants were observed more carefully and the researcher directed the talks more professionally. Additionally, the researcher was more alert in case further information was required in accordance to the participants' answers. Moreover, the researcher interfered less during the interviews than she did in the pre-pilot study to give the participants more time to ponder on their answers. She gave them time after each question and did not rush into asking the next one, silence provided comfort and encouraged them to remember more details. The interviews were audiotaped and one of them was transcribed and translated into English and discussed with the researcher's supervisor. The researcher listened to the recordings of the pilot studies repeatedly and read the transcript in order to improve the interview schedule. The modifications on the pilot interview schedule were made in light of

the observations of the researcher and the recommendations of the supervisors of the researcher; and the actual interview schedule was prepared.

The pre-pilot and pilot studies were all helpful for the assessment of wording and for editing the order of the questions in the schedule, modifying the interview schedule by eliminating the inappropriate questions in the interview schedule and creating new necessary questions. They were also helpful for avoiding failure in following the procedures in the main interviews and gaining success in the major study.

5.5 Interview Schedule

Following the pre-pilot and pilot studies which were conducted for the necessary modifications in the proposed interview schedule, the questions of the main interview schedule are categorized into three main sections. The first set of questions consisted of two central questions and their probes, which were related to the participants' negative and positive experiences in life; "Could you please tell me about the most difficult thing that happened to you?" and "Could you please tell me about the happiest thing that happened to you?". The participants were also asked questions such as how they were affected by these events, how they felt, how they reacted to them, how they coped with them, and what meaning they attributed to these events in order to encourage them to talk in detail and to reveal their feelings, thoughts, and concerns. Spirituality was not mentioned in these two questions and their probes at all. The purpose of beginning the interviews with questions related to negative and positive significant life events was to explore any traces of spirituality in the expressions of the participants without pointing their attention to that perspective. It was aimed to see if the spiritual dimension was consciously referred to by the participants themselves, and if spirituality played an influential role in their lives due to the fact that life events may affect people in many different ways, whether socially, physically, psychologically, mentally, and spiritually. Moreover, circumstances and different stages of life can influence and "contribute to different emphases in spirituality throughout the life cycle" (Harris & Moran, 1998, 110).

In the second section of the interview after the introductory questions, the participants were asked detailed questions about spirituality and spiritual experience. The second group of questions were: "What do you mean when you use the term spiritual or spirituality

(*maneviyat*)[57]?," "How can spirituality be experienced?," "Can we describe a person using the adjective spiritual, for example, A is a spiritual person?," "Can we describe a period of time or a place as spiritual?," and "Do you think that everybody can experience spirituality?." Following these questions, the interviewees were asked about the relationship between spirituality and religion and if the two words could be used synonymously in order to explore the existence of non-religious perceptions of spirituality. Then, the students were asked about their spiritual practices. Further, they were asked to point out the exact word they would use for spirituality since Turkish language offers multiple renderings (*maneviyat*, *ruhsallık*, *tinsellik*, *spiritüalite*) with different connotations and implications (see Chapter 3 for a detailed discussion). Finally, it was important to find out the frequency of the use of the concept of spirituality at university during formal classes and other leisure activities; therefore, they were asked if spirituality was discussed at university.

In the last section, participants were given a card with a group of words written on it. These words are mainly emphasized in some contemporary Western definitions of spirituality and some in the Islamic tradition such as, universe, relatedness, music, sports, nature, love, awareness, fortune-telling, UFOs, sorcery, search, Mother earth, purpose of life, mysticism, sheikh, horoscope, yoga, energy (power), reiki, morality, beauty, contemplation, meditation, submission, the sacred, art, and values. The participants were asked if any of these words were associated with spirituality. Immediately after they indicated the words they thought related to spirituality, the researcher asked them to define the relevant words. The purpose of this section was to explore the views of research subjects on contemporary Western concepts of spirituality, if the participants did not mention them during the interview, this time as opposed to the first section, the researcher aimed to introduce them to the words and obtain their opinions.

At the end of the conversation of the first few interviews, the informants wanted to thank the researcher giving a positive feedback about the interview in general and emphasized how content and satisfied they felt answering the questions as they pondered on spirituality which helped them remember a very important yet neglected dimension in their lives. The interviews were an opportunity for the participants to talk about this dimension without any interruption. The interview spurred their memories and helped them see these memories from

[57] In the scope of this work, the term of spirituality stands for *maneviyat* in Turkish, in case of any other use of other Turkish counterparts (*ruhsallık*, *tinsellik*, and *spiritüalite*) will be duly noted in the brackets.

a wider perspective, and changed some of the participants' negative outlook and approaches towards their memories. Some even stated that the interviews were therapeutic. Therefore, the researcher decided to ask for a feedback from the rest of the participants if they did not bring up their views after the third part of the interviews were completed.

5.6 Participant selection

Purposive sampling which is a type of non-probability sampling technique was employed in this research to find participants who "have particular features or characteristics that will enable detailed explorations of the phenomena being studied" (Shinebourne, 2011, 49) and provide rich information (Patton, 1990) and have the ability of generating useful data for the study. This recruitment best enables the researcher to answer the research questions, focusing on university students' particular understandings of spirituality; yet the sample being investigated is not supposed to be representative of the population. Compared with other sampling techniques, a relatively small sample is investigated in purposive sampling. Five or six number of participants is considered reasonable and acceptable in such research (Smith, 1996). Therefore, the homogeneous sample group of 12 individuals included university students from two universities and two departments. Two public universities, 9 Eylul University and Ege University, are targeted for the research. Six students from the department of Theology at 9 Eylul University, and six students from the department of Psychology at Ege University participated in the research. The participants' ages ranged between 20 and 36.

Twenty students were recruited through lecturers at the two determined universities for this study. Potential participants who were selected by lecturers at universities are screened via telephone and email to determine their ability to meet operational criteria for participating in interviews. Participants who met the eligibility criteria of being Turkish, and being an undergraduate or postgraduate student at the department of Theology or Psychology in one of the two determined universities in Izmir, Turkey, and who were interested in participating and willing to be recorded during the interview and who did not have any reported diagnoses of mental health were selected and interviews were scheduled based on participants' availability. Table 2 and Table 3 below list the numbers of interview participants with their pseudonyms, sex, age, and university grades. The researcher gave each participant a pseudonym.

Table 2. Number of the participants

Department	N	Males	Females
Psychology	6	1	5
Theology	6	3	3
Total	12	4	8

Table 3. Participant list and demographics

Subject No	Pseudonym	Sex	Age	Department	Religious affiliation
Subject 1	Burcu	F	20	Psychology 1st year	Hanafi Sunni
Subject 2	Onat	M	21	Psychology 3rd year	Hanafi Sunni
Subject 3	Ezgi	F	24	Psychology 4th year	Hanafi Sunni
Subject 4	Leman	F	25	Psychology Master's	-
Subject 5	Zehra	F	28	Psychology PhD	Hanafi Sunni
Subject 6	Semra	F	28	Psychology PhD	Hanafi Sunni
Subject 7	Serhat	M	24	Theology 2nd year	Hanafi Sunni
Subject 8	Tugce	F	20	Theology 3rd year	Hanafi Sunni
Subject 9	Sevgi	F	24	Theology 4th year	Hanafi Sunni
Subject 10	Buse	F	23	Theology Master's	Hanafi Sunni
Subject 11	Ilyas	M	36	Theology PhD	Hanafi Sunni
Subject 12	Muhammed	M	27	Theology PhD	Hanafi Sunni

5.7 Data Collection

The data collection took place in November 2014. Semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face and one-to-one with each volunteered participant for an in-depth investigation. Open-ended questions were oriented in order to explore the participants' perceptions and experiences of spirituality. The interviews took place at different times and different locations chosen by the participants in order to make them feel comfortable in a natural setting and to create a relaxed atmosphere with the aim of establishing a friendly and safe environment. The length of the interviews depended on the participants, and the duration of the interviews varied between approximately forty-five minutes to two hours depending on the mood of the interviewees and on their characteristics as some was very talkative and some needed encouragement to speak and express their opinions. The interviewer recorded the interviews with an audiotape instead of taking notes to save time, since it was an open-ended interview. It was also important to give full attention and consideration to the participants during the interviews in order to follow the respondents' points, to make sure they understood the questions properly as well as to make sure the interview steered in the right direction.

At the beginning of each conversation, the researcher introduced herself and gave some information about her degree at the university, and about what she was studying. She gave an interview protocol to the interviewees in advance, which covered an information sheet and a consent form to be read, and signed (Appendix 1 and 2). Then, she proceeded with the interview questions and conducted the interviews. There was a friendly atmosphere established in the course of the interviews, and the participants seemed very enthusiastic about the topic of the conversation. However, at times, the participants moved on to other topics of conversation and asked the interviewer questions about her personal views on spirituality, her personal life, her experiences in the UK, how to gain a scholarship to go abroad for study, how to apply for a university in other countries and how to be accepted, and such. This was the case in all of the interviews. The researcher tried to answer the participants' questions kindly maintaining a friendly attitude. She briefly answered the questions and informed that she was available for these kinds of questions after the interview. As the researcher familiarized herself with conducting interviews during the process of pre-pilot and pilot studies, the main interviews went easier and provided a rich source of information for the research.

5.8 Data Processing and analysis

The researcher accomplished the verbatim transcription and analysis of the data. The researcher tried to transcribe the interviews soon after she collected the data before the important observations and details slipped away. She jotted notes while they were still fresh in her mind after each interview. “Anyone who has listened to long stretches of talk knows how frequently people circle through the same network of ideas” (D’Andrade, 1991, 287). Therefore, the researcher repeatedly listened to the records in order to become familiar with the data. Transcription of the data required a long time. She transcribed the interviews into Microsoft Word documents and she left wide margins on both the left and right sides of the text in order to be able to write notes and comments easily while reading the material.

After the transcription was completed, it was time to begin the analysis of the data. The researcher discussed her observations and views about the interviews and transcriptions with her supervisors and they agreed on the methods of analysing the data, which was to be done manually in the traditional way, instead of using computer assisted data analysis software such as NVivo and ATLAS.ti. Even though, computers save time, the traditional way of analysis was appropriate, as the study was not a large-scale investigation, which requires analysis of a great number of data. Then, she continuously read and reread the whole transcripts to thoroughly enhance familiarity with the data. She conducted line-by-line analysis in order to understand what the sentences were about and to find out similarities and differences between the proceeding and following phrases, expressions, statements, and sentences. Then, she looked for the linked topics, issues, patterns, and themes that emerged in the data, respectively dominant, less dominant, and then, less dominant in order to sort the data. The ideas and concepts, which were repeatedly referred by the participant, became important themes in the transcript; in other words, the frequency of repetition in the occurrence of the same ideas and concepts made them themes that are more dominant. The researcher generated and identified the initial codes by trawling through the texts while highlighting with different coloured markers, taking notes on the margins of the texts, using sticky notes, and then transforming her notes into emerging themes. She tried to examine and see what level of overlap and discrepancy, similarities and differences between the topics and themes occurred in each case, and she compared the themes she found in a case with the emerging themes in the other transcripts. She identified the recurring themes and how often they were reported by how many people, and in what ways they were used. Then, she

clustered the themes together according to their similarities and relations to each other. The next stage was organizing and classifying the themes and sub-themes while putting them in the form of a table by covering headings and sub-headings that underwent change repeatedly until the best appropriate tree structure was accomplished. This stage required careful and critical thinking. The researcher discussed the stages she went through, her labelling of the themes and sub-themes, and their meanings with her supervisors and the most appropriate final structure was agreed on during the broad meetings. All these stages of analysing the data allowed the researcher to develop a general understanding of what was happening and led her to the next step to find answers to the research questions. Finally, she produced the report on the findings of the research, which is presented in Chapter 6.

5.9 Ethical considerations

The procedures for the protection of human participants in research involving human subjects consist of the ethical considerations. "Ethical responsibility in qualitative research is an ongoing process" (Orb, et al., 2000, 93) which covers all the stages in a research: before, during, and after data collection. The British Psychological Society defines research ethics as "the moral principles guiding research from its inception through to completion and publication of results" in the Society's *Code of Human Research Ethics* (2014, 5). Following ethics guidelines and behaving fairly and ethically in research is necessary and important to ensure minimal risk to participants. Accordingly, the British Psychological Society developed four principles that may not ensure but contribute to qualitative research: respect for the autonomy and dignity of persons, maximising benefit, and minimising harm, social responsibility, and scientific value. According to Cohen and Crabtree (2008),

> Qualitative research should be ethical, be important, be clearly and coherently articulated, and use appropriate and rigorous methods. Conducting ethically sound research involved carrying out research in a way that was respectful, humane, and honest, and that embodied the values of empathy, collaboration, and service. (p.333)

In this regard, the ethical approval was obtained from the Ethics Committee of the Department of Theology and Religion at Durham University (see Appendix 3). After granting the ethical approval, the researcher took several steps in order to make sure she was following ethical guidelines.

The participants were informed about the research briefly by the lecturers at the universities who recruited them. They were not provided with detailed information about the questions related to spirituality beforehand; however, they knew that their positive (happy) and negative (challenging) experiences were to be discussed. The researcher prepared a detailed information sheet including the name and address of the researcher, the aim of the study and anticipated consequences as well as how the interviews were to be conducted and the procedures were to be followed in order to give to the interviewees at the outset of the interviews. Thus, when they met with the researcher for the interviews, they were informed, once more, about the essence and nature of the research and what was expected from them. The researcher requested them to ask any questions about the research if they had.

The researcher also developed an informed consent form to be read and signed by the participants. Informed consent means "voluntary consent of the individual to participate in research" (Burgess, 1989, 6). The researcher also made sure that the participants learnt their rights in the research. Accordingly, the participants were told that they were free to voluntarily accept or refuse to participate in the study and withdraw their consent and stop participating in the interview at any point during the research process. All of the participants fully understood that participation was voluntary and they agreed to sign the informed consent forms. Consent was re-obtained in order to be able to use interview materials at the end of interviews, when research participants knew the topics discussed in the interview.

The privacy, dignity, and anonymity of the participants were also emphasized. All of the information and identification of the informants were to be presented anonymously using pseudonyms throughout the research. This is to preserve anonymity and to ensure maintaining the confidentiality and security of personal data at all times. Furthermore, the participants were informed that the audiotapes of the interviews would be kept confidential and would not be granted access to any unauthorised persons.

Beneficence, which is maximising benefit or doing good for the participants and preventing or minimising harm (Orb, et al., 2000) is another significant principle of qualitative inquiries. Unexpected and unforeseen situation and outcomes may occur due to intense feelings, which may result in unintended harm to the participants during or at the end of the interview; even though the participation is voluntary, the interviewees are aware of the nature and essence of the research, and the research procedure should not be distressing. Therefore, the researchers "must be prepared to provide psychological support (or suggest or

direct the participant to the suitable ways to receive support) if their interviews create undue stress or raise psychological complications" (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006, 319). Social responsibility is another important ethics principle in research. Therefore, the researcher should respect "the values and interests of the community in research and, wherever possible, to protect the community from harm" (Weijer, et al., 1999, 275). It is stated in the British Psychological Society's *Code of Human Research Ethics* (2014, 11) that supporting beneficial outcomes is essential to "not only support and respect for the dignity and integrity of persons (both individually and collectively) but also contribute to the 'common good'".

Another important ethical issue is the scientific value of the research project. In this respect, the research design should be well grounded in order to ensure its integrity, quality, robustness, and contribution to the development of knowledge in the field. These factors are important so as not to waste participants' time. At the same time, justice should be considered carefully; the researcher should avoid the risk of exploiting and abusing the participants for personal gain (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Orb, et al., 2000).

Establishing rapport rapidly during the interviews is one of the most essential aspects of the research. Accordingly, the researcher should develop a positive relationship with the interviewees, and should trust and respect them, their culture, ethnicity, national origin, language, age, sex, sexual orientation, religion, education, socio-economic status, and whatever they share with him/her such as their experiences, knowledge, feelings, and insights, and should avoid prejudices and discrimination (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). The research materials should not be inappropriate, insensitive, offensive, or discriminatory. Protecting the participants is another essential priority of qualitative research. In short, the researcher tried to conduct the interviews with maximum care through following the ethics principles in order to avoid potential risks both to the participants and the community, and to maintain privacy, anonymity, confidentiality, and dignity of the participants and benefit of the community at all times during the research.

CHAPTER 6

FINDINGS

6.1 Introduction

This descriptive chapter introduces the research findings, some of which will be quoted from the interviews. The data will be represented without any reference to the research questions and the relevant literature. This gives the opportunity for a flexible method of presenting the research data for qualitative researchers (Smith, 1995). This flexibility provides the researcher the advantage of shaping the structure of the dissertation in accordance to her preference. Therefore, the findings and the discussion of these findings will be presented in two separate chapters in this dissertation. As such, the next chapter (Chapter 7) is dedicated to the comments and discussion of results.

6.2 Participants' negative and positive life events

The first area of inquiry in the interviews focused on both difficult and happy memories in the participants' lives. The interviews began with questions related to negative and positive significant life events without any reference to spirituality by the interviewer, in order to see if the participants themselves mentioned the spiritual dimension in the course of the first part of the interview. Moreover, with this method, the researcher aimed to find out if spirituality played a potentially influential role in difficult and/or happy moments in the lives of the participants. According to the findings, the participants faced several challenges, which were all different from each other while the happy events they experienced were generally similar. An interesting part of this process was that students had difficulty in finding a specific happy moment or experience to share. They all expressed that they felt happiness even in the most smallest of things that may seem insignificant and they experienced

countless happy moments in their lives; thus, it was hard for them to remember and discuss an exact time or event.

Life events may affect people in many aspects, socially, physically, psychologically, mentally, and spiritually. According to Harris and Moran (1998), life tasks and experience can influence spirituality (Engebretson, 2004, 272):

> Another component of contemporary spirituality is age […] (This) refers to the different ages of life: childhood, adolescence, young, middle and older adulthood, elderhood […] I have discovered that different developmental circumstances – adolescence or new parenthood or promotion to a managerial job or an empty nest or retirement - contribute to different emphases in spirituality throughout life cycle (Harris & Morgan, 1998, 110).

Within this framework, several questions were asked about the participants' negative and positive life experiences at the beginning of the interviews in order to discover the importance of spirituality in their lives. These questions included 'Could you please tell me about the most difficult thing that has happened to you?' and 'Could you please tell me about the happiest thing that has happened to you?' along with the probes.

During the first part of the conversations which was dedicated to positive and negative experiences, only two participants referred to spirituality (*maneviyat*)[58] even though the topic had not been the subject of interest. One of them was Semra, a Psychology PhD student, who reported that she wished to be a spiritually strong person. She further stated that religion was not practised in her family; therefore, she had to discover, learn, and practise religion herself. She based her lack of religious belief and commitment on her family's traditional approach to religion. They had not taught her religion and as a result, she considered her spirituality weak. She stated that her search and discovery of spirituality began during her adolescence, in which she began trying to find the meaning of her life and she thought that her spirituality was always insufficient as it was groundless. She noted that she admired people who were educated at religious vocational high schools and at the departments of Theology and Religion, since she was unable to receive any foundation from her family. In this case, during the first part of the interview she related spirituality to religion. However, during the second part of the interview where she began pondering on the subject of spirituality, she expressed more comprehensive views about the concept.

[58] As mentioned earlier, in the scope of this work, the term of spirituality stands for *maneviyat* in Turkish, in case of any other use of the other Turkish counterparts (*ruhsallık, tinsellik, and spiritüalite*) will be duly noted in the brackets.

The second person who referred to spirituality was Serhat, who was in his second year at the department of Theology, stated that there was not such thing as spirituality in the departments of Theology and Religion in Turkey. According to him, there can be no spirituality in traditional religion if it is examined in a scientific setting. He yearned for traditional religious thinking to prevail at universities. Moreover, this student thought that reading the Holy Quran in Arabic and memorizing any verses of the religious text without understanding it, which was an obligation at these departments, was not related to spirituality at all. To him, this was a problematic issue, because not understanding what you read is futile. Therefore, its translation into Turkish ought to be read in order to sense spirituality.

Even though only two informants used the word spirituality when discussing their negative and positive experiences, the other eight subjects indirectly mentioned spirituality while explaining how they coped with difficult moments in life or their reaction to happy moments through words they used when they defined spirituality in the second part of the interviews. However, the other two never mentioned spirituality in this part of the interview. While analysing the data, the researcher discovered that the meanings that the participants referred to the concept of spirituality in the second part of the interviews were discussed as ways of coping and reaction to happy moments without naming them as spirituality in the first part of the interviews. Detailed information is given in the following sections. Accordingly, the challenging and happy memories of the interviewees are presented in two sections: first, coping with negative life events, with the sub-headings of coping with God, social coping, mental strength, cognitive therapy, and other ways, second, reaction to positive life events with the subheadings grace from God and one's own effort. Table 4 provides a brief summary of each participant's negative and positive experiences, and how they coped with them and how they reacted to them. It also shows who mentioned spirituality in their speech and how they referred it.

6.2.1 Coping with Negative Life Events

Participants' answers to the first question and its probes were categorised according to the ways they coped with the challenging experiences. In difficult times, some participants turned to God to seek refuge and some received support from their family and friends. The participants also appealed to the other ways in order to solve their problems. See Table 4 for

each participant's negative life experience, how they responded to the struggles, if they mentioned spirituality while telling their stories, and if so, how they referred to the concept.

Table 4. Participants' negative experiences and reactions to them

	Negative life event	Coping with it	Any mention of spirituality
Subject 1 **Burcu**	**Burcu** could not pass matriculation in the first year.	She believed that this is a test from God. She believed in the divine will and decree. She surrendered to God and prayer. She sought support from her family. She believed that God knew what was best for her.	No
Subject 2 **Onat**	**Onat** got lost when he was young.	It was a test and he had to be successful in this test.	No
Subject 3 **Ezgi**	**Ezgi** learnt that her younger brother was smoking.	It was a test and she had to be successful in this test. She tried to find a way to help her brother, such as consulting with psychologists, and talking about the problem with her sisters. She prayed a lot for him.	No
Subject 4 **Leman**	**Leman** applied for a Master's degree but she was not accepted.	She started smoking and it turned into an addiction. She listened to music, began playing tennis.	No

Subject 5 **Zehra**	**Zehra** was fired because of her clothes; she was blamed for not covering her body well.	She sought support from her family, friends, and non-governmental organisations.	No
Subject 6 **Semra**	**Semra**'s father had cancer.	She believed that it is a test from God. She believed in the divine will and decree. She surrendered to God and prayer. She sought support from her friends. She also used cognitive therapy techniques to cope; she thought that this could happen to anyone; whatever she did, nothing was going to change the outcome.	Yes She told that her spirituality was weak and she wished to be a spiritually strong person.
Subject 7 **Serhat**	His girlfriend's family refused **Serhat**.	God knew what was best for him, and this was the best for him. He sought support from his family and friends.	Yes He wished that there was a more spiritual environment at the departments of Theology in Turkey.
Subject 8 **Tugce**	**Tugce**'s father cheated on her mother.	It was a test and she had to be successful in this test. She thought that this could happen to anybody and some people had worse situations than hers. She sought support from	No

		her teachers at college.	
Subject 9 **Sevgi**	**Sevgi** experienced unfair treatment because she was wearing headscarf.	This experience made her stronger and she believed in God and religion more. She sought support from her family.	No
Subject 10 **Buse**	**Buse**'s best friend stole money from her.	She sought support from her friends. Her mental strength helped her cope with the challenge.	No
Subject 11 **Ilyas**	**Ilyas**'s father committed suicide.	His belief in God kept him alive and supported him so did his teachers at college.	No
Subject 12 **Muhammed**	**Muhammed** worked as an imam in a village, yet he wanted to become a lecturer at a university.	God knew what was best for him, and this was the best for him.	No

6.2.1.1 Coping with God

Majority of the participants stated the methods of coping as follows: Believing in God, taking refuge in Him, and praying to Him in order to receive the best for themselves (Burcu, Ezgi, Semra, Serhat, Tugce, Sevgi, Ilyas, and Muhammed). Burcu, Serhat, and Muhammed expressed that they believed God knew what was best for them and thus their experience was for the best. Four participants (Burcu, Onat, Ezgi, and Tugce) thought that the difficulties they lived through were a test in which they had to be successful. For example, when Burcu faced the biggest challenge in her life, she never thought of this event as a punishment. She stated that this was what had to happen, and this helped her to keep a calm state of mind. She believed that passing matriculation in the following year was the most important outcome since God knew that this outcome was better for her when she could not pass matriculation in the first year. Her family's support also enabled her to pull herself together. Another participant, Ezgi, considered her negative life event as a test that happened because she did not have the power to control her life. She thought that her power was limited and that she could not handle or control everything. She had to do the best she could, then be patient and pray to God. She believed that God was with her and He was going to help her eventually.

Praying to God was very important to relieve Semra when she faced her biggest trial in life, which was her father's cancer. Being away from her family also made matters worse and as a result, she felt angry, hopeless, and sad. She blamed herself for not being by her father's side. One of her friends encouraged her to consider this situation as a blessing because when a person was abroad and prayed, he/she prayed more sincerely and strongly, which was what she believed her father really needed. She was indeed praying a lot, especially during the night. She believed praying relieved her; it had a rehabilitative effect on believers. She knew that there was a supreme power that controlled everything, and she prayed because she believed that God could help her. Due to her father's illness, her trust in life was shaken; she began questioning life and its values. She described this illness as an unexpected bomb that turned her life upside down including her plans for the future. She first considered the events as a punishment from God, but later she changed her mind. First, she asked questions such as "why now?" and "why me?" yet she never blamed God; never got angry with Him. She held her father responsible for his illness because he was smoking.

Another participant, Tugce, also considered the biggest struggle in her life as a test but she also thought that this could happen to anybody and she tried to look at the bright side by thinking that she could be in a worse situation. She prayed to God to help her mother.

Taking refuge in God was Serhat's way of coping when he faced a sad challenge in his life. He tried to be patient, focused on his prayers more, read specific verses from the Qur'an, and prayed with a deep reverence to God and asked him for the right path. He believed that during this time his relationship with God strengthened. He thought that whatever happened to him was a grace from God. Sevgi also took refuge in God when she faced the primary challenge in her life. She stated that the struggles she faced made her stronger and she believed in her faith more.

For Ilyas, believing in God kept him going on and supported him through a terrible ordeal when his father committed suicide. He stated that this suicide was his father's own decision, hence he never blamed God, nor did he consider it as a punishment from Him. On the contrary, his belief in God and prayers helped him to pull himself together. Muhammed also stated that he prayed to God during his difficult times. However, he also stated that he did not experience extreme hard times in his life. He reported one thing, which was not hard, but he had hoped to change it, and he did. Nevertheless, there were moments that he felt challenged. One of these was the time when he worked as an imam in a village even though he longed to carry on in the academia and finally became a lecturer at a university. During these times, he prayed to God to give him the best option.

Two subjects mentioned above (Semra and Serhat) referred to spirituality when they told their stories, as presented earlier. Even though the rest of the interviewees who coped with God (Burcu, Ezgi, Sevgi, Ilyas, and Muhammed except Tugce) did not mention spirituality, their ways of coping were associated with their definitions and descriptions of spirituality. They defined spirituality from a religious aspect in the second part of the interviews; their definitions of spirituality included relationship with God and prayer; and they coped with their problems by surrendering to God, believing that God knew and wanted the best for them, worshipping Him, and praying to Him. In short, according to the data, for one half of the participants (Burcu, Ezgi, Serhat, Sevgi, Ilyas, and Muhammed), spirituality, which was defined as relationship with God and prayer, was very helpful during the difficult times and it played an important role in their lives in general. The other two (Semra and

Tugce) did not define spirituality with God and prayer, although they coped with negative life events through God and prayer.

6.2.1.2 Social coping

During the interviews, some of the subjects mentioned social support they received from others while coping with challenges they faced. Four interviewees (Burcu, Zehra, Serhat, and Sevgi) received support from their families during their difficult times. Burcu, Serhat, and Sevgi mentioned their families' help in coping with their problems after they talked about surrendering to God and praying to Him. Four participants (Zehra, Semra, Serhat, and Buse) dealt with the struggles with the support of their friends. Zehra received support from her family, friends, and non-governmental organisations when she was fired because of her outfits; she was blamed for not covering her body well enough. Two participants (Tugce and Ilyas) noted that college life was effective in coping with the difficulties as they sought support from their teachers.

In the second part of the interview, some participants defined spirituality in relational terms such as relationship with others/people (Burcu, Zehra, Semra, Sevgi, and Ilyas). They did not specify their families and friends in their definitions. Moreover, they did not mention spirituality when they were talking about how they coped with the struggles. However, it is possible to argue that their understanding of spirituality as relationship was influential in coping.

6.2.1.3 Mental strength

Only one subject stated that mental strength was an important way of coping with challenges in life. Buse explained her best friend's betrayal (stealing money from her) as the biggest challenge she had faced in life. This incident not only broke her heart but it also caused her to feel insecure and lose trust in people, including her close friends. She explained that she used her mental strength to cope with this struggle, which put her in a good position to solve the problem. She went to the police, found the video records, and made plans to reveal what happened. She said she always trusted herself to solve her problems. She did not

refer to mental strength when she defined spirituality, so in this case, her understanding of spirituality was not helpful to cope with the difficulty she experienced in her life.

6.2.1.4 Cognitive therapy

Cognitive therapy was helpful when two participants faced difficulties in life. Semra reported that she used cognitive therapy techniques to help her cope with the struggle, she told herself that this could happen to anyone, and she believed that no matter what she did nothing was going to change. Similarly, Tugce also considered this struggle as a test and she thought that this could happen to anybody and some people had worse situations than hers, even though she did not name her coping strategy 'cognitive therapy' like Semra.

6.2.1.5 Other ways

Other ways apart from believing in God, taking refuge in Him, and praying to Him included seeking social support from others; one participant to cope with her struggles used mental strength and cognitive therapy. Leman noted that she tried other methods one of which was smoking, which later turned into an addiction. She listened to music and began playing tennis, believing that all of these were going to help her.

6.2.2 Reaction to Positive Life Events

Participants' answers to the second question and its probes in the first part of the interview were categorised according to how they reacted to the positive experiences. Participants' reactions to their happy life events could be categorized into two groups: In happy times, participants either considered them as a *grace from God* or *one's own effort*. Table 5 presents the positive life experiences of each participant, and how they reacted to happiness.

The participants did not refer to spirituality directly while telling their happy stories. However, an analysis of their reactions to the positive life events and definitions of spirituality together indicates that four subjects' (Burcu, Serhat, Ilyas, and Muhammed) spirituality played an important role in reacting to the happy moments. Associating

spirituality to relationship with God was seen among the subjects who believed in God, loved and respected Him, and thought that their positive experience was a grace from God, and therefore, they thanked and prayed Him more. Therefore, it is possible to argue that spirituality played an important role in making meaning of happy moments just as it was important for making meaning of bad experiences.

Table 5. Participants' positive experiences and reactions to them

	Positive life event	**Reflection to it**	**Any mention of spirituality**
Subject 1 Burcu	She passed matriculation and won the university she had aimed for.	She believed that God helped her and it was a grace from Him; therefore, she was thankful to Him. She began wearing headscarf to show her gratitude. She was proud of herself for her success.	No
Subject 2 Onat	He passed matriculation and began at the university.	He worked hard for his aim and he succeeded. He believed that he deserved it thanks to his efforts.	No
Subject 3 Ezgi	Her best friend got married.	She was happy for her friend but sad for herself since she was not going to be able to see her friend as often as before.	No
Subject 4 Leman	She passed matriculation and began at the university she had aimed for.	She worked hard for her aim and she succeeded. She believed that she deserved it thanks to her efforts. She was proud of herself for her success.	No
Subject 5 Zehra	She became a research assistant.	She worked hard for her aim and she succeeded. She believed that she deserved it thanks to her efforts.	No
Subject 6 Semra	She received an unconditional offer for a Master's of Science degree in	It was a grace from God; therefore, she thanked Him a lot for this gift.	No

	clinical psychology in America.		
Subject 7 Serhat	He passed matriculation and began at the university.	It was a grace from God; therefore, he thanked Him a lot for this gift.	No
Subject 8 Tugce	Her father told her that he loved her a lot.	His attitude motivated and encouraged her to study more.	No
Subject 9 Sevgi	She passed matriculation and began at the university.	She believed that it was an opportunity to achieve her aims in life, such as improving herself and becoming a useful person for humanity and for the world.	No
Subject 10 Buse	She passed her sociology exam with a high mark.	She worked hard for her aim and she succeeded. She believed that she deserved it thanks to her efforts.	No
Subject 11 Ilyas	In an occasion, he felt that God was thinking about him.	It was a grace from God. He defined this experience as a religious experience. He worshiped more and worked harder to be a better servant for God and a positive person.	No
Subject 12 Muhammed	He became a friend to an Iraqi immigrant in Turkey, which was an opportunity for him to improve his Arabic.	It was a grace from God. He believed that God knew his need and sent him what he needed.	No

6.2.2.1 Grace from God

Five subjects reacted to happiness by considering the positive life events as a gift from God and being thankful to Him for His grace (Burcu, Semra, Serhat, Ilyas, and Muhammed). For instance, Burcu stated that she was aware that God allowed her to pass the exam and begin at the university she had aimed for. For this, she was thankful to God. During the interview, she stated that she remembered,

> Not passing matriculation at the first attempt and passing in the following year increased (her) belief in the presence of an omnipotent power; everything is beyond your power, everywhere and always.

She also pointed out that she began wearing a headscarf when she started university as an indication of her gratitude to God. She also accepted the events she experienced as a grace from God. Serhat also thanked God when he got the good news of passing matriculation and began at university. Similarly, Semra considered her happiest life experience as a grace from God and thanked Him a lot for this gift.

Considering the happy moment as a grace from God was also Ilyas's reaction to the event. He reported that his happiest experience was one of the times when he felt God was thinking about him. This was a grace from Him, he prayed for this blessing. He described this experience as a religious one. He defined real happiness as communication with a higher power you believe in and feeling His presence. Every other thing on earth such as children, possessions, and status, each are a means to reach this real happiness, he stated. He expressed that this experience urged him to communicate and worship God more, and work harder to be a better servant to Him. Such happy experiences changed his outlook, made him a positive person, and gave him the ability to disregard other insignificant matters around him. Muhammed explained a very happy experience he had recently; he stated that while he was doing his Master's he lived in Jordan, and took Arabic language education for 15 months. He was in a large education circle; they read important books about his field with professors. When he came back to Turkey, he could not find a similar environment. This upset him, as he felt lonely. Then, he met Ahmad who was an Iraqi who visited Turkey. This made him very happy, since he was able to practise Arabic with him. He did not pray specifically for a person to become his friend and study Arabic with him, but this incident occurred, which

Muhammed considered as a blessing and gift from God. God knew his need and sent him what he needed.

6.2.2.2 One's own effort

Working hard for their aims and as a result experiencing the happiest moments in their lives was the reaction of four participants (Onat, Leman, Zehra, and Buse) to positive life events. They believed that their success was the result of their own efforts. Two participants (Burcu and Leman) also mentioned that they were proud of themselves for their success. For example, Burcu studied very hard after her failure until finally she passed matriculation and began at the university she had aimed for. She considered this as a grace from God but also noted that she was very happy and proud of herself because of her hard work. Leman was very happy and proud of herself as well when she passed matriculation and entered university. She was successful and got a scholarship. She thought that she deserved them both because she studied a lot when she was at college. Similarly, Buse was very happy when she passed her sociology exam with a high mark as it was a very difficult subject; she studied hard and succeeded; and she did not feel stupid anymore. To conclude, these participants did not mention spirituality while telling the positive life events in their lives and their reactions to them. It is also found that the participants' understandings of spirituality were not encountered in their positive experiences.

6.3 Participants' perceptions and descriptions of spirituality

The forms of spirituality discovered in the twelve different cases of this research were mapped into a classification with six categories. Table 6 presents the classification of participants' definitions and descriptions of spirituality. All of the categories were delineated by sub-headings under each main category, which was based on the answers given by the participants to the interview questions. Accordingly, the main categories are: (1) the meaning of spirituality, with sub-headings of relationship with God, with others, and environment, and connection within the self, belief, to read and understand the Qur'an, the sayings of prophets, philosophers and saints, worldview, ideology and way of life, mindfulness, mood and feelings, values and morality, meaning and purpose, and non-material, (2) the function of spirituality, with sub-headings of expressions of spirituality and benefits of spirituality, (3)

the relationship between spirituality and religion, with subheadings of spirituality is related to religion, spirituality untethered from religion, (4) change in spirituality, with sub-headings of spirituality decreases over time and spirituality increases over time, (5) the meaning of spirituality in Turkish and (6) implications of spirituality for understanding person, time, and place, with sub-headings of spiritual person, spiritual period of time, and spiritual place.

Past and present life events, family, friends, and hopes for the future might play a significant and shaping role in a participant's understanding of spirituality. Findings of this research show that the level of a person's spirituality might fluctuate during their life span; in other words, it might increase or decrease over time. However, the data also demonstrate that the meanings some people attribute to spirituality might change at different stages of life. Some participants reported that spirituality meant something different to them in the past. For instance, Leman reflected that her understanding of spirituality was different in her childhood, in her teenage years, and when she was an undergraduate student. Formerly, she associated spirituality with belief and supernatural powers; however, she no longer believed that. To her, spirituality is related to the inner self and inner processes.

Change in the understanding of spirituality is found in another participant's story as well. Semra explained that she formerly associated spirituality with religion, especially with Islam; however, she no longer thought so. To her, spirituality was a general belief and a moral system that might be related to religion but did not necessarily have to be. Her opinions changed during her visit to the US as a student. Similarly, Tugce reported that she formerly associated spirituality with non-material things, proximity to God, and prayer; however, her thoughts also changed over time**.**

As the scope of this research is the participants' contemporary understandings of spirituality, their previous opinions, and perceptions were not the focus of the conversations. Therefore, the researcher did not dwell on what the participants understood from the concept of spirituality in the past and kept the interview focused on their current opinions. The contemporary meanings attributed to spirituality by the participants are explained in the following sections, and they are supported by relevant, brief quotations from the interviews.

Table 6.Classification of participants' definitions and descriptions of spirituality

1. The meaning of spirituality	2. The function of spirituality	3. The relationship between spirituality and religion	4. Change in spirituality	5. Four words in Turkish	6. Aspects of spirituality
1. Relationship with God, relationship with others, relationship with the nature and the world, and connectedness within the self 2. Belief 3. To read and understand the Quran, the sayings of prophets, philosophers and saints 4. Worldview, Ideology and Way	1. Expressions of spirituality - Religious rituals Prayer Salah (Praying five times every day) Fasting Almsgiving - Non-religious spiritual practices Organising surprises Giving gifts Doing good deeds	1. Spirituality is related to Religion 2. Spirituality untethered from religion	1. Spirituality decreases over time 2. Spirituality increases over time	3. Maneviyat 4. Ruhsallık 5. Tinsellik 6. Spiritüalite	1. Spiritual person 2. Spiritual time 3. Spiritual place

of life 5. Mood and feelings 6. Values and Morality 7. Meaning and Purpose 8. Non-material	Helping others Writing Photography 2. Benefits of spirituality - It brings positive emotions and feelings				

6.3.1 The Meaning of Spirituality

Two participants (Leman and Tugce) stated that people had different perceptions of spirituality; everyone understood something different from this concept. According to five participants (Ezgi, Leman, Tugce, Sevgi, and Ilyas), everyone could experience spirituality, even though they understand it in a different way. Semra argued that everyone could experience it if they wished. However, spirituality was something difficult to experience for Onat. Zehra stated that everyone might have experienced spirituality, but perhaps they did not recognize that it was spirituality. Only Serhat told that a person could experience spirituality or could become spiritual if he/she is a Muslim. The first main category comprises six sub-headings in order to reveal the meaning of spirituality attributed by the participants. Table 7 provides a brief summary of the main points of participants' definitions and descriptions of spirituality.

6.3.1.1 Relationship with God, with others and environment, and connectedness within the self

In the majority of the interviews, spirituality was mainly discussed in relational terms, such as relationship and connection. This association included one's connection with God, with his or her environment, with others, with nature, and with the world, and within himself or herself. Some subjects noted the importance of inner peace while defining and describing spirituality as ***relationship with God***. Buse expressed spirituality as:

> Peace you find with the transcendent power, the feeling you internalize in your relationship with Him, disengagement from yourself when you pray to Him, to be close to God, to be one with Him, with a unique attachment, affection (Buse).

Relationship with God was important to Ezgi. She explained God as the creator who is beyond the material and physical world; she explained peace manifested in her relationship with God and she mentioned search for something in her definition of spirituality. She described spirituality as:

> To look at the world around oneself with a deeper insight; to see beyond the material and beyond the physical world; you see its Creator not the material; you see the art in its creation; when you do that you feel inner peace, not only peace but something between peace and concern, the feeling is similar to searching for

> something; to feel something like that. It is the relationship with God. For me, this is spirituality. I do not worry myself with problems, all of them are temporary, here today, gone tomorrow; I find refuge into God, I say to Him: 'You are omniscient, you know the outcomes of everything, I do not know.' If I get bored terribly if I feel tightness in my chest I kneel before Him, I pray.

Her image of God was an eternal, merciful, and omniscient one; His love was endless. She believes that when people are aware of this, they could cope with their sorrows and struggles easily. The key point in relationship with God was, according to her, full submission. In difficult times, being patient was what submission meant to her. Zehra defined spirituality in relational terms as well:

> Relationship with God, disengagement from yourself when you pray to Him, to be close to God, to be one with Him, such an attachment, an affection.

Relationship with people was noted as the description of spirituality by some participants. Semra defined spirituality as:

> Your way of walking on the road, your relationship with people, your way of speaking with people, your attitudes while contacting people, how you treat the elderly, or how you communicate with a child … all of these are your way of applying your spirituality; your morality rests on your spirituality.

Onat explained his understanding of spirituality in social terms as:

> To have strong relationships with people, to have strong transactions between/among individuals; transaction of feelings and ideas. The foundation of these human relationships is based on honesty. If you are honest with yourself first and then with others, if you represent yourself well, then love and respect comes; therefore, strong relationships can be established. Spirituality is not temperamental or an inward-looking aspect; it is a social phenomenon.

Strong relationships with families and friends were noted in the conversations by all of the participants. However, some did not associate these relationships with spirituality while defining spirituality as a connection to other people.

Relationship with nature and the environment was important for some participants. They considered the relationship with nature, the environment, animals, and the world as a category associated with spirituality. Ezgi reported that looking at the environment directs a person to spirituality as it helps her to think about their purpose in this environment and question the meaning of life. For Ilyas, being religious was not necessary to become spiritual. He indicated that spirituality was something you felt when you looked at nature and witnessed the beauty in it. Leman, who stated that she did not believe in God generally,

reported that she had inner peace when she established relationships with animals. For example, when she fed cats and gave milk to them in their garden, she felt peace. Furthermore, she asserted that there was always something to learn from everything, from a cat on the street to a bird. Zehra also mentioned animals when defining spirituality. One of the meanings she attributed to spirituality was love for animals.

Apart from a relationship with God, others and the environment, some participants also used ***connection within one's inner self*** to explain the meaning of spirituality. Tugce stated that spirituality is an inner voice and mindfulness. Ilyas defined spirituality as deep thinking, mindfulness, contemplation (*tafakkur*), finding himself, and personal journey. Leman defined spirituality as inner processes, self-knowledge, awareness, turning back to the inner world, critical and analytical thinking, mindfulness, and discovering ourselves. She explained:

> People should be more careful about their inner processes. They should question themselves and their environments, and they should read books more. If people can reach the point of analytical and critical thinking and questioning, if they ask existential questions such as why am I in this world, where did I come from, why did I come, where am I going to and how can I be useful for this world, they can find the answers. Everyone has this capacity and uniqueness. The duty of everyone is to discover the answers to such questions. In addition, everyone can be successful at fulfilling himself or herself by finding answers to these questions. However, because of the social norms, because of the attempt to satisfy others rather than themselves, people cannot succeed in questioning and finding answers. I think everyone we encounter, in a way, can help us and lead us to discover ourselves. I think there is always something to learn from everything, from a cat on the street, or from a bird. To look, to see, to be aware of […] I think we lost them in this world, which became synthetic/artificial and I think because of this, people are not happy, they are restless. To be aware of inner processes, to discover an inner world, to discover themselves can make people happy.

For Ilyas, the foundation of spirituality lay in connectedness with God, with others and within one's self. He stated, "Spirituality is also everything in the triple relationship among human being, the universe/ nature and the creator." Similarly, Burcu emphasized the importance of nature, the environment, and the others in our relationship with God including all aspects of relatedness and connectedness in her understanding of spirituality:

> These are not the only ways of the connection with God; we should also remember Him when we look at our environment, to nature and to the people, and feel and witness His presence when we face an event. He is the almighty power above everything, very compassionate and a protector.

6.3.1.2 Belief

Belief was a significant foundation of spirituality for some participants. Ezgi stated that for her spirituality meant belief and she expressed her beliefs, including religious and non-religious, with the word spirituality; spirituality meant faith in general to her, and she noted that it should not be limited to a religious context. Similarly, Semra believed that spirituality could be associated with any religion, or it could be related to a 'religion-like' belief, which is not a religion in origin, yet it influences all aspects of an individual's life. She explains spirituality as:

> A belief, it might be Abrahamic religions; apart from that, Buddhism is also a belief, or it might be a more specific belief in anything, which determines a person's life entirely, his/her social life, his/her morality, his/her work life, his/her marriage, which gives direction to all elements of his/her life.

Muhammed believed that spirituality was powerful belief. Zehra noted that spirituality was associated with belief:

> I relate spirituality to belief in yourself, belief in your power to be helpful to other people, to feel useful in life. The belief that your creator sent you to the earth to achieve this.

Belief in the afterlife was important to Ezgi and Serhat. Serhat considered spirituality as a personal journey towards God and life after death. They had a similar understanding of spirituality and defined spirituality as:

> Afterlife, the eternal life, and all of the things I do for that everlasting life, not to get lost in worldly affairs.

6.3.1.3 Reading and understanding the Quran, the sayings of the prophets, philosophers, and saints

Reading and understanding the Qur'an and sayings of the important thinkers were essential elements of spirituality for some participants. Ezgi stated that when she faced difficulties in life she tried to strengthen her spirituality through learning her religion more and through reading lives of religious leaders and saints, how they behaved to stay strong during hard times.

Belief was the most important thing in life to Serhat; he asserted that it comes before anything else; however, it should be supplemented by careful reading of the Qur'an, understanding its meaning and messages, and learning Islam better. He stated that spirituality appears gradually in this process. For him, spirituality meant inner peace and inner happiness that occurrs in this process to him. He reported that as he had more knowledge about his religion, he felt happier and more at peace. He believed that he could not reach God effectively due to his former lack of such feelings. However, the more he learnt about religion, the more he appreciated everything, from his daily prayers to his relationships with people. Similarly, according to Muhammed, a person could reach spirituality through reading the Qur'an, the sayings and life stories of the prophets and the saints', and attending dhikr (invocation) circles. Thus, all of these rituals may lead a person to spiritual experience. Spirituality was being influenced by the life stories of both Western and Islamic philosophers; it was an attempt to empathise with them; it was an attempt to experience and live the way they did. Ilyas reported his spiritual rituals, including deep thinking:

> My biggest spiritual ritual is thinking deeply at night; I also read the works of some writers and philosophers on thinking. I read the chapter from the Qur'an called Duha; one of the verses I like very much: 'Your Lord did not abandon you.' These are my spiritual rituals.

The writings of philosophers on deep thinking were significant for Ilyas, he stated that he read them very often, and reading and understanding them was a foundation of spirituality.

6.3.1.4 Meaning and Purpose

The subjects stated that questioning existentially urged them to think about the meaning and purpose of their lives. They stated that spirituality referred to trying to find purpose and meaning in life. Ezgi believed that asking several questions such as, why we are alive, what is the purpose of our life, and these questions led us towards spirituality. Similarly, Leman noted that a person should critically think about his/her existence in the world and find his/her purpose in life. She stated that this could be interpreted as spirituality. According to Zehra, spirituality appeared when a person wanted to make meaning of something; when he/she wanted to make sense of something. Tugce asserted that spirituality was the concept that gave purpose to her life and made her happy. Ezgi offered an existential definition of spirituality as:

> A method that is easy to gain. You do not have to work as hard as when you try to earn money. If people really consider why they exist, if they turn back to themselves and to their inner worlds they will find spirituality.

Questioning life and an individual's purpose in life was an essential foundation of spirituality for Semra:

> A human being sits and questions life, questions himself/herself, questions his/her behaviours; what am I doing, who am I, where did I come from; questions his/her morality, questions his/her value system; what am I living for, why am I in this world, what do I have to do […].

6.3.1.5 Worldview, Ideology, and Way of life

Worldview, ideology, way of life, and life style were important to some participants, and they defined their perception of spirituality using such words. Semra stated that spirituality meant life style to her. Tugce pointed out that spirituality was an ideology, which directed and enlightened a person; it was a person's life. She stated, "Spirituality is the helpful light in front of me, something I draw on my life." For Ezgi,

> Spirituality is my life style, structure of my thoughts, my perspective […] and my way of life. It is how I look at life. Everyone has a direction in his or her life. All of us are on a path; the final state is the same for everyone, however, the direction we choose to go to that final state is different. My aim and direction is not to get lost in this world, to be more sensitive, to be spiritual, and to grow my spirituality.

6.3.1.6 Values and Morality

Values and morality were other major themes that emerged as the foundations of spirituality in some subjects' definitions. Ezgi noted that spirituality was her values. Burcu did not think that spirituality was an experience by itself. She believed that it was feelings and values given/taught to a person by his/her family and then by his/her environment in his/her socialization. According to her, this person sustains it in his/her future relationships. Spirituality, to her, was learnt feelings, values, and attitudes, such as love and respect for family, tolerance, and compassion to people. She defined it as followed:

> Spirituality is values that make a person human, and the most significant of them are loving and respecting and, at the same time, fearing God. These are the most important components of spirituality. For example, my love for my mother, my

> respect to my father, my tolerance for people, my compassion for children, all of these are considered spirituality. I can say that I am a believer and respectful person to everybody on earth.

Morality and conscience were important to Onat; he defined spirituality with these words and emphasized the importance of being spiritually peaceful in his relationships with others. In this framework, Semra defined spirituality as:

> Relating to a person's value system and morality. If I say that a person is spiritually immature I do not refer to a non-religious person, I talk about a person's morality, point of view […]; I talk about how much he/she obeys ethics and social rules. Such as being fair to people and not stealing are some moral codes, these are the basics and foundations of spirituality.

6.3.1.7 Mood and feelings

Some subjects defined spirituality as a mood, a state, and a feeling. For instance, Ezgi stated that spirituality referred to "state of mood, nourishment of the soul, relief and peace, and it was essential for life." Ilyas described spirituality as below:

> I think spirituality is relevant to the feelings of human beings. It is the feeling that sprouts after a person's relationship with the physical world. I think spirituality might be happiness or it might be pleasure. A person can feel beyond happiness and pleasure depending on his/her growing and the depth he/she has. Spirituality is a word, a term, to which a person can attribute various meanings according to his/her self-development. An ordinary human being can experience spirituality through his/her feelings or reflect it through metaphysical things, which are beyond the physical domain. The first step of this experience might be establishing empathy in an event, the ability to see different aspects and to understand what others feel about it. Every human being can succeed in this. Moreover, perhaps spirituality is beyond empathy. Spirituality is also everything in the triple relationship among human being, the universe/ nature, and creator. You experience something good but spirituality is a wish to experience and feel something better, more beautiful, and more delicious. Feelings and conscience become important. You take pleasure and as a result, you thank God. Spirituality is also the feelings left after our good deeds, religious practices, and helping others wholeheartedly.

Feelings and mood also appeared in Tugce's definition of spirituality:

> Spirituality is a feeling, state of mood, circle of the soul that directs a person's life and provides a connection to life. […] Feeling is important and it is the essential foundation of spirituality. Religious practices are not spirituality, a person prays five times a day, but if he prays spiritually, if he feels it, this is different. […] To me, spirituality is full of feelings.

For Muhammed, spirituality was experiencing and feeling events in a different way. Onat stated that spirituality was a feeling, it was peace, and he noted that he felt at spiritual peace. Leman reported that she felt at peace in her relationship with nature and that was spirituality for her. Feelings were important to Burcu in her relationship with God; therefore, she referred to feelings when describing spirituality and she stated, “This is a connection through feelings and senses; that is what makes it spiritual.” Zehra defined spirituality as:

> Peace you find with the transcendent power, the feeling you internalize in your relationship with Him.

6.3.1.8 Non-material

Some participants defined spirituality as a non-material phenomenon. Burcu stated that it was everything non-material, which could not be touched, seen or bought with money and she asserted that there was nothing material in her relationship with God, which was spirituality. Onat noted that he used the word spiritual in abstract terms, as opposed to the material.

Table 7. Brief summary of participants' definitions and descriptions of spirituality

	A brief summary of definitions of spirituality	Relationship between spirituality and religion	Synonymity	Superiority
Subject 1 Burcu	Relationship with God, religious requirements, values, love and respect to God and fear of Him, love and respect to parents, tolerance for people, compassion towards children	Religion could be only one of a number of foundations of spirituality.	Not synonymous	-
Subject 2 Onat	Relationship with people, honesty, morality, conscience, peace, relief	Religion could be only one of a number of foundations of spirituality.	Not synonymous	-
Subject 3 Ezgi	Relationship with God, salah, contemplation, inner world, belief, faith, belief in the afterlife, not to get lost in this world, worldview, lifestyle, values, mood, peace, relief, strengthening spirituality through learning religion, reading the lives of religious leaders and saints, asking some questions might lead us to spirituality, such as, why are we living? What purposes do we have?	Spirituality is related to religion.	Not synonymous	-
Subject 4 Leman	Relationship with animals, feeling at peace in relationship with nature, self-awareness, critically thinking about the existence, being a good person, peace, relief	Spirituality is not related to religion.	Not synonymous	-
Subject 5	Relationship with animals, belief in yourself and in your power	Religion could be only one	Not	-

Zehra	to help others, purpose of life, spirituality appears when you want to make sense of something	of a number of foundations of spirituality.	synonymous	
Subject 6 Semra	Morality, relationship with people, (any kind of) belief which determines a person's life entirely, value system, lifestyle, obeying ethics and social rules and moral codes	First, the participant asserted that spirituality was related to religion but it was not solely made up of religion. Then, she claimed that spirituality was not related to religion.	Not synonymous	Spirituality is more extensive than religion
Subject 7 Serhat	Relationship with God, religious requirements, salah, belief in the afterlife, not getting lost in the worldly affairs, belief, reading the Qur'an and learning Islam better	Spirituality is related to religion.	Synonymous	Spirituality and religion complete each other.
Subject 8 Tugce	Feeling, state of mood, circle of the soul, cause of light in a person's eyes, inner voice, and spirituality makes a person happy and gives life purpose.	Religion could be only one of a number of foundations of spirituality.	Not synonymous	Spirituality is more extensive than religion
Subject 9 Sevgi	Salah, sincere communication with God	Spirituality is related to religion.	Not synonymous	Religion is more

				extensive than spirituality.
Subject 10 Buse	Religious requirements, relationship with God, salah, almsgiving, being righteousness, disengagement from yourself to be one with God	Spirituality is related to religion.	Synonymous	Religion is more extensive than spirituality.
Subject 11 Ilyas	Deep thinking, finding himself, being thankful to God, reading the writings of philosophers and authors	Religion could be only one of a number of foundations of spirituality.	Synonymous	Religion is more extensive than spirituality.
Subject 12 Muhammed	Powerful faith, relationship with God, religious requirements, salah, meaning, experiencing and feeling events in a different way, a person could reach spirituality through reading the Qur'an, prophets and philosophers	Spirituality is related to religion.	Not synonymous	Religion is more extensive than spirituality.

6.3.2 The Function of Spirituality

6.3.2.1 Expressions of Spirituality

The expressions of spirituality are categorized into two groups: religious and non-religious rituals and activities. ***Religious duties*** were important to Serhat and he regarded them as expressions of spirituality. He reported that for him spirituality meant to reach into the soul at peace, in complete rest, and satisfaction, which was inner peace. To run after worldly pleasures was a temporary ambition. In order to become spiritual, he stated that a person should enforce the orders of God and should abstain from His prohibitions. Sevgi who defined spirituality as 'sincerity to God, the level of this sincerity, the level of the relationship and closeness between a person and God' emphasized the necessity of the ***religious rituals*** to provide this sincerity:

> Becoming distant from God, which means being busy with worldly affairs only, decreases our spirituality. To worship more and to engage in religious rituals more provides spirituality.

Burcu considered religious rituals and worship essential for spirituality and she highlighted the importance of religious rituals to maintain the relationship with God:

> This relationship is constructed through prayer, worship, belief, and only turning to Him in times of need. I believe that when I take a step towards Him, He comes towards me ten steps.

The findings of this research revealed that for the majority of the subjects ***prayer*** was a spiritual activity that did not require being a religious person. For instance, Zehra stated that she was not a religious person, however, she experienced spirituality through her prayers, and she thought about God almost every day. ***Salah*** is an Islamic prayer that is practised five times each day by the religious followers. Some participants (Ezgi, Serhat, Sevgi, Buse, and Muhammed) cited salah as their spiritual ritual. Ezgi expressed that when a person prayed regularly, his/her spiritual feelings increased. Only Ilyas mentioned ***being thankful to God*** when he was asked his spiritual practices, although the majority of the participants referred to their prayers very often. Only Ezgi and Zehra considered ***fasting***, which was given as one of the examples of a spiritual practice, as an essential component of spirituality.

Almsgiving was considered as an expression of spirituality by some interviewees. Zehra defined spirituality as:

> I think it is a density of feeling that you sometimes feel when you pray or when you give alms. In the Qur'an it is stated "indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of God is the most righteous of you" (49:13). That means sensitive understanding and awareness. For example, a child comes to you and begs for money; you do not know what the money will be spent on. He/she can harm him/herself with the money you donate; so, you can eat something with him/her instead of giving money. Spirituality does not have to depend on rituals such as prayer (*salah*). Even a smile you give to that child, paying for his food, and eating something with him/her is spirituality.

Serhat and Buse mentioned ***almsgiving*** when they described spirituality:

> Almsgiving and the feelings you have when you do this good deed are spirituality.

Non-religious expressions of spirituality that are noted by some partcipants are organising surprises, giving gifts, doing good deeds, helping others, writing, and photography. Buse stated that ***organising surprises*** and ***giving gifts*** to her friends were her spiritual activities. For Leman, ***doing good deeds*** was her spiritual practice; she stated that spirituality was "to think how I can be useful for this world, for whom my doings are useful or if I am doing wrong and harming someone."

Helping others was Sevgi's spiritual practice. She defined spirituality as being in sincere communication with God and continued:

> I am a volunteer in IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation. We are trying to reach as many people as we can; we are trying to aid them in several ways. Now, our project is concerning orphans both in Turkey and in the other countries. A smile on their face or any small thing we do for our mission is a great spirituality. I think it is the highest degree of spirituality.

Similarly, helping others was important for Zehra, even if it meant abandoning her own needs. At times when she thought she needed something, she would consider others who were in greater need, thus she would postpone her need to care for others first. For her, this was spirituality, to feel that you were useful to others. She continued,

> If a person is compassionate towards others, if he/she tries to do something for this world and tries to do good deeds, if he/she is not selfish, that means he/she is a spiritual person. Belief in God or being religious is not essential for being spiritual.

Spirituality is believed to be a motivation for people to do good deeds and to be a better person. Tugce defined it as:

> Everything that makes you feel that you can be of service to people and to be useful, which makes you feel happy and motivates you, directs you towards goodness. For me, to do something good means to do something spiritual. I mean it is sentimental. If there is anything I do at university for a social club, independent from religious affairs, or any good I do for a person or for a friend, I feel that I experience spirituality and I think I am a good spiritual person. […] I can say that spirituality might be an aspect of religion that I transmit to social life.

Ilyas explained one of his spiritual experiences as:

> We had a symposium in a nursing home. During the break, I was sitting in the restaurant preparing for my presentation; an old woman came in and wanted to sit. While she was trying to sit, she dropped her walking stick; as she did not have it she could not even move, neither could she sit nor could she stoop to pick it up. I saw her, ran, and took the stick from the floor, and gave it to her. She thanked me, she was very happy just like a child. This situation can only be understood with spirituality. Spirituality was the thing that directed me to help her or spirituality was the happiness we both felt because of this act. Perhaps, this connection between us might be explained with love; but it is not, because if we look materially, she did not have a face or posture to be liked. However, her need and your values direct you to act and you want to help.

Along with helping others, ***writing*** was important to Ilyas. He stated that it was one of his spiritual rituals. The poems he wrote as an undergraduate student were especially special to him. He thought that his inspiration to write came during the night. He also mentioned ***photography***. He stated that every time he looked at the photographs he took, he saw different things in them. These were his non-religious spiritual activities.

6.3.2.2 Benefits of spirituality

Peace and happiness were important to some participants and they stated that peace and happiness manifested when they experienced spirituality. Some noted that spirituality brought peace, relief (Onat, Ezgi, Leman, Zehra, and Buse), inner peace, pleasure, happiness (Leman, Serhat, and Tugce), and excitement (Zehra). Tugce thought that spirituality illuminated a person's eyes and it was the cause of the light in a person's eyes.

6.3.3 The relationship between Spirituality and Religion

The subjects fell into two categories with regard to their understanding of the relationship between religion and spirituality. For some, (Onat, Ezgi, Zehra, Serhat, Sevgi, Buse, and Muhammed) spirituality could be associated with religion and for others (Leman and Semra) it was the opposite. Moreover, some (Burcu, Zehra, Semra, Tugce, and Ilyas) thought that spirituality could be related to religion but it was not made up of only religion; in short, religion could be one of the foundations of spirituality.

6.3.3.1 Spirituality is related to Religion

Some participants noted that religion and spirituality were related phenomena and religion was one of the foundations of spirituality. Two interviewees (Sevgi and Buse) asserted that spirituality could not be separated from religion; there could be no spirituality without religion, so religion was the only foundation of spirituality for them. For Serhat, spirituality and religion completed each other. Onat discussed the connection between religion and spirituality through relationship with others as:

> If a person is religiously strong, he or she can be a spiritually strong individual; I mean his or her relationships with people can be strong. For religion, human relationships should be perfect, we can make mistakes but we have conscience; therefore, we feel remorse and try to compensate for it.

The relationship between religion and spirituality was explained by Ezgi as below:

> Religion and spirituality are of course related to each other, I refer to Islam when I say religion, and perhaps this is the same for the followers of the other religions, to me, increase in spirituality and your spiritual growth, and to make your spirituality meaningful depend on how much you know your religion and how much you practise it.

For Sevgi, spirituality without religion was not possible because they were intertwined, she stated:

> Spirituality exists as long as religion exists. You communicate with God through religion, I do not suppose, I do not feel or I do not think that you can do that without religion. Religion makes you connect with spirituality.

Muhammed also asserted that religion was not only related to spirituality, but also to all other aspects of our life, he considered it a broad concept:

> Religion addresses everything in our life; we are not only spiritual beings but we also have a physical aspect, I mean we are not living in the kingdom of spirits;

> so, there is this physical world we live in; so, we should relate religion to spirituality in this way. For example, arguing that religion is just a moral phenomenon is very wrong; or it cannot be claimed that religion only consists of law. Religion is everything; so, it is very comprehensive. Therefore, we should relate spirituality to religion in this manner.

Serhat reflected that religion and spirituality completed each other. Ilyas believed that spirituality and religion could be used synonymously and yet it depended on the context in which they were used. Serhat thought that the words religious and spiritual could also be used synonymously. Four participants (Sevgi, Buse, Ilyas, and Muhammed) mentioned the superiority of religion over spirituality. Spirituality was considered a private term and a personal experience; on the other hand, two subjects (Sevgi and Ilyas) considered religion as a social term. Sevgi stated that "spirituality is a personal and an individual thing; however, religion affects everyone and everything."

6.3.3.2 Spirituality untethered from religion

Some participants thought that religion could only be one of a number of foundations of spirituality. They noted that spirituality could be associated with religion, yet it was not necessarily related to religion. Burcu defined spirituality through her feelings and explained the relationship between religion and spirituality as below:

> The word spiritual is very special for me. Many people associate it with religion only, but for me it is not so. […] Love, respect, and fear for God. These are the most important components of spirituality. For example, my love for my mother, my respect for my father, my tolerance for people, my compassion for children, all of these are included in spirituality. I can say that I am a believer and respectful person to everybody on earth. All of these are spirituality; of course, these are all related to religion because God is the one who gave us these feelings, so spirituality evokes faith. It is all of the feelings that make a person human; I mean whether a person believes or not, he or she has feelings that make him or her human, there might be faith in the basis of these feelings.

Zehra explained how non-religious persons could be spiritual as well as religious people; she thought that religion is not necessarily the only foundation of spirituality:

> Initially, it seems like only religious people can be spiritual, but people who do not practise religion can have spiritual feelings as well. For instance, just believing in the presence of a tree can awaken spiritual feelings in a person; a tree is alive, giving us oxygen, so a person believes that nature should be respected.

Semra suggested that practising religious rituals was not the only way to be a spiritual person; being spiritual also depended on having social values and performing them:

> When I say religion, I am actually talking about Islam; all of the orders of Islam are the things that cover spiritual matters, I mean religion and spirituality are related. Helping others is a universal value, it is important everywhere, and this is independent of religion, or for example not lying; but these are all included in religion and they are all spiritual things. A person who claims that he or she is religious might not be spiritual, I think people practise some rituals automatically; that means a person practises religion, but he/she prays or fasts not to go to the hell, and he/she does not help people and thinks that he/she does not have to do that. There are also spiritual and religious people, they are spiritual because they are religious, they belief and practise; and there are people who are spiritual but not religious. Spirituality is related to religion but it is not made up of only religion, but it is related to religion, however, I think, how you define religion is also important.

Tugce noted that spirituality was not religion but religion might be one of the foundations of spirituality:

> Spirituality is not religion, definitely not religion. It is not Islam, it is not being a Muslim, it is neither solely faith, nor is it religious practices. People who have mystical thinking define spirituality as seclusion in a mosque or in a certain place for several days especially during Ramadan, worship, and performing extreme sharia laws (Muslim canonical laws); I think spirituality is not any of these, because it is a state of feeling. Religious practices are not spirituality, a person prays five times a day, but if he prays spiritually, if he feels it, this is different. If we called religion or religious practices spirituality, then spirituality would be an empty phenomenon.

Ilyas had a similar point of view. He said that spirituality did not require following a religion or reaching a certain level of belief in a religion. Two subjects thought that spirituality was more extensive than religion. Semra described this relationship as follows:

> Religion and spirituality are not synonymous, because when we talk about spirituality we talk about a more comprehensive phenomenon than religion. When people say religion they mean a specific thing; they mean a faith. However, when we talk about spirituality we mean something wider that includes other belief systems along with religion.

For Tugce, spirituality could be defined as a feeling, state of mind, a mood, and a motive, hence it was not limited to religion, but rather it was more extensive:

> […] If we define spirituality like this (in other ways different than religion and religiousness), we do not limit it and it becomes a comprehensive term. It might be related to religion, but I do not completely associate them. Religion might be one of a number of foundations of spirituality; everyone has a motive to believe in something, this might be a faith or a religion. For me, they are related but

> religion is just one of a number of foundations, not spirituality itself. I do not relate spirituality to religion, or to becoming one with God or prayer; therefore, I do not narrow its meaning to religious belief.

Two subjects of the study thought that spirituality and religion were unrelated phenomena, so religion was not one of the foundations of spirituality. Leman explained her opinions as follows:

> I think that contemporary religion and spirituality are different things. I think that people put a spin on religiosity; they established regulations for their own profits and want all people to obey the rules. Even today, some people make changes to religious rules, again for their own benefits. Actually, I think since religion was developed in old times, it is not properly adapted to our lives. Yes, people established it and they told us that spiritual feelings were given to us by God and they collected it into a book.

Semra noted that:

> Being a religious person does not make someone spiritual or spiritually strong, or not being a religious person does not mean that this person is not spiritual. What I mean when I use the word spirituality or spiritual is morality, belief system, and value system as a whole, but not religion.

The majority of the participants (Burcu, Onat, Ezgi, Leman, Zehra, Semra, Tugce, Sevgi, and Muhammed) indicated that religion and spirituality were not synonymous. Ezgi explained this difference stating that spirituality was something "mainly abstract, your thoughts, values, and feelings; and religion refers to the things you should do, rules, obligations, prohibitions, and orders; therefore, they cannot be used synonymously."

6.3.4 Change in Spirituality

During the course of conversations, some participants mentioned that a person's level of spirituality could change over time and this change could emerge as either a decrease or an increase in spirituality.

6.3.4.1 Spirituality decreases over time

The decline of spirituality referring to their experiences was discussed by three participants (Leman, Buse, and Ilyas). These participants referred to their personal experiences. Leman explained this decrease as:

> I can say that I am less spiritual now, for example, I used to believe that the universe or the world would bring me good things, or I used to believe in God more and I believed that good things would come to me. However, I am not like that now. I have not talked to anyone about spirituality and spiritual matters recently. I am talking about concrete things, because it is easier and controllable.

Buse compared her feelings when she prayed in her childhood and now:

> When I was praying as a child I was enjoying it more, but now I cannot. This change might be because of me, however, unfortunately, gradually as we get older and as money takes a more important place in our lives spirituality disappears.

Ilyas stated that the decrease or increase in the level of our spirituality was in our hands:

> I think I have neglected my spiritual world recently. Spirituality, I mean the traces of the things we write or read, the feeling we have after our sincere prayers, the feeling we have after helping someone in need, all of these are decreasing within the extreme speed of daily life, perhaps we need to slow down, we need to live slowly, perhaps we postpone this spiritual life and all of these as they are very special and demanding, and we live in a secular world, how spiritual can you be in such a world? How meaningful can it be?

6.3.4.2 Spirituality increases over time

Only one participant (Serhat) claimed that spirituality could increase over time and he was more spiritual than before:

> I am spiritually more peaceful than before; my perceptions about wisdom were different. I enjoy everything from my prayers to my behaviours towards people, thank God, I can say in brief. I did not enjoy these things in the past, I was about to question Islam since I did not know Islam very well and I thought I was following an ineffective religion. That was because I did not understand Islam, I could not reach out to God and I could not experience tawheed (oneness). Therefore, there was no spirituality. Spirituality is peace. You cannot find peace in many things. Prayer restrains from shameful and evil deeds (the Qur'an 29: 45), but if I am praying and doing evil deeds, that means I am not praying consciously and spiritually. Then, I comprehended all of these and began enjoying my prayers; my spirituality increased over time.

6.3.5 The meanings of ruhsallık, tinsellik and spiritüalite in Turkish

There are four words in Turkish; ***maneviyat***, ***ruhsallık***, ***tinsellik,*** and ***spiritüalite*** that can be used to translate the English term spirituality into Turkish (see Chapter 3 for a detailed

discussion). From the beginning of the interviews with the participants, the word ***maneviyat*** was used to mean spirituality since it is the most commonly used word among four in Turkish society. In the second part of the interviews, the subjects were asked several questions about the other three words, ***ruhsallık***, ***tinsellik,*** and ***spiritüalite***; such as, whether they had heard or encountered them earlier and whether they knew the meaning of each word, and if so what these words meant to them. The results revealed that more than half of the participants had heard or encountered some of these words in a book or article; however, only the minority of the individuals could assign meaning to them, and the subjects did not use these words in their daily lives (Table 8). According to the findings, the meanings given to the word ***ruhsallık*** are:

> The thoughts or values that are attributed to events by spiritual people (Ezgi).
>
> Mental; like in mental illness or mental health (Zehra).
>
> Inner needs of a person apart from physical needs; ruhsallık is a more comprehensive phenomenon that encompasses everything (Semra).
>
> Mood; a person's happiness, sadness or dissatisfaction (Serhat).
>
> Sensibility, a person's inner world (Tugce)
>
> A word used by the non-religious psychiatrists instead of *maneviyat* when they treat their patients (Muhammed).

Only two of the participants defined ***tinsellik***:

> Explaining an event using religion (Zehra).
>
> Matters concerning the basics of religion, about God and his features (Muhammed).

Four individuals described ***spiritüalite*** as:

> My inner world, my feelings, my thoughts, and how I interpret events (Leman).
>
> Beliefs and actions of Non-religious people, and belief in the existence of other universes (Zehra).
>
> The ability of the soul to influence the body, the ability to do something with the power of the mind power (Ilyas).

Spiritualism (Muhammed).

Table 8. Three words used instead of maneviyat (spirituality) in Turkish

	Ruhsallık		**Tinsellik**		**Spiritüalite**	
		Meaning		**Meaning**		**Meaning**
Subject 1 Burcu	Was not aware of the term	-	Was not aware of the term	-	Was not aware of the term	-
Subject 2 Onat	Was not aware of the term	-	Was aware of the term	-	Was aware of the term	-
Subject 3 Ezgi	Was aware of the term	The thoughts or values that are attributed to events by spiritual people	Was not aware of the term	-	Was aware of the term	-
Subject 4 Leman	Was not aware of the term	-	Was aware of the term	-	Was aware of the term	My inner world, my feelings, my thoughts, and how I interpret events
Subject 5 Zehra	Was aware of	Mental; like in mental illness or	Was aware of	To explain an event using	Was aware of the term	Non-religious people's beliefs

	the term	mental health	the term	religion		and actions, and belief in the existence of other universes
Subject 6 Semra	Was aware of the term	Inner needs of a person apart from physical needs; ruhsallık is a more comprehensive phenomenon that encompasses everything	Was aware of the term	-	Was not aware of the term	-
Subject 7 Serhat	Was aware of the term	Mood; a person's happiness, sadness or dissatisfaction	Was not aware of the term	-	Was not aware of the term	-
Subject 8 Tugce	Was aware of the term	Sensibility, person's inner world	Was not aware of the term	-	Was not aware of the term	-
Subject 9 Sevgi	Was aware of the term	-	Was not aware of the term	-	Was not aware of the term	-

Subject 10 Buse	Was not aware of the term	-	Was aware of the term	-	Was aware of the term	-
Subject 11 Ilyas	Was not aware of the term	-	Was aware of the term	-	Was aware of the term	The ability of the soul to influence the body, the ability to do something with the power of the mind power
Subject 12 Muhammed	Was not aware of the term	A word used by non-religious psychiatrists instead of maneviyat when they treat their patients	Was aware of the term	Matters concerning the basics of religion, about God and his features	Was aware of the term	Spiritualism

6.3.6 Implications of spirituality for understanding of person, time, and place

6.3.6.1 Spiritual person

The subjects were asked whether a person could be defined as spiritual. The findings of this research revealed that the adjective spiritual (*manevi* in Turkish) was not quite embraced by the participants to describe someone. Moreover, 'to be a spiritual person' is not a common expression in Turkish according to the subjects of this research. Only three interviewees (Burcu, Onat, and Sevgi) thought that a person could be described as spiritual while the rest answered no and offered several other alternative options/adjectives in order to define a person who is spiritual rather than the word spiritual. These alternatives are *believer of God* (Ezgi), *pious* (Ezgi), *self-conscious* (Leman), *honourable* (Zehra), *his/her spirituality is strong* (Semra, Sevgi, and Buse), *spiritually strong* (Semra), *peaceful* (Serhat), *faithful* (Serhat), *such as a Muslim* (Serhat and Ilyas), *religious* (Tugce and Ilyas), *virtuous* (Ilyas), *wise*, *scholar*, *the sun of religion* or *the light of religion* (Muhammed)[59]. The majority of the subjects argued that even though people might easily define themselves or others as religious or practising religion or non-religious or non-practising in Turkey, a traditional approach using other words (presented above) is preferred instead of using spirituality to define people. These findings show that the participants had a clear vision of the word and were capable of defining it clearly, though they did not use it in their daily lives.

6.3.6.2 Spiritual time

The subjects were required to give examples of a period of time and place that they considered spiritual. Their answers were mainly related to their definitions of spirituality. The interviewees provided different examples; their answers in brief are:

> The moment I am impressed by the feelings and faiths of people when I enter a mosque (Burcu).

[59] To show what the participants actually said and make the thesis more useful for future Turkish researchers working on this topic, it would be good to give these answers in Turkish. They are respectively: *Allah'a inanan, takvalı, kendini tanıyan, muhterem, maneviyatı kuvvetli/yüksek/güçlü, manevi yönden güçlü, huzurlu, imanlı, ne kadar da Müslüman, dindar, erdemli, alim, allame, şems'ed-din, nur'ed-din, fahru'd-din, sadru's-şeria*.

The moment when we communicate with someone (Onat).

It cannot be limited. The moment you have the spiritual feeling. For a praying person, it is the moment when he or she prostrates to God (Ezgi).

Any time when there is nobody around you and you think about yourself (Leman).

Religious festivals, Ramadan, and Muharram (the first month of the Islamic calendar) (Zehra).

The period of time when you sit and think about life and yourself, and you question your behaviours and morality (Semra).

Fridays and the time of Friday prayer (Serhat).

When you are active doing good deeds that make you happy (Tugce).

Whenever you remember your God as written in the Holy Qur'an: "Men who celebrate the praises of God, standing, sitting, and lying down on their sides, and contemplate the (wonders of) creation in the heavens and the earth…" (3/191) (Buse).

Time between Isha prayer and fajr prayer (night), crack of dawn, quiet and isolated times (Ilyas).

The sacred days, Ramadan (Muhammed).

6.3.6.3 Spiritual place

Half of the participants (Burcu, Ezgi, Zehra, Serhat, Buse, and Ilyas) mentioned mosques as spiritual places while others provided several other options. In brief these are:

The places where we communicate with someone (Onat).

Any place where there is nobody around you and you think about yourself. It is not a mosque or a church (Leman).

Mosques, other religious places of worship and shrines (Zehra).

The places where you sit and think about life, yourself, and you question your behaviours and morality (Semra).

Mosques and shrines in Istanbul, the district of Eyup in Istanbul, Hisaronu in Izmir, my parents' house, some places, and cities like Canakkale (Gelibolu) which is one of the cities the Ottoman Empire entered and our ancestors lived since the Ottoman Empire (Serhat).

Any place where you are active doing good deeds that make you happy (Tugce).

Any place where you talk with people about developing yourself in terms of faith and worship, where God was mentioned in the conversations, and where people gather for a certain purpose such as helping people in need and undertaking projects for humanity (Sevgi).

Mosques, shrines, dervish convents, my house as I never watch television, which can distract me from deep thinking (Buse).

Mosques, Kozahan (an inn) in Bursa (a city in Turkey), Hikmet Association in Bursa, places where friends talk about spiritual matters, public kitchens where people in need and people who help them meet where they have a spiritual connection, and dervish lodges (Ilyas).

Ka'aba (the sacred house in Mecca) (Muhammed).

6.3.7 List of the words

In the third and final part of the interviews, the subjects were given a list of words written on a card and they were asked to choose the words that they thought related to spirituality. The only word chosen by all of the participants (12 participants) was morality. The words chosen by the most of the participants were awareness (11 participants), purpose of life (11 participants), relationship with people (9 participants), love (9 participants), search (9 participants), contemplation (9 participants), submission (9 participants), sacred (9 participants), values (9 participants), relationship with the nature (9 participants), universe (8 participants), mysticism (8 participants), art (8 participants), nature (7 participants). The minority of the participants selected music (5 participants), energy (5 participants), beauty (5

participants), mother earth (3 participants), sheikh (3 participants), sports (2 participants), meditation (2 participants), fortune-telling (1 participant), UFOs (1 participant), sorcery (1 participant), horoscope (1 participant), yoga (1 participant), reiki (1 participant), quantum (1 participant), reincarnation (1 participant) respectively. There was only one individual (Semra) who thought that all of the words on the list were associated with spirituality; therefore, she chose them all.

After the subjects had chosen the words related to spirituality, they were asked to explain why they selected these words and what they meant to them. The majority of the participants explained the relationship between spirituality and the words they selected, and some did not want to. Their understandings are presented in the following sections briefly.

6.3.7.1 Morality

Morality is the best of all spiritual things (Burcu). A morally good person is considered a spiritual person; a person cannot be spiritual without being moral. Religion including spirituality is morality itself (Ezgi). Ethics is universal; if people thought morally, and everyone can find the same moral rules (Leman). Morality was not to harm the others; a spiritual person is he/she who had such morality and did not harm anyone (Zehra). Morality covered all values; therefore, it is considered associated with spirituality (Tugce).

6.3.7.2 Awareness

People have to be aware of why they are on the earth; this is spirituality (Burcu). People had to think and be aware of themselves and how much spiritual feelings they have (Onat). When the level of spirituality decreases, Ezgi's awareness and reactions towards events decline (Ezgi). People have to be aware of the world around them and think about what is happening around them is essential for spirituality (Leman). A person can become spiritual with awareness, with being aware of why he or she is created and how he or she can be useful for humanity; a person can become spiritual when he or she is aware of his or her purpose in life (Zehra). Awareness is essential in order to ensure inner peace, which is spirituality (Serhat). There could not be spirituality without awareness; comprehension and awareness are essential for life (Tugce). The first verse of the Holy Qur'an (96: 1) which is "Proclaim/read" does not mean a literal reading; it is thinking of the creation in the universe

by God and it is looking at nature, at a flower, from a different perspective to see the real meaning beyond its existence. This is awareness (Buse).

6.3.7.3 Purpose of Life

People are in this world in order to be tested; knowing that and being aware of that is spirituality, the purpose of life is being successful in this test (Burcu). Everyone has to actualize himself or herself and has to find their purpose in life, this is very much related to spirituality (Leman). A person has to find a purpose and has to form his/her behaviours spiritually (Zehra). Knowing that this world is just a test, doing something for the real world 'the hereafter' and to be able to do all of these good deeds are necessary for spirituality (Serhat). Our purposes determine everything including our spirituality (Buse). Sevgi believed that her spirituality increases when she works hard to teach her students and help them.

6.3.7.4 Relationship with People

Relationship with people is important for all of the participants. Moreover, nine participants stated that spirituality meant relationship with people. Onat stated that he found some answers to his questions about himself by communicating with people. A person cannot be spiritual without having a connection with people and nature (Zehra). People have to have relationships with people according to God's orders and prohibitions; this is spirituality (Serhat). Spirituality is the relationships we have with people and our behaviours towards them (Tugce).

6.3.7.5 Love

Spirituality is love of God, the ultimate concern we have to reach (Burcu and Zehra). If people spend more time with God and engage in worship more carefully and decently, our practices can bring us more peace (Serhat). Love is a higher level of relationship with people, there is more responsibility in love; and this is spirituality (Onat). You can see yourself in the mirror of the person you love and you can discover your spirituality (Leman). A spiritual person is he/she who is not egocentric; he/she thinks of other people, loves someone, and takes responsibility for others (Zehra).

6.3.7.6 Search

The source of spirituality is based on searching, we are always in search for something; then, we find what we are looking for and this strengthens our spirituality (Ezgi). People have to find their purpose in life through searching for it (Leman). We need to search in order to be full of spiritual feelings (Zehra). Spirituality is to search and to realise what we are capable of and engage in relationships with people and be social (Tugce).

6.3.7.7 Contemplation

The more we contemplate, the more spiritual feelings increase (Ezgi). Spirituality is to behave spiritually, such as helping someone or something for the sake of God and thinking deep on His orders (Zehra). Spirituality is to acknowledge God, to meditate on the thought of Him and to come closer to Him (Serhat and Sevgi). Not only meditating on God but also contemplating the prophet (Muhammad peace be upon him) and topics about religion is spirituality (Ilker). You become spiritual when you contemplate and spiritual feelings are sacred (Ezgi).

6.3.7.8 Submission

A spiritual person means an individual submitting himself or herself to God (Burcu). Submission is to be close to God (Sevgi). If a person experiences hesitation of belief, he/she cannot be spiritual; in order to be able to submit yourself, you have to believe strongly and trust; this is spirituality (Serhat). When you face a struggle, if you believe that you are capable of fighting this problem, you can cope with it and you do your best, and then, you submit yourself, this is spirituality (Leman).

6.3.7.9 Sacred

The strongest spiritual feeling is faith and all of the values that make us have faith are sacred (Burcu). Our creator, religion, and Holy book are sacred (Zehra, Serhat, and Tugce).

6.3.7.10 Values

Spirituality refers to values and it becomes meaningful with values (Ezgi and Tugce). All of the values in life, such as being a moral person, the way of sitting and talking are all related to the purpose of life; we identify values according to our purposes (Sevgi).

6.3.7.11 Relationship with Nature

We came from soil, and we will go back to it; therefore, it is related to spirituality (Onat). When a person wants to run away, he/she takes refuge in a mountain, a forest, or seaside, and this helps him/her spiritually (Sevgi).

6.3.7.12 Universe

The creator sent us to the universe; our thoughts, our behaviours, and whatever we do on earth affects our spirituality (Ezgi). When we go towards our inner self, we see that we had a connection with the universe and the world, and we have responsibilities towards them, this is spirituality (Leman). Thinking about the universe is spirituality (Serhat). The universe, the world, and we, the connection among these three are related to spirituality (Tugce). When you look at creation, how seasons are created, how the sun rises and sets, you thank God, and this is spirituality (Sevgi). Thinking about creation, nature, the sea, and the stars are a means of living a spiritual life (Ilyas).

6.3.7.13 Mysticism

The basis of mysticism is spiritual feelings (Onat). In mysticism, you do something because you like it, not for fear of punishment; this is spirituality (Leman). Mysticism is all about goodness and values, which is spirituality (Zehra).

6.3.7.14 Art

A person makes art and/or music through embedding something from himself or herself; he/she wants to express himself/herself better through his art and/or music; therefore, this is spirituality (Onat). Art is a part of human beings' purpose and inner world (Leman). Art gives a person spiritual feelings (Tugce) and makes him/her come closer to God; making art creates a different atmosphere and leads a person to spirituality (Sevgi).

6.3.7.15 Nature

To keep nature safe for the sake of God is important as He created it; however, independent of a belief in God, we have to keep it safe, as it is useful for humanity. This is spirituality (Zehra).

6.3.7.16 Music

Just like art, feeling the energy of music is good for us and good for our spirituality (Leman). Music is the nourishment of the soul; therefore, it is related to spirituality (Muhammed).

6.3.7.17 Energy

Energy means power and we could not do anything without energy or power, and therefore, we would not have spirituality (Tugce). Energy means spirituality (Muhammed).

6.3.7.18 Beauty

Spirituality had a dimension of aesthetics; being aware of being a human and behaving well everywhere and to everyone is spirituality; this goodness is a reflection of spirituality (Ilyas).

6.3.7.19 Mother Earth

Mother Earth enlivens something like God (Leman). The soil is the beginning of everything, we are created by the soil, everything we consume in order to live is from the soil and finally we are going to return to the soil; mother earth is the soil not God (Zehra).

6.3.7.20 Sheikh

Sheikh is a spiritual person since he tries to make people remember God (Buse).

6.3.7.21 Sports

Our physical capacity makes me think about our creation, so sport is related to spirituality (Leman).

6.3.7.22 Meditation, Fortune-telling, UFOs, Sorcery, Horoscope, Yoga, Reiki, Quantum, Reincarnation

Only one participant (Semra) chose these nine words, which are common in Western contemporary spirituality. She described spirituality as something that was reflected and spread all over our lives; it penetrated all aspects of our lives and it affected our daily preferences. Therefore, she thought that all thirty words on the list were associated with spirituality in some way.

Table 9. List of the words

	Subject 1 Burcu	Subject 2 Onat	Subject 3 Ezgi	Subject 4 Leman	Subject 5 Zehra	Subject 6 Semra	Subject 7 Serhat	Subject 8 Tugce	Subject 9 Sevgi	Subject 10 Buse	Subject 11 Ilyas	Subject 12 Muhammed
Morality	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Awareness	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x
Purpose of Life	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Relationship with People		x		x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x
Love	x	x		x	x	x	x			x	x	x
Search	x		x	x	x	x		x		x	x	x
Contemplation	x		x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Submission	x		x	x		x	x		x	x	x	x
Sacred	x		x	x		x	x	x		x	x	x
Values	x		x		x	x		x	x	x	x	x
Relationship with the Nature		x		x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x
Universe			x	x		x	x	x	x		x	x
Mysticism	x	x		x	x	x				x	x	x

Art		x		x	x	x			x	x	x	x
Nature				x	x	x	x			x	x	x
Music		x		x		x				x	x	x
Energy		x				x		x	x			x
Beauty						x		x		x	x	x
Mother earth				x	x	x						
Sheikh						x				x		x
Sports				x		x						
Meditation					x	x						
Fortune-telling						x						
UFOs						x						
Sorcery						x						
Horoscope						x						
Yoga						x						
Reiki						x						
Quantum						x						
Reincarnation						x						

6.4 Frequency of the usage of the word spirituality (*maneviyat*)

The participants were asked how often they used the word spirituality (*maneviyat*) in everyday life and if they had ever heard of the concept during their education at university. Only two subjects reported that they used this word very often. One of these participants stated that spirituality meant belief, religious requirements, and belief in the afterlife. He said that he used the word spirituality frequently, especially during difficult times. For the other subject, it meant belief, relationship with people, morality, and values. She implied that she used it very often because it had a very important place in her life as she cared a lot about all human relationships. On the other hand, eight out of twelve individuals reported that they rarely used the word of spirituality, and they did not even remember the last time they used it. On the other hand, two subjects stated that they had never used this term in their lives. For some, the cause of not using this word was very often implied and explained as being lost in worldly affairs which means being busy with daily life and worldly affairs.

When the participants were asked if they came across the concept of spirituality at the university, only five (two from the department of Psychology and three from the department of Theology) stated that they did. However, they noted that they had heard this word only a few times. One was from the department of Theology doing his PhD on psychology of religion. He asserted that he encountered the concept of spirituality many times while working in this field. All five subjects who claimed that they heard it proclaimed that the usage of the term was in a religious sense, whether having a positive or negative meaning. One psychology student recollected that some lecturers at the university were very hostile towards religion and they expressed hatred at every opportunity in class. They preferred using the word spirituality (*maneviyat*) instead of words like religion (*din*) and piety (*takva*), as they did not even like to speak of these words (religion and piety). Nevertheless, they used the word spirituality very rarely. This student also mentioned that she was very sad about the negative attitudes, discourses, and insults the lecturers displayed during the class. Another psychology student recalled that the psychology of a society could not be healed by precluding its spiritual dimension as done in the departments of Psychology in Turkey. Moreover, all participants from the two departments thought that there was not a spiritual environment at university.

6.5 Feedback from the participants

At the end of each interview, individuals gave feedback on the dialogue. A large number of the respondents admitted that they had never thought about spirituality and they reported that they believed that other people also did not think about it very often. Moreover, they stated that this interview revealed their inner worlds; an issue they have never thought deeply about was brought to the forefront of their minds; therefore, they felt happy and peaceful so that they thanked to the researcher for the opportunity for a discussion on an important topic in a friendly environment. The majority of the interviewees were curious about the concept of spirituality and they wanted the researcher to give them information specifically about the contemporary understandings of spirituality after the interviews ended. They also asked some questions about the issue, such as what the personal views of the researcher were. Some indicated that they would like to learn more about the concept and they told that they were going to read about it later. In short, it might be argued that participation in this research was very valuable and beneficial for the majority of the subjects.

To conclude, the participants' self-descriptions of spirituality and how they gave the account of the meaning and values in life and the factors that helped make them who they are are discussed in this chapter. Spirituality is an ambiguous concept that is difficult to discuss, define, and describe in respect of its nature. Even though it is a vague notion that does not have an all-encompassing definition, the subjects of the research were able to clearly and fluently express their thoughts on it, and thus, they contributed valuable material to the study. However, the majority of the respondents hesitated as to whether they were correct or not when they were talking about the topic and sharing their ideas with the researcher, and they claimed that spirituality is a concept that is difficult to define. As a feature of the interview method, participants needed to speak extemporaneously and explain a profound theme/subject in a restricted time, and they were recorded. In spite of the fact that they were informed about the nature of the research and its topic, they were not given the interview questions beforehand. Therefore, they had to talk without previous preparation. Despite this difficulty, all of the subjects were very successful in the conversations.

Some participants related spirituality to religion, as in the traditional discourse, and specifically associated with Islam and formal Islamic practice. Their descriptions embraced belief, relationship with God, and submission to Him, religious knowledge, religious requirements, contemplation (*tafakkur*), gratitude, and afterlife. Two individuals emphasized that spirituality without religion was not possible. The majority of the sample thought that spirituality could be related to religion; however, only two claimed that they could be used synonymously. Religion was more extensive than spirituality for four subjects, two of whom stated that spirituality could be framed as a private and personal phenomenon, while religion had a more social structure and affected everything in a person's life. One indicated that spirituality and religion completed each other, thus one was missing without the other.

On the other hand, some participants described spirituality without religion. Five respondents thought that spirituality could be related to religion, yet it constituted more than just religion and spirituality had many other meanings. Spirituality was believed to be more comprehensive than religion by two subjects. They stated that spirituality and religion could not necessarily be equated; finally, for one participant, spirituality had nothing in common with religion. The meanings of spirituality given by the participants without reference to religion were a person's relationship with his or her environment, with other people, a connection within him/herself, a mood, feelings, meaning, and purpose in life, worldview, ideology, deep thinking, values, and morality. Spirituality was a changing notion for four subjects. Three explained the decrease in their spirituality, while one stated that his spirituality increased over time and he was a more spiritual person.

In short, the most important findings of the research indicate that (1) spirituality is perceived outside the boundaries of traditional religion; in other words, spirituality exists without religion; (2) it is regarded as a universal phenomenon, on which religion, Islam in particular, does not have a monopoly and which cannot be possessed by one specific group or community; (3) the most common element of spirituality among the participants' perceptions was morality; (4) for all of the subjects, spirituality was what is (the most) important in their lives; and (5) participants usually do not use the (scientific/psychological) jargon of spirituality when they are talking about their lives including both positive and negative life events without being prompted. The next chapter will present the limitations of the study and the discussion of the findings.

CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

THE CONCEPT OF SPIRITUALITY IN TURKEY TODAY

7.1 Introduction

The intention of this study has been to bring the perceptions of spirituality to light in a Turkish context, and accordingly, the findings of this research indicate that the participants provided various definitions and descriptions of spirituality, which cover the idiosyncratic views of each individual. In this chapter, the findings of the research that were presented in the previous chapter will be commented on, critically discussed and interpreted in detail with reference to the Turkish context and existing literature. Furthermore, the most important and interesting aspects of the findings, the unexpected outcomes, and what the study has shown that is truly new will be delineated. It is important to state, before anything else, that this investigation is the first attempt to explore the perceptions of spirituality among theology and psychology undergraduate and postgraduate students by conducting qualitative interviews. Therefore, the findings are new to our knowledge, and this research is a significant contribution to literature. However, as with all research projects, this study has some limitations, which will be described first.

7.2 Limitations of the study

Subjects for the interviews were recruited from two departments of two universities in November 2014; therefore, the scope of the study is inherently limited to a specific group of participants, which were selected and interviewed in a specific period. In addition, this study was undertaken by conducting qualitative interviews. Qualitative method is not limited to particular variables and statements so that it gives freedom to the subjects to answer the open-

ended questions and to explain their thoughts freely. However, as a feature of the interview method, participants needed to speak extemporaneously and explain a profound topic in a restricted time, which were all recorded for future reference. The participants had to tell their stories and express their opinions spontaneously without any prior preparation since they did not have detailed information about the interview schedule beforehand; in addition, they were not provided with any definition of spirituality at the beginning of the interviews. Moreover, even though participants answered all of the questions and clearly explained what they thought about spirituality, they might have wanted to talk more and might have provided more data if they had more time to speak. Furthermore, even though the participants voluntarily accepted being audio recorded, they, or at least some of them, might not have reflected all of their experiences and explanations about spirituality. These factors may have constrained the results. Another limitation of the study is regarding the gender of the participants, since the majority of them were female.

Moreover, the generalizability of the results is subject to certain limitations. For instance, the sample of the research size was narrow since the nature of qualitative inquiry required working with a small group of individuals. This study found that the subjects provided rich material with their definitions and descriptions of the term. However, it might have been more appropriate and ideal to contact a wide range of university students and to have interviews with students from all departments. This research could include individuals from very different backgrounds so that the chance of giving a voice to more people would be possible. This study has, however, a strict time and financial limitations. In addition, we have not undertaken any quantitative research, and in qualitative inquiry, the research sample size is small; and therefore, it does not represent a broader population, which makes it difficult to generalize the results of the study. In fact, generalizing the results of the study to the rest of the population is not the aim of the qualitative inquiries. Therefore, in practice, we had to choose the most suitable sample group among different fields, and the numbers of participants were limited.

To find the most suitable subjects for this research, two criteria were especially important. One was the possibility of students coming across the word spirituality in some of the departments' curricula such as theology, psychology, and philosophy; therefore, the students from these departments seemed more appropriate than those in the other departments did, since they had the potential to be acquainted with this term. The other criterion was choosing two departments that had students from different backgrounds, roughly

corresponding to Turkey's dual social contexture, that of religious and nonreligious. The departments of Theology and Psychology met the criteria most effectively and were thus chosen for this study. Individuals who are from conservative religious families tend to prefer the departments of Theology. The majority of the students in the department of Psychology are mainly from families with a secular and modern background, yet this does not mean that religious individuals detain themselves from this department. Secular individuals can also choose the department of Theology as well; however, this is very rare in Turkey.

Another limitation of this study might be considered as the participants' denominations. Though there are people of different cultures and religions living in Turkey, mainly Sunni Muslims constitute the majority of individuals in the departments of Theology. Hence, focusing only on this department might reflect only their approach to spirituality in this study. It would ideally be more appropriate to reach other students from different religious and nonreligious backgrounds. Nonetheless, the choice of these two departments seems adequately relevant to the scope and targets of this study.

Furthermore, choosing students from the departments of Theology and Psychology had another benefit for the purpose of the study. These two departments are expected to have the means to equip their students with a good education in order for them to be qualified individuals to help people. For instance, graduates from the departments of Psychology might become mental health occupational therapists or mental health care assistants, while graduates from the department of Theology might become clerics, spiritual caregivers etc. Therefore, their views might be infused into a broader society and they might be effective in shaping future perceptions of spirituality in Turkey. Thus, these two fields have a potential important role in society. Therefore, it is expected that examining the perceptions of the undergraduate and postgraduate students of these departments will provide an important insight into the future prospects in Turkey.

Another important limitation lies in the fact that the lack of a single equivalent Turkish word to spirituality in English. As the in-depth discussion in Chapter 3 indicated, four words are used in Turkish academic literature in order to translate spirituality into Turkish, which are *maneviyat*, *ruhsallık, tinsellik,* and *spiritüalite. Maneviyat* is used in the study; the main questions of the interview about spirituality adopted the word *maneviyat* since its common usage was thought to be better known by the subjects than the other words. However, this choice might have affected the responses of the participants because it has a religious

connotation or it is evocative of religion. The word *maneviyat* was also used when the prospective participants were asked if they would like to be involved in the study and when they were informed about the subject of the research and the context of the interviews. Some of the invited people might have felt reluctant about participating in the interviews due to this religious note of the term. Therefore, it might have prevented us from having a wider range of individuals from various backgrounds. This could arguably have been the case with psychology students with a secular background in particular. Perhaps some of the initial candidates might have not wanted to talk about spirituality (i.e. religious topics) regarding the peculiar socio-political atmosphere in Turkey. Thus, one of the reasons they removed themselves from the study and deprived us of their thoughts about spirituality might as well be of this particular nature. This situation might arise from prejudice against the meaning of the word, which could have been perceived as having a religious implication. In fact, one of the subjects of the study from the department of Psychology (Leman) who defined herself as a non-believer in general expressed that she did not want to use this word because many people in Turkey might have related this word to religion. On the other hand, due to the same reason people with a religious orientation could have been interested in participation more than secular individuals. Moreover, there might be two other reasons for people being reluctant to participate in the study, one of which is the educational background of the researcher since she is a student at the department of Theology and Religion, and the other is the outlook of the researcher since she is wearing a headscarf.

7.3. Four words for spirituality in Turkish

Surprisingly, the literature review on the topic of spirituality in the third chapter of the thesis revealed that there are four words in Turkish that can be used to translate spirituality into Turkish: *maneviyat, ruhsallık, tinsellik*, and *spiritüalite*. The word *maneviyat* was utilized for the purpose of this research, as mentioned in the limitations of the study. However, the participants were also asked if they had ever come across the other three words (*ruhsallık, tinsellik*, and *spiritüalite*) and if they had any idea about their meanings. According to the findings, none of the participants related *ruhsallık* and *spiritüalite* to religion. Only two subjects could define the word *tinsellik*. Even though *tinsellik* and its cognates are not defined in terms of religion in the *online dictionary of the Turkish Language Association (see Chapter 3),* these two subjects connected it to religion. Again as mentioned in the third chapter, the use

of this word (*tinsellik*) is rare in academic literature, and it is not associated with religion by the authors (Bozhuyuk, et al., 2012; Tuncay, 2007; Karairmak, 2004). In addition, the findings of our research revealed that it is not a common word in daily language as well.

The word *ruhsallık* was defined by half of the individuals. Some of the various definitions of *ruhsallık* by the subjects were the thoughts and values that were attributed to events by spiritual people, mental, inner needs of a person which are separate from physical needs, mood, sensibility, and a person's inner world, and it is also considered as a word used by non-religious psychiatrists instead of *maneviyat*. The word *ruhsallık* is used as a technical term in the fields like Psychology, Psychiatry, and the Psychology of Religion. The Turkish literature on mental illness mainly referred to this word regarding it as a non-religious concept (see Chapter 3 for an in-depth discussion). An example of the non-religious usage of the word *ruhsallık* is found in writings of Ozdogan (2005). As discussed in Chapter 3, she defined the word as the connection of a person with his Creator, so that its source is divine yet it does not have a religious context. The dominance of the usage of this word without any reference to religion in literature might have led the participants to regard it as unrelated to religion. It is also important to note that one of the interesting findings of this study shows that psychologists and psychiatrists' approach to spirituality seems to be perceived as being distant from religious patterns by the participants. Some pointed out that psychologists and psychiatrists might not want to make use of religious and spiritual words in therapy, and it was not applicable in a country having mainly a traditional cultural religious setting, in our case, Islam. This issue will be discussed further in a later section. Some of the definitions of the word *ruhsallık* that were provided by the subjects such as mood and inner world are very similar to the ones that were attributed to the word *maneviyat*, which will also be discussed in more detail in section 7.4. Just as *ruhsallık*, it is found that the word *tinsellik* is not common in daily language as well.

The word *spiritüalite* was defined by four participants as spiritualism, telekinesis, the beliefs and actions of non-religious people, belief in the existence of other universes, inner world, and feelings. Some interviewees seemed to adopt this word as a new age concept without relating it to religion. Its usage is not common in daily language and it is generally employed in academic writing (Hicdurmaz, & Oz, 2013; Korkut-Owen & Owen, 2012; Arslan & Konuk-Sener, 2009; Cetinkaya, et al., 2007; Akgun-Kostak, 2007). The subjects who defined it in their own words stated that they had come across this word in some articles and books, although this was rare. The participants who knew this word were post-graduate

students, two from the department of Theology, and two from the department of Psychology. Although it is expected that they would be aware of these terms as they are more advanced in the field than undergraduates are, this was not the case. It is important to note that this word is almost not known and will probably not be used in daily life by this group of participants in the near future. In short, even though these three words *ruhsallık, tinsellik,* and *spiritüalite* are employed in the academic literature, which is not very often, they arguably do not seem to be a part of daily language of this group.

As mentioned earlier, the term spirituality will stand for *maneviyat* in Turkish in this chapter, and in case of any other use of the other Turkish counterparts (*ruhsallık, tinsellik,* and *spiritüalite*) will be noted in the brackets.

7.4 The importance of spirituality in Turkey today

7.4.1 Frequency of the use of the word spirituality

One unanticipated finding of this study is that our subjects have not embraced and thus do not use the word spirituality very often in everyday language. The subjects were asked how often they referred to the concept of spirituality and only two individuals reported that they used it very often in daily life. Interestingly, one of them did not refer to spirituality while talking about negative and positive life events although she stated that she used it very often. Moreover, the findings also revealed that the participants did not refer to the term very often in the first part of the interviews, it was mentioned only twice by two students (See Chapter 6 for more details). This outcome is contrary to previous research conducted with different populations. For instance, the results of Manning (2012)'s study on what role spirituality and religion played in life of participants indicate that the subjects used these terms "to describe major life events and parts of their personhood that are important to them" (p. 100). It can be said that when people do not engage with something, they do not think about it and they do not talk about it in daily life. Furthermore, there is a possibility that the more we engage with the material world, the more our relationship with our spiritual side deteriorates. The discourse of an individual indicates his/her choices and life-style. The disappearance of spirituality in the discourse of individuals might suggest that the spiritual part is also missing in their lives. Social environment and the changing structure of the society in general might be significant factors in shaping identities and life-styles of individuals.

When the changes brought by the process of secularisation, westernisation, and modernity in Turkey are considered, it seems that one of the most influenced groups is the young generation and university students in particular. It might be argued that such changes mostly influence young adults, for instance, as stated in Chapter 2, new spiritualities are common mainly among the young, especially highly educated people, in the West (Zappala, 2009). Similarly, it might be claimed that university students in Turkey might have such tendencies.

An interesting finding of our study show that, as stated earlier, one (atheist) subject did not embrace the term spirituality as it had a religious sense in public perception, and thus, this perception caused her to avoid this term. Moreover, she emphasised that it was possible to be spiritual without being religious. Her approach to the concept might have two implications. In the former instance, it might be argued that not using the word spirituality in daily language symbolizes the weakening and gradual disappearance of the power of religion to govern people's lives accompanied with the impacts of modernisation and secularisation, while in the latter case; the rejection of religion is the issue. However, the findings also revealed that even though the participants hardly or never used the word spirituality, they had an idea of what it might mean and they could define it clearly. They did not use the word in the first part of the interviews about the positive and negative life events; however, the definitions of spirituality they offered in the second part of the interviews indicated that spirituality played an important role in their lives. These subjects used another terminology instead of referring to the word spirituality itself in their discourses, willingly or unwillingly. They used other statements such as 'I am trying to have a sincere communication with God' and 'I am trying to help people' (which were also their definitions and descriptions of spirituality) while they were talking about negative and positive life events instead of using the word spirituality.

Again, the rare use of a word that is mainly associated with religion in a culture might show that people do not refer to religion very often in daily life. The participants' feedback at the end of the interviews once more emphasized the neglect and lack of the usage of this word in daily life, and its drawbacks. The participants also believed that spirituality was not put on the agenda or did not come into question in daily lives of other people, just like themselves. This feedback might suggest that these young adults are surrounded by mainly worldly affairs that kept them busy in a gradually changing Turkey; in fact, some participants highlighted that they cannot focus on spiritual dimension in their lives since they are busy with worldly matters. This might affect their thinking and perspectives on issues. Being away from spiritual matters might make them feel uncomfortable, and they only become aware of this when they

are made to talk about these topics. Again, it might be argued that when something is missing in thought, it is missed in speech and daily language as well.

The results of a study with a different population which matches the findings of our investigation show that the concept of spirituality is not popular in a Nordic context (Stifoss-Hanssen, 1999). Similarly, the findings of another research conducted by Gibson (2014) which examined experiences of spirituality in New Zealand revealed that some of the subjects recognized spirituality as a seldom-discussed topic in public. Another study investigated by Ubani and Tirri (2006) on how Finnish pre-adolescents perceived religion and spirituality seem to be consistent with the findings of our study. Accordingly, they asked 12 to 13-year old Grade 6 pupils to write down their definitions of spirituality and religion. The results of their study show that their subjects did not use spirituality very often in everyday language. Moreover, in this study, the 10 most common expressions concerning spirituality were 'spirit,' 'spiral,' 'spirit-movie,' 'devotional life,' 'yoga,' 'Latin word,' 'rituals,' 'spiritual world,' 'Spiritism,' and 'strange word'. In addition, they stated that these words "were all derived from the Latin word *spiritualitas* that refers to all aspects of life that is somehow connected with the spirit of God," (p. 363). Therefore, there is a difference between the findings of this study and ours, which is none of our participants associated spirituality with Spiritism, spiral, and yoga.

As discussed in the literature review, the term spirituality is embraced by both religious and non-religious people in the West, and it can be explained either in relation to religion or without a religious content. Likewise, the findings of our research showed that the subjects understood and explained the concept in both contexts. There is a strong (positive and negative) connection between spirituality and religion, and thus some participants perceived it as a religious phenomenon, yet others did not associate it with religion. For the subjects, spirituality is a term whose meaning is ultimately linked to religion, for better or worse. The reason for this is that spirituality is understood and explained either through religion or through rejection of its connection with religion, or as a reaction to religion. At this point, it is important to ask why people express their ideas in a relational/rejectionist way. The social change in the Turkish society accompanied with the process of secularisation (see Chapter 3 for an in-depth discussion) is believed to be one of the reasons for the different conceptualisations of spirituality as explained earlier. Another reason for this might lie in the negative and positive experiences of religion of the subjects of this research.

Negative (religious) experiences might lead to alienation from religion. These experiences may be related to personal problems in life, the existence of hunger, poverty, and wars, which make people question God's existence, His wrath, whether He sends these problems to earth and lets human beings struggle, or whether He does not help people to cope with these issues. At times when they ask God for help and think that they were not heard or answered they can get resentful or angry with Him and think that His existence is redundant, and therefore, in some cases, they reject Him. One psychology student held God responsible for all trouble and injustice in the world, such as illnesses. She blamed Him for being the cause of all human sufferings. Such negative experiences might make people tend to avoid religion in their lives and they might not prefer using the word spirituality since it is believed to be a religious word.

Another cause of negative religious experience might be inadequate religious education or wrong information about religious matters. This might include, for example, religious beliefs and rituals that are not understood properly, or that do not go beyond imitation, or practising religion, performing all formal physical rituals in detail, yet forgetting or ignoring the spiritual aspect, namely practising without feeling it. These causes might also alienate people from spirituality. While people may become strongly affiliated to religion and become devout adherents, they may miss the spiritual aspect. As one participant stated, 'praying spiritually and feeling it is spirituality; if we called religion or religious practices spirituality, then spirituality would be an empty phenomenon'. Accordingly, there is something missing in a ritual if it is not performed spiritually. Therefore, it might be argued that spirituality might exist without religion; however, it is hard to become a devout religious person without being spiritual.

The findings of this research also, interestingly, revealed that some subjects think that some people who claim that they are religious or who show people that they are practising religion neglect the social dimension of religion. This situation also makes the participants avoid using the word spirituality since it is regarded as a religious concept and religious people are not interested in the social dimension of life spiritually. It is argued by the interviewees that these people do not care about morality, human rights, or the environment, and they fulfil bodily practices of religion such as prayer and fasting. However, they are not interested in other religious duties, such as alms giving, politeness, etc. These attitudes have the potential to cause prejudice against religious people in general and to religion itself. This, therefore, might be another cause of negative religious experience. One participant stated that

such people affected her in a negative way; and played an important role in making her a non-religious person, even a non-believer. Whatever the cause is, negative religious experience might disappoint people and lead them to separate spirituality from religion. On the other hand, they might embrace the word spirituality even though its earlier usage is related to traditional religion. The reason for still embracing it instead of finding or creating another word could be that this word speaks to the inner world of each individual and it does not belong to a specific group or community.

As mentioned earlier, this research is based on the perceptions of university students from the departments of Theology and Psychology due to a high possibility that students in these departments have come across the concept of spirituality during their university education. In short, these two groups of students had the highest potential to learn about spirituality in their modules among all departments. The education system in the departments of Psychology is very similar to the education system in the West. Nonetheless, it is worth explaining the education system in the departments of Theology in Turkey before heading up to the frequency of the use of the word spirituality at university. Even though the institutions and curriculum of higher education in Turkey have been organized according to the higher education system in the Western world, the educational approach in the departments of Theology in Turkey is slightly different.

The program/department of Theology in Turkey, namely *Ilahiyat*, is similar to the departments of Theology in the West in terms of its main outlook. However, the departments in Turkey accommodate their own traditional contents. In the departments of *Ilahiyat*, purely philosophical and theological disciplines are somewhat neglected when compared with their counterparts in the West (yet this situation has been gradually changing over the last couple of decades). Interpretation of the Qur'an and Hadis (the Prophet Muhammad's sayings), language education including Arabic and Persian, and historical studies particularly on the Prophet Muhammed's life and the history of Islam constitute the biggest part of the programme. Even though modules such as history of philosophy, Islamic philosophy, psychology, and sociology (which can be counted under philosophical sciences) take part in the curriculum, their role in an *Ilahiyat* student's learning remains ultimately peripheral. Moreover, tensions between two different educational disciplines (traditional and philosophical) can be quite high, and more often teachers as well as students are involved. Although this does not mean that an *Ilahiyat* student's agenda is invariably divided between the two, the hints of the above-mentioned strife are frequently all too evident. In other words,

the critical tools employed by the *Ilahiyat* scholarly circles often do not correspond to the rigour and scrutiny of traditional western critical approaches, whose claim for universality is sometimes easily dismissed. Instead, traditional Islamic *'ilm* (learning, science) is widely regarded as a source for more contextual and productive critical approaches. This is why an *Ilahiyat* student's simple efforts of reasoning and explanation are more likely to be peculiarly traditional. As will be discussed in the following sections on the relationship between spirituality and religion, the perception of spirituality among the students of two departments (Theology/*Ilahiyat* and Psychology) will be excellent examples to prove the difference. However, contrary to expectations that theology students perceive spirituality just in a religious framework, two students from the department of Theology, surprisingly and interestingly, noted that spirituality could not be limited to religion.

One of the most interesting findings of our study is that, as mentioned in the findings chapter, the word spirituality is not popular at university. Only two subjects stated that they encountered the term spirituality in the department of Psychology; it was used very rarely and in a religious context. Moreover, other two students from the same department noted their worry about the lecturers' negative attitudes towards the spiritual and religious matters and hindrance of spirituality in their discourses. They reported that there have been incidents where some lecturers tease students because of their spiritual and religious beliefs and practices. These findings support the literature on negative approach to religion in Turkey (Hayta, 2000; Cuceloglu, 2009; Mert, 2008). Accordingly, some Turkish social scientists, scholars, and researchers remain distant from religion and religious values in this country. Moreover, they adopt a hostile attitude and approach to religion. This approach is more apparent in the field of psychology (Hayta, 2000)[60]. Even though there has been a slight change in this negativity recently, prejudice against religion still continues (Cuceloglu, 2009). In fact, an interesting finding of our study shows that some academicians from the departments of Theology in Turkey have done almost all of the studies on the relationship between religion and mental health. This single-minded viewpoint, instead of the union of scholars from different backgrounds such as medicine, psychology, psychiatry, and theology is a barrier to successful contributions and progress in science. Furthermore, this is one of the indicators of the avoidance of religious and spiritual topics in science in Turkey. However,

60 In order to find out more about the historical background of Turkish social scientists negative approach to religion and religious thought see MERT, N. (2008). Turkiye'de sosyal bilimlerin dine bakisi, pp. 96-102. In *Sosyal Bilimleri Yeniden Dusunmek Yeni Bir Kavrayisa Dogru*. Metis Kitap: Istanbul.

there are recent signs of progress in embracing spirituality in academia in the country. First, the inaugural National Psychology of Religion and Spiritual Care Workshop was organized in 2012. Then, in 2015, the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Religious Affairs signed a protocol regarding collaboration in providing spiritual care at hospitals. The previous research and literature on the topic in both Europe and the United States have been studied prior to the signing of the protocol. Accordingly, it was decided that spiritual care was going to be given to patients and their relatives who requested it in public hospitals in Turkey. Several themes will be covered in spiritual care, such as patience, contemplation, belief in predestination, and prayer. Twenty religious commissaries who are alumni from the departments of Theology that were chosen by the Ministry of Religious Affairs were trained in psychology of religion, pastoral psychology, religious and spiritual care, and communication skills with the patients and their relatives for five weeks in 2015 (*Hastanelerde manevi destek hizmeti*). However, the idea of such a training system and service received negative reaction from the trade union of Public Employees in Health and Social Services (SES), Turkish Medical Association (TTB), and the Association of Psychologists for Social Solidarity (TODAP). Another progress in academia is that annual National Symposiums of Psychology of Spirituality have been organized since 2013. Finally, first International Congress on Religious-spiritual Counselling and Care was organized in 2016.

Two participants of our study emphasized the disadvantages of dismissing spirituality in both the education system and training. Furthermore, all of the interviewees complained about the lack of spiritual environment in their universities. In fact, spirituality and spiritual care are new concepts in Turkish literature (Celik, et al., 2014). The lack of the usage of the concept at university might reflect the disinterest in this area and the limited number of studies conducted in the field of health care in Turkey within this framework. In addition, the findings of a recent research on spirituality in psychotherapy settings conducted by Eksi and colleagues (2016) show a similar fashion with the findings of our study. They conducted interviews with eight Turkish psychological counsellors on the integration of spirituality and psychotherapy. The findings indicate that none of their subjects received counselling training programs covering the notion of spirituality during their undergraduate and postgraduate education. In addition, their participants reported that they did not read any articles or books about spirituality. Some participants criticised the education system and curriculum just as the participants of our study did. On the other hand, some subjects thought that spirituality should not be included in the curriculum due to the current social structure and conditions in Turkey,

and some suggested that only non-religious spirituality should be included in the education programs (Eksi, et al., 2016). Likewise, Karairmak (2004) states that spirituality and the spiritual dimension of human being is not included in the curriculum in the fields of counselling and psychotherapy at universities in Turkey. She argues that spirituality should be taught at universities as a distinct phenomenon, which is not associated with religion.

The infrequent usage of the word spirituality in both departments might be explained by the effect of the positivist education system in Turkey. Graduates from both departments can be expected to work in the service sector as therapists, counsellors, caregivers, or clerics. Thus, these graduates should be able to provide spiritual care for the individuals and patients when in need or when it is asked for. Moreover, the graduates will presumably be educators and academics at every stage of the education system; therefore, they should be able to teach this topic at university. In each case, they will be in service of the community and will play a significant role in society. Graduating from university and beginning work without being enlightened on a subject that is relevant to the essence of human beings and without gaining the ability of considering issues from different perspectives have a potential to cause tension in relationships with people and in their service. It might be also argued that the lack of usage of the word spirituality in both departments leads to a neglect in academic research and medical application. A number of Turkish scholars highlight the small numbers of research and inadequacy of training on spirituality, spiritual care, and spiritual healing (Ergul & Bayik, 2007; Yilmaz & Okyay, 2009; Cetinkaya, et al., 2013; Celik et al., 2014; Kasapoglu, 2015; Kavas & Kavas, 2015). They emphasise the importance of these issues and state that spiritual care of patients is neglected, and therefore, the patients are not provided a holistic care (Kostak et al., 2010; Celik et al., 2014).

Surprisingly, the results of our study indicate that even though spirituality is mainly perceived as a universal and unique private and/or social experience, ‘to be a spiritual person’ is not a common expression in Turkish, for the majority of the subjects of this research. Only three subjects noted that people might be defined as spiritual. Many participants did not prefer defining a person as spiritual, however, they embraced a traditional approach using other words instead of using spirituality, and they noted that several other options might be referred to in order to define someone as spiritual (see Chapter 6 for details). The majority of the subjects offered adjectives based on the meaning they attributed to the concept of spirituality. For example, one participant who defined spirituality as self-discovery and self-awareness stated that she defines a person as ‘he or she is self-conscious’, instead of stating that ‘he or

she is a spiritual person'. Another participant who believed that spirituality is associated with religion stated that he defines a person as being faithful, religious, and/or Muslim instead of asserting that he or she is a spiritual person. In addition, it is found that some participants defined a spiritual person as stating that his/her spirituality is strong or weak.

It is understood from the study that our participants might easily define themselves or others as religious, or practising religion, or non-religious, or non-practising, or believer or non-believer. However, they might not define people as spiritual; indeed they abstained from doing so. This finding once again shows that the interviewees had a clear vision of the word and were capable of defining it very well, although they did not use the word spirituality in their daily lives very often.

7.4.2 Spirituality as a coping method and resource of good feelings and emotions

As mentioned earlier, the majority of the interviewees did not refer to the concept of spirituality very often in the first part of the interviews, when they were asked some questions about positive and negative life events they went through in order to explore if spirituality was a way of coping for them (see Chapter 6 for more details). The results of this study, interestingly, show that only two participants used to the word spirituality while they were talking about how they coped with difficulties, and how they reacted to happiness. Moreover, again, as stated in the previous section, the majority of the participants do not use the word spirituality in everyday language. However, surprisingly, the second part of the interviews revealed that even though the participants did not use the word spirituality while talking about their experiences, their understandings of it was very important in their lives and it was a way of coping and resource of good feelings and emotions for the subjects. For instance, some noted that they coped with difficulties by turning to God when they were in trouble; they sought help from Him, they believed in Him, took refuge in Him, and prayed to Him, yet they did not name it as spirituality in their narratives and explanations. However, while defining spirituality they referred to belief in God, the relationship with Him, closeness to Him, being thankful to Him, and praying to Him. Even though the participants did not use the word spirituality while recounting their stories, spirituality appeared in hard times, such as, while experiencing negative life events, being under trouble, confronting an obstacle, loss of a close relative, loss of property in earthquakes or major disasters, in times of sorrow or despair, and when control is lost. The explanations of the participants showed that people turned to

spirituality in their own ways. Therefore, one of the most important findings of our research is that in the eyes of the majority of the subjects, the spiritual awareness of a person plays a significant part in one's coping apparatus. Moreover, some participants thought that happy life events were a gift from God and they were thankful to Him, yet again, they did not mention and did not use the word spirituality when they talked about such experiences, except one person. As previously highlighted, the majority of the participants stated that they only rarely used the word spirituality. This situation might explain why the participants did not name coping with God or seeking help from Him as spirituality or referring to the word spirituality while talking about happy moments.

Spirituality is considered as an effective coping strategy in literature (Pargament, 1999). Times of sorrow, pain, and disappointment make people think in deeper and more reflective ways (Engebretson, 2004). The findings of our research are in accord with recent studies indicating that Turkish people cope with illness through spirituality along with medical treatment (Bostanci-Dastan & Buzlu, 2010; Adana, 2006; Asti, et al., 2005), and spirituality is helpful for Turkish people in difficult times, such as during the loss of a loved one or while having an existential crisis (Oz, 2004). Our research revealed that, except for one subject, whether people practise religion or not, they turn to God in one way or another in difficult times. For instance, one participant stated that she does not worry herself with problems since she believes that the problems are temporary, she seeks refuge in God, and prays, and she believes that God is with her at all times. These results are also in line with those of previous studies. For example, Krumrei & Rosmarin (2012) state that highly challenging life events and the discomfort created by these situations may lead people to turn to God, or to pursue new spiritual ways to bear sufferings. Moreover, Pargament (2007) claims that spirituality, as well as religion, faith, and prayer, is a main source of support and a critical coping method with adversity, important problems, crisis, and serious mental disorders for many people in times of stress. Pargament (2007) states,

> Illness, accident, interpersonal conflicts, divorce, layoffs, and death are more than 'significant life events'. They raise profound and disturbing questions about our place and purpose in the world; they point to the limits of our powers, and they underscore our finitude. These are matters of 'ultimate anxiety': the anxiety of faith and death, the anxiety of emptiness and meaninglessness, and the anxiety of guilt and condemnation. These deep questions seem to call for a spiritual response. (p. 11)

Such events might affect people physically, emotionally, and spiritually in a negative way. In addition, they might also lead to spiritual growth of humankind (Pargamnet, 2007,

98). Cappellen and colleagues (2013) asserts, "Spirituality should be understood not only as a coping strategy, but also as an upward spiralling pathway to and from self-transcendent positive emotions" (p. 3). Engebretson (2004) also found that the responses of the subjects often showed that "times of loss, sorrow, pain and disappointment were times that deeper, more reflective thinking occurred" (p. 270). Similarly, some participants of our study reported that difficult life experiences lead people to contemplate the hard times they experience and the reasons behind them, and to question life, their existence, and purpose and meaning in life. While one subject was asking herself unsettling questions because of her father's cancer, such as "Why is this happening to me?" "What is the cause of this illness?" and "Is it my fault?" in fact, she was trying to find an ultimate meaning in her life. Her situation reminds us of Frankl's argument which is "man is not destroyed by suffering; he is destroyed by suffering without meaning" (Frankl, 1984, 30). Asking existential questions and turning to spirituality led this participant to reflect and understand the situation better and deal with the problem, as Puchalski (2001) notes "when people are challenged by something like a serious illness or loss, they frequently turn to spiritual values to help them cope with or understand their illness or loss" (p. 353). Murray and Zentner (1989) define spirituality as:

> A quality that goes beyond religious affiliation, that strives for inspiration, reverence, awe, meaning and purpose, even in those who do not believe in God. The spiritual dimension tries to be in harmony with the universe, and strives for answers about the infinite, and comes into focus when the person faces emotional stress, physical illness, or death. (p. 259)

Pargament (2007) explains several conservational methods of spiritual coping, which help people cope with challenges, and all of which requires "a book of its own."[61] He categorises these methods as:

> (1) Benevolent spiritual reappraisals: Redefining a stressor through religion or spirituality as potentially beneficial (2) Seeking spiritual support: Searching for love and care from the sacred (3) Seeking support from clergy/congregation members: Seeking love and care from clergy and congregation members (4) Seeking spiritual connection: Searching for a sense of connectedness with transcendent or immanent forces (5) Spiritual helping: Attempting to provide spiritual support to others (6) Collaborative spiritual coping: Seeking a partnership with the divine in problem solving (7) Spiritual purification: Searching for spiritual cleansing through ritual. (p. 100)

The comments and statements of our interviewees, such as 'God knows the best for us', 'whatever we experienced is for our own good', or 'everything we live through is a test

[61] For detailed information about the methods of spiritual coping, see Pargament, K. I. (1997) The psychology of religion and coping: theory, research, practise. New York: Guilford Press.

from God' indicate that they embraced the majority of these methods to sustain themselves spiritually. Many participants asked existential questions to understand what was happening to them and the reasons for the challenge in the midst of a crisis, then, they redefined the challenges through religion and/or spirituality, as Pargament (2007) stated, mostly as a test and beneficial. They thought that God loved them and cared for them, just as He cares for all creatures (the Qur'an, 2: 268), and He knew everything (the Qur'an, 57: 3) and the best for them, and they asked for help from Him (the Qur'an, 1: 5). In addition, they worked together with God to find a way to solve their problems. Finally, the majority of them were inclined towards religious practices, such as worship and prayer. They never blamed God for the troubles they experienced.

Furthermore, the viewpoints of the subjects show some hints of their firm devotion to God, sincere submission to the will of God, avoiding disobedience, and the virtue of *sabr* (patience) in Islam. As one participant pointed out it is proclaimed in the Qur'an that people are tested with good (blessings) and evil (calamities) (the Qur'an, 7: 168), and what is expected from the human beings is that they remember God in all instances of life, in times of both happiness and sorrow. The results of our research show that the majority of the subjects remember God in both difficult and happy times; they acknowledge difficulties beyond their control, they interpret them as a test; they devote themselves to God, and try to be patient. As Pargament & Mahoney (2002) state; "There are aspects of our lives that are beyond our control. […] In spirituality, however, we can find ways to understand and deal with our fundamental human insufficiency, the fact that there are limits to our control" (Pargament & Mahoney, 2002, 655), our subjects accept that their control is limited and they turn to spirituality in order to cope with problems. Moreover, the majority of them regarded good things in their life as a grace from God, so they turn to Him again in order to thank for the beauties in their lives.

In brief, the importance of spiritualty revealed itself as being a way of coping and a resource of good feelings and emotions for the subjects of our study. It is found that negative and positive life experiences might lead people to spirituality, it might also increase their spirituality, and as a result, spirituality becomes a way of coping for this group and a resource of good feelings and emotions. Even though the subjects of our research did not mention spirituality clearly while talking about the positive and negative life events, their coping strategies, and their reactions to these events, the majority of them turn to God to ask His help, to thank Him and/or just to find peace in their communication with Him. Another

interesting and important finding of our study is that none of the participants talked about spirituality as bringing emotional distress or any other negative physical or mental health outcomes. They did not associate spirituality with destructiveness in life. This finding is contrary to that of Cetinkaya and colleagues (2007) and Sulu (2006) who claim that spiritual experience may cause spiritual pain, spiritual anger, spiritual anxiety, spiritual loss, spiritual guilt, spiritual alienation, and such. Spirituality is important for the participants because it is a coping resource, which they use in times of adversity, and it is a resource of good feelings and emotions. However, it can also be argued that it is in the nature of spirituality that it is used as a coping resource and a resource of good feelings and emotions. This brings us to the next section, which deals with the nature of spirituality as conceived by our subjects.

7.5 The nature of spirituality in Turkey today

7.5.1 Spirituality as a universal phenomenon

One of the most important findings of our study is that the majority of the subjects interpreted spirituality as a universal, personal, and unique phenomenon. In addition, they stated that everyone's conception and perception of spirituality might be different form each other's. The majority of the participants believed that everyone could experience spirituality; with one exception, who thought that only Muslims could experience spirituality if they practise Islam precisely. This finding shows that spirituality is widely regarded as a shared ground and universal human attribute for subjects and it widely applies to all humankind. It might be understood from this finding that these subjects do not see the concept of spirituality as belonging to some particular group or set of beliefs; but rather, spirituality is perceived as a universal human possession, which does not yield any sort of appropriation. Moreover, they noted that even though people define the term with the same words; their understanding of the words that they use to describe spirituality might also be different and unique.

Regarding spirituality as a universal human experience might be considered as an indicator of tolerance among these students, since they are open to new ideas and diversity. On the contrary, for some adults and the elderly people, it is harder to be open-minded and to accept new ideas; therefore, they cannot tolerate others/outsiders, who do not share similar opinions and ideologies. The reason for being tolerant might be given an account of the influence of modernisation in Turkey on younger people, specifically university students, who

experience this process more directly than older age groups. Ertit (2015) highlights the situation that the new generation seems to be more tolerant than older people in Turkey. In addition, Ciftci's (2005) study on generation gap argues that there has been a great difference in values, behaviours, and attitudes between younger and older generation in the process of westernisation of Turkey.

The finding of our research is consistent with Culliford's suggestion that all human beings are regarded as spiritual beings and they have the potential to experience spirituality whether they do not acknowledge it and cannot identify what they experience. They can engage in spiritual practices which are "giving them meaning and adding to a sense of purpose, a feeling of belonging, of working towards being whole, living wholesome lives and being their true selves", yet they cannot name it (Culliford, 2012, 220). In a similar fashion, Vaillant (2013) states, "like breathing, our spirituality is common to us all" (p. 592). Correspondingly, the findings of the study conducted by McSherry & Jamieson (2013) that examined nurses' understandings of spirituality and spiritual care show that for most of the respondents spirituality was

> The essence of the individual, something universal linked with identity and personhood as expressed simply in the following: It's the essence everybody has that makes them who they are. (p. 3175)

Likewise, Egan and co-authors (2011) report that one participant in their research expressed that spirituality is a personal term and everybody has it. Similarly, Rose (2001) conducted a qualitative study on the understandings of spirituality and what is entailed by the term among the exemplars from five major world religions. Six of the ten subjects gave a positive response to the question of whether all people experienced spirituality. The Muslim participants in the research believed that most people had a similar view of spirituality and there was a great similarity in the understandings of spirituality in every tradition. This finding indicates the universality of the concept of spirituality and our research echoes the result of this study, however, some subjects of our study insisted on the necessity of practising religion, in this case Islam, in order to be a spiritual person and to experience spirituality.

The finding of our study which indicates that the majority of our subjects regard spirituality as inherent in everybody is in line with Vaillant's suggestion (2013), which is spirituality being "biologically hard wired in us all" (p. 590). Hay and co-authors (2006) consider spirituality as "an inbuilt feature of the human species that develops from the beginning of individual's life (or not) depending on [prevailing] conditions" (p. 48).

Moreover, Tanyi (2002) reviewed literature on spirituality through dictionaries and scholarly articles and books, which investigated and provided the meaning of spirituality, and found that spirituality is regarded as an inherent component of being human in literature.

7.5.2 Spirituality as both a private and social phenomenon

The findings of our study indicate that spirituality might be considered in three categories; a private, personal, internalized dimension covering aspects related to beliefs, mood, feelings, and deep thinking; a social externalized dimension in terms of social and moral perspectives; and finally, a religious dimension. According to the meanings our subjects attributed to the term (explained in Chapter 6), both internalized and externalized dimensions might have religious motivation or vice versa. It is found that relationship was very important for all of the participants and the majority of them perceived spirituality as both a personal and social experience. The results of our study parallel previous studies, which indicate that individuals might understand spirituality both in terms of inward and outward aspects. For instance, Harris & Moran (1998) point out that spirituality is a personal term; however, they also regard it as unavoidably communal. Furthermore, Gibson (2014)'s research findings show that spirituality has both dimensions:

> All participants described spirituality as having an internalized dimension in terms of beliefs, values and attitudes and an externalized application pertaining to socially and morally responsible behaviour. All participants describing their sense-making of spirituality in terms of it being an innate human dimension and something socially constructed, being shaped and re-shaped through family and personal life experiences. (p. 526)

Nonetheless, the literature on contemporary spirituality makes a distinction between spirituality as being personal, and religion as being social (see Chapter 2 for an in-depth discussion). For example, Day (1994) reports one of the interviewee's thoughts in her own words:

> Religion is organized, dogmatic, and social. Spiritual is individual, intimate, personal. Religion tells you what is good or true and tells you who is favoured and who is not. It operates in fixed categories. Spirituality is developed. You have to work hard at it and to be conscious about it and take time for it. (p. 163)

In a similar manner, Ho & Ho (2007) considers spirituality as being universal, ecumenical, internal, and private.

Another interesting finding of our study is that one subject regards spirituality as just a social phenomenon not an individual one. This participant associates spirituality only with strong relationships whose foundations are human qualities, such as love, respect, and honesty. This person described spiritual place as where we communicate with someone and the spiritual time as the moment when we communicate with someone; therefore, spirituality is, for him, all about relationships between people, in short, he brought only a social explanation to his understanding of the concept of spirituality. The three categories mentioned above (private, social, and religious) will be discussed in detail later on in this chapter.

7.5.3 Spirituality as a changing phenomenon

Another important finding of our study is that some participants talked about the possibility of changes in spirituality over time, experiencing a decline or an increase in the spiritual experience or in the level of spirituality. In other words, they referred to becoming less spiritual or more spiritual even though they were not asked about it (see Chapter 6 for detailed information). Two subjects acknowledged that it is one's own responsibility to improve his/her spirituality; otherwise, it could be neglected, and therefore, it could decrease. Some participants even blamed their own actions as the cause of decline in their spirituality. They reported that the reason for that was living 'a careless life' without paying attention to the spiritual dimension in a secular world of money and aging. While growing up and getting older, people are 'possessed by the worldly concerns and pursuits, and face bitter truths of life, such as the necessity of the battle for survival and the need for money, hence they might drift apart from childhood sincerity'. In this turmoil of life, they might be compelled to neglect seeing spiritual elements and to lose the balance between the spiritual and the profane. The time and effort needed for spirituality might be lessened because they seek success and aim at gaining material profits. They are surrounded and preoccupied by worldly affairs, and therefore, everyday matters distract them.

In case of religiously oriented subjects, it might be argued that they are evidently concerned about the way their priorities are shifting from living for the sake of God to worldly affairs. Even though they know that this world is temporary and just a means to achieve success for the afterlife (the Qur'an, 29: 64[62]; the Qur'an, 102: 1-2[63]; the Qur'an, 64:

[62] "What is the life of this world but amusement and play? But verily the Home in the Hereafter, -that is life indeed, if they but knew." (Qur'an, 29:64)

15[64]), they arguably look like they embrace worldly matters as a priority to live and they strive for this world. Therefore, they are compelled to work hard and spend more time and effort in order to obtain more profits that are material, and to live a better life. In short, 'they make this world their main purpose in life'. Therefore, the fact that they choose to express this strife in their everyday lives as a decline in their spiritual character is highly indicative of their conceptualisation of spirituality as something self-cultivated rather than an objective possession, which is 'just there'. This situation is succinctly put forward by an interviewee who refer to a prophesy of the Prophet Muhammed which goes on to say that Muslims will love and care about the world more than they do about God (Allah) and the afterlife. In addition, the same participant quotes a verse from the Qur'an on the same subject: "You prefer the life of this world, while the hereafter is better and that which remains" (the Qur'an, 87: 16-17). In short, it is evident that this subject in particular (and others who appeal to religion for self-evaluation in general) considers spirituality as an essential part of one's religious commitment, thus equates the growth in spirituality with increasing devoutness and willingness to abide by God's law. Along these lines, we can safely state that spirituality in this context is regarded as an aspect of inner religiousness as opposed to formal adherence to a religion, and is subject to personal cultivation and betterment.

This interpretation becomes even more relevant when we turn to some other testimonies, which aim at clarification of spiritual growth or decline. For instance, as one participant noted, learning religion (Islam) from its main source, the Qur'an, promoted his spirituality; he then emphasized that becoming more religious might enhance spirituality. Furthermore, an interesting finding of our study shows that experiencing awe and joy in nature, listening to sui generis songs, watching a film, engaging in prosocial behaviours, anything that comes to mind might enhance spirituality. Many of the subjects reported that experiencing bad events lead people to spirituality or enhances their spirituality, especially when there is nobody to turn to. This tendency might arguably be based on the thought that you might turn to your Lord at times when you do not have your friends, family, or basically anyone to talk to about your feelings, experiences, and sorrows. A person needs someone or something to turn to one way or another. When you do not have any other options, you feel

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[63] Rivalry in worldly increase distracts you (from the remembrance of God/ from the more serious things), until you come to the graves." (Qur'an, 102: 1-2)

[64] Your wealth and your children are but a trial, and God has with Him a great reward." (Qur'an, 64: 15)

closer to the transcendent being and you make a stronger communication with Him, which increases your spirituality. In fact, Pargament (2007) emphasised the importance of spirituality for people with less support from their environment, he states, “Spiritual coping appears to be particularly helpful to people with fewer personal and social resources facing more trying situations” (p. 108). The findings of our study are in line with the results of previous research. There are a number of studies indicating the influence of negative and positive emotions on increase in spirituality. It is claimed that negative events and emotions such as loss of a loved one might increase spirituality (Hood, Hill & Spilka, 2009). Furthermore, Saroglou (2008) argues that positive events and emotions (such as transient self-transcendence; awe and elevation) as well as negative events and emotions promote spirituality. Similarly, Cappellen and colleagues (2013) stated that positive emotions “or at least some of them may be conducive of higher spirituality” (p. 4); they found out that these emotions “generate an upward spiral toward greater spirituality” and increased their participants’ spirituality, for both religious and especially non-religious participants (p. 27). Moreover, whether regarded as a spiritual practice or not, meditation and contemplation enhances spirituality (Benson & Stark, 1996).

7.5.4 Spirituality as a non-material phenomenon

The findings of our study indicate that spirituality is also considered as a non-material phenomenon, an intangible and abstract concept, ‘which cannot be held by hands, cannot be experienced through five senses and money cannot by it’. Similarly, Kurtz and Ketcham (1993) claim that spirituality can be comprehended and used for the nonmaterial realm, in contrast to materialism. However, Elkins (1998) argues that the contemporary usage of the word spirituality, which is in contrast to religion, is more common than its usage as opposed to materialism. The themes emerged from the findings of our research show that spirituality is understood in terms of religion, in terms of being untethered from religion, and all have the same feature, which is their non-materialistic dimension; although only three subjects noted they used spirituality and spiritual in contrast to material. As Elkins (1998) highlights, the understanding of spirituality being unrelated to religion is more common among the participants’ definitions of the concept in the current study.

7.6 The relationship between spirituality and religion in Turkey today

The overall themes emerged from the findings of this study were: connectedness within the self, self-discovery and self-awareness, inner voice, nourishment of the soul, mindfulness, contemplation of the existence and aims in life, contemplation and thinking deeply on any subject, , making events and experiences meaningful, meaning and purpose in life, worldview, way of life, ideology and mission in life, belief, state of mind, mood, feelings and emotions, relationship with other people, being honest, sincere, and conscientious, and feeling peace in these relationships, being a good person and doing good deeds, developing empathy with others and being of service to others, morality and values, relationship with the environment, the universe, with the world, with nature, a person's relationship with God, religious belief, fulfilling religious duties such as *salat*, prayer, being thankful and testifying to God, fasting, almsgiving, and to read and understand the Qur'an, the sayings of prophets and saints, and belief in the afterlife (see Chapter 6 for detailed information about the findings).

Defining spirituality is claimed to be a difficult task in literature as discussed in Chapter 2; however, the subjects of our research were successful at providing insightful definitions and descriptions of the concept and even clarified the difference between the two terms, spirituality/*maneviyat* and religion/*din*. This is the most important finding of our study, which aimed at exploring the perceptions of spirituality in a Turkish context in order to find out whether contemporary western understandings of the term exist in Turkey. The impact of the process of secularisation, westernisation, and modernity on individuals and society was also an important topic of concern in this thesis. Therefore, even though such results have been expected to a certain extent, surprisingly more substantial findings are obtained in this study.

Moreover, as previously mentioned, although the majority of the participants from the department of Theology had a tendency towards understanding, experiencing, and expressing spirituality in a religious framework, two highlighted that they did not perceive spirituality as religion. The minority of the subjects related spirituality to religion and the majority perceived

it outside the borders of religion and made a clear distinction between the two[65]. Accordingly, the relevant findings of the research are grouped into two major categories. The first category emerged from the results, which is spirituality as being associated with religion and formal Islamic practice, is easy to discuss since it is the normal traditional discourse of spirituality. However, the second category, understanding spirituality untethered from religion is similar to the contemporary understandings of spirituality in the Western world and it is new to the Turkish context.

Here, some possible explanations for these interesting results can be provided. First, the findings of our study surprisingly indicate that two psychology students did not identify spirituality with religion even though they reported that they were trying to perform religious practises as much as possible. Regarding the circumstances in the departments of Psychology in Turkey, as explained earlier, these students have a different environment at university compared to the students from the department of Theology. It might be argued that their family background and life-styles are important factors that affect the meanings they attributed to matters and concepts including spirituality. The fact that they defined spirituality without religion, despite not having come across the word at university often, might also be interpreted as the reflection of identities and worldviews, which have been shaped by their social environment, including families and friends, and by what they have learned from them. Therefore, their being receptive to different ideas and being tolerant to diversity might be an expected outcome. It might be argued that their tendency to describe spirituality untethered from religion is understandable; however, it is interesting that two students from the department of Theology also did not relate spirituality to religion. One of them even insisted that spirituality could not be defined by associating it with religion or religious practices, while the other one stated that it might be related to religion but has other dimensions as well.

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[65] This situation reminds us of Rappaport's (1999) conceptualisation as 'deutero-truth". Accordingly, 'deutero-truth term is a shorthand term, which is used for an idea that is important for people, and the meaning of which is assumed to be known by everyone in a particular group or speech community. However, when people are asked to define it in detail in order to seek a precise definition of the word, "meaning might fragment" (Davies, 2009, 2; Davies, 2015, 185). God, democracy, family, love, hope, and trust can also be some examples of a deutero-truth, it is difficult for people to define these words, therefore, opinions over detail might emerge and they might even lead to some division (Davies, 2009). In a similar manner, spirituality might be considered as one of the deutero-truths. Even though the participants of our study were able to define the concept of spirituality precisely, its traditional religious meaning did not emerge in all of the definitions; as Davies (2009) states its meaning fragmented and it is found that spirituality mostly meant different things to different subjects.

These two participants were the only respondents in the department of Theology who had come across the word during their university education. This situation might help explain the reason for their non-religious understandings of the concept. Training leads people to expand their perspectives. Even though they remain in the same environment, in the same community, education opens doors to different worlds and gives them an opportunity to learn many new different ideas. Therefore, these two students from the department of Theology might have learnt different conceptualisations of the concept of spirituality at university, and understood that they could perceive it from a different perspective and their descriptions of spirituality are affected and arguably changed.

Second, these results may be due to meeting new people and discovering what they think about issues and phenomena. This might help people revise their own views and might influence their belief systems. One participant from the department of Psychology thought that spirituality was not related to religion. In fact, she initially believed that spirituality was associated with religion, yet she changed her mind and noted that they are not related concepts and she reported that her postgraduate education in the United States might have led her think the opposite way. She added that she had numerous friends from different backgrounds, cultures, and countries, and she learnt many things from them; therefore, she thought that her views about spirituality might have transformed from being associated with religion to having a different characteristic and being untethered from religion.

Third, another possible explanation for these results may be the lack of adequate and positive experience of religion. For example, one student from the department of Psychology explained her experiences relating to religious encounters, and accordingly, how her perception of religion and spirituality are developed. She stated that she does not relate spirituality with religion. Her views about spirituality are shaped based on her negative experience of religion and of people who claimed to be religious. Having limited and negative experiences for both sides, on the one hand, for religious people not being in contact with nonreligious people, and on the other hand, for nonreligious people not interacting with sincere religious people who also care for others in their relationships, might cause them to have prejudice towards each other. Therefore, this situation might reflect their perceptions of religion and spirituality.

Finally, none of the participants felt any pressure when it comes to talking freely on religious and spiritual issues, or nobody stated that they felt a pressure to live a religious

and/or spiritual life in Turkey. The majority of the subjects even reported their non-religious thoughts and understandings of spirituality clearly in the interviews. Within this context, it might be understood from the results that religion is not be penetrating all domains of life for this group. Especially, since spirituality historically has a religious pattern, and therefore, it has mainly been used as a religious term (see Chapter 2 for a detailed discussion), it might have been expected that the majority of the participants were going to report religious understandings of spirituality. This can be argued at least for university students at the departments of Theology, such as in the sample of this research. However, given that the majority of this sample attributed some non-religious meanings to spirituality, it can be argued that something is changing. Whatever the reasons behind this outcome are, it might be argued that conducting research through interviewing with more people from different social, cultural, political, and religious backgrounds is useful, particularly in the Turkish context. People who define spirituality without binding it to religion, can provide very rich material and various data to shed light on ideas about people's identities and can help researchers use these findings for the benefit of Turkish society in many different fields, such as training people about spirituality and treating patients.

As discussed in Chapter 2, some scholars including Koenig and colleagues (2012) and Salander (2006) do not support the idea of including positive psychological and social states, positive character traits, and personal beliefs in the definitions of spirituality since they believe that this separation causes vagueness and does not provide valid research results. In addition, they define spiritual as "the deeply religious" (Koenig, 2012, 46). Even though it is not possible to disagree with their argument, the findings of our study indicate that the majority of the participants attribute diverse meanings to the concept of spirituality, which are not associated with religion (Figure 5 shows the major relevant themes emerged from the data). These findings are consistent with research claiming that spirituality is not limited to religious context (Worthington, et al., 1996; Zinnbauer, et al. 1999; Geertsma & Cummings, 2004; Hage, et al., 2006; Gill, et al., 2010).

The relationship between spirituality and religion has been subject to a great number of studies, some equating spirituality to religion, and some arguing that spirituality is a wider concept and cannot necessarily be bound to religion, and there have been defenders and critics of both approaches, as broadly discussed in Chapter 2. At this stage, the meanings attributed to the concept of spirituality by the subjects of our study will be discussed in detail, in two

main categories, according to its relationship with religion (Figure 6): (1) Spirituality within religion. (2) Spirituality untethered from religion.

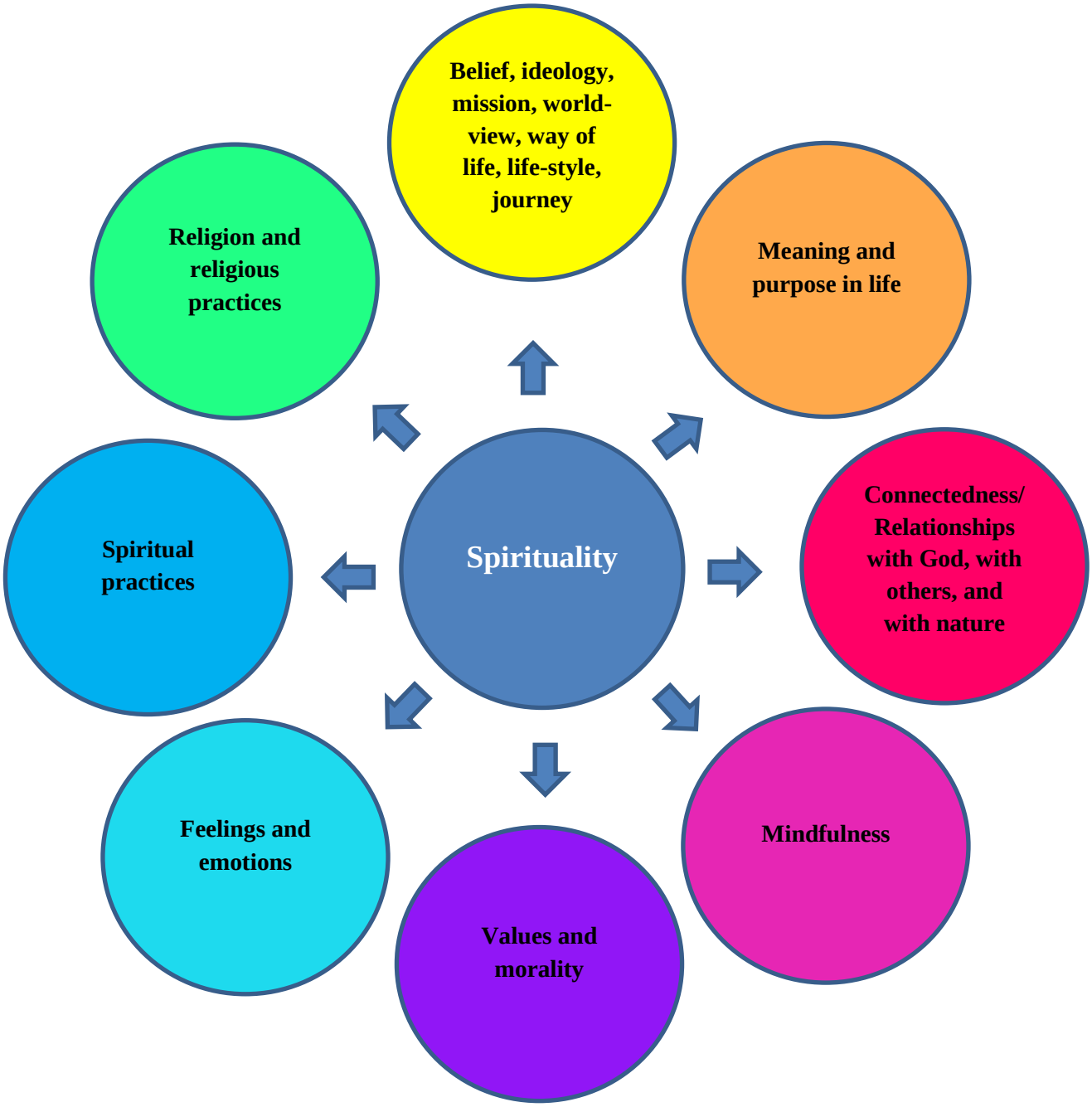


Figure 5. Major themes of Spirituality emerged in the current study

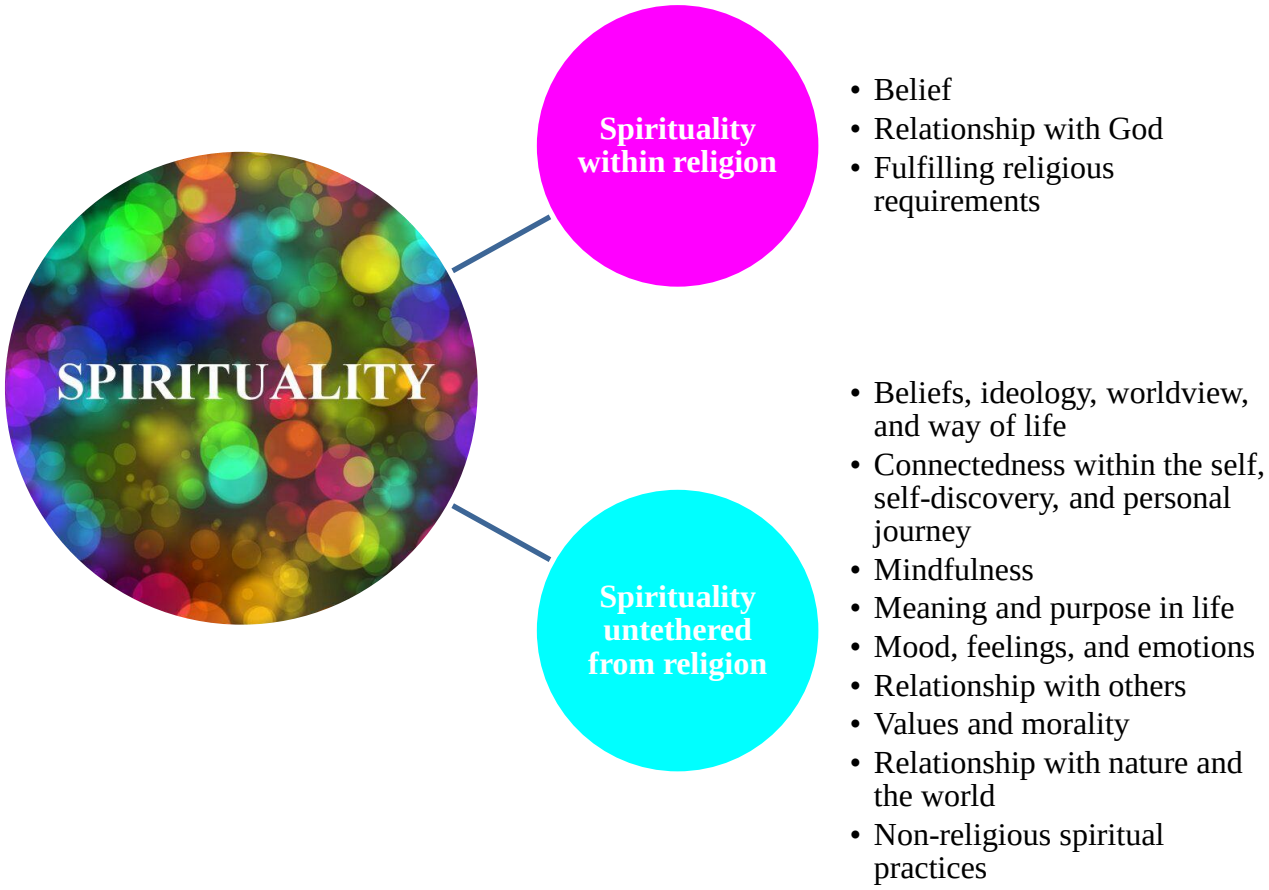


Figure 6. Spirituality within religion and spirituality untethered from religion

7.6.1 Spirituality within religion

Some participants of our study described spirituality as related to religion, which is the traditional religious understanding of spirituality. This finding is consistent with existing studies on the topic, which adopt the traditional discourse and regard the terms spirituality and religion as being synonymous, indistinguishable, interchangeable, intertwined, overlapping, and/or conflated (Moberg, 2010; Streib & Hood, 2008; Damon & Lerner, 2006; Helminiak, 2006; Miller & Thoresen, 2003; Lukoff, et al., 1996). Some subjects defined spirituality as religious belief, belief in God, relationship and sincere communication with Him, fulfilling religious duties such as *salat*, prayer, almsgiving, fasting, and belief in the afterlife. In addition, for the subjects, reaching spirituality and/or strengthening spirituality were achieved through reading the Qur'an, and the life stories of religious leaders and saints. Learning religion, in our case Islam, as well as religious practices was also considered as methods of reaching spirituality. Furthermore, some interviewees stated that even though spirituality is not necessarily associated with religion, religious teachings might motivate people to be spiritual. For example, one participant noted that spirituality means being honest and having strong relationships with people; and he added that God orders people to be perfect in relationships; religion requires this, yet only some people might be successful in doing so. This finding is in line with those of previous studies. For instance, Harris & Moran (1998) claim, "A rediscovery of the spiritual teachings within [the religious traditions] may provide the framework of spirituality that many people today seek" (p. 108). Accordingly, it might be argued that understanding religion and religious wisdom can help people experience spirituality better.

Moreover, Koenig (2012) refers spirituality as a component of religion. He offers that it can be regarded "as a characteristic of deeply religious persons that separates them from those who are only superficially religious" (Koenig, 2012, 38). Relating spirituality to religion has become a part of the accepted ordinary discourse ever since it was first debated in history as discussed in Chapter 2, and it has been mainly used in a religious sense in Turkey as well. This finding, which indicates that spirituality is understood within religion, might be interpreted in terms of upbringing. Children get their first education from their families; therefore, their upbringings along with their environment predominantly shape their viewpoints until they go to primary school, and the influence of these factors on identity continue later on throughout life.

> Our earliest beliefs emerge in the context of family, the micro-culture into which we are born and where the language, values, and ideology that will enable us to survive, function, and reproduce are inculcated. Most of our formative beliefs, about the world, the people in it and our relationships to them, develop unconsciously and shape our most basic sense of identity, who we are and where we belong. These formative beliefs form what philosophers call our 'world-view'. Significant in this process are the cultural and religious beliefs that are passed on through myths and rituals, and that mould our metaphysical beliefs. (Nolan & Holloway, 2014, 14)

Most of the conservative families in Turkey send their children to religious vocational schools after their primary education until they begin university, where they receive a similar education to their family's mentality if they continue their education in the departments of Theology. Hence, their environment usually consists of individuals coming from similar backgrounds and mind-sets. If we consider this general situation in Turkey, not encountering people from different backgrounds might lead them to evaluate issues from a religious perspective, specifically from an Islamic perspective in the Turkish context. Within this framework, four subjects from the department of Theology, who regarded spirituality as a religious concept, limited it to the boundaries of religion. Moreover, interestingly, only one participant from the department of Psychology related spirituality to religion, and although she linked spirituality to religion, she attributed other meanings to the term, despite the fact that she came from a religious family. The different environment this psychology student participated in at university and the education she received in the field of psychology might explain her perception of spirituality, which is, religion can only be one of a number of foundations of spirituality.

Furthermore, Moore (1992) states, "Some people are fortunate in that their childhood tradition is still relevant to them, but others have to search" (p. 212), in this regard, the participants of our study who understands spirituality in a religious context are following a traditional discourse of spirituality, and they relate it to belief, relationship with God and fulfilling religious duties.

7.6.1.1 Belief

Belief is one of the themes emerged in our study. The majority of the participants except the atheist subject emphasized the importance of belief in God in their lives. However, only two of them from the department of Theology referred to the word belief when they

defined the concept of spirituality in a religious sense, even though belief in God and relationship with Him played an important role in the lives of most participants of our study. Furthermore, religious belief helped some participants make sense of their lives and find answers to their existential questions, as mentioned earlier. Similarly, belief as an important element and foundation of spirituality appears in a number of studies. For example, King and colleagues (2014) conducted a qualitative research on psychological constructs related to spiritual development. They named one of the categories that emerged from their data analysis as fidelity. Accordingly, fidelity included commitment to beliefs, worldviews, and values, and its subthemes were beliefs, values, morals, devotion, purpose, and openness. The findings of their research indicate that belief is the main component of spirituality for all of their participants, except one atheist subject. This result parallels the finding of our research related to the theme belief. Similarly, for all of the participants in our study except the atheist student, belief was one of the essential elements of spirituality.

The findings of our study revealed that spirituality is also defined as belief in life after death. Some participants stated that they believe in God who is the Master of the day of Judgement (The Qur'an, 1: 3), who creates from the very beginning and who can restore life after they are resurrected (The Qur'an, 85: 13-14). This religious belief in the afterlife permits "feelings of continuity, of immortality, that attenuate the dread of non-being" (Tobin, et al., 1994, 188). Belief in the afterlife is an important element in most religions, which have different forms of resurrection (Rosenblatt et al., 1976). It might be argued that some subjects find meaning through awareness of the afterlife. Their existential questions lead them to make meaning of their life, which is a journey towards God (The Qur'an, 2: 285) beginning with birth and not ending but transforming shape with death to the hereafter. These subjects believe that their purpose in life is to live a meaningful life in accordance with God's orders and to reach the high(est) level of humanity (*al-insan al-kamil* in Arabic)[66], which is "the person

[66] Human beings constitute *qalb* (heart), *ruh* (spirit, soul, or breath of life), *nafs* (ego, soul, psyche, the person, the self), and body (see Chapter 3 for a detailed discussion). In the Islamic tradition, the ultimate purpose of human beings is to worship God (the Qur'an, 51: 56), doing good deeds (the Qur'an, 67: 2), and to return to God well-pleased and pleasing Him (the Qur'an, 89: 28), which refers to reaching perfection. The human self is "subject to both purification and defilement" (Picken, 2008, 101), as explained in the Qur'an:

> Consider the human self, and how it is formed in accordance with that it is meant to be, and how it is imbued with moral failings as well as with consciousness of God. To a happy state shall indeed attain he who causes this [self] to grow in purity, and truly lost is he who buries it [in darkness] when that most hapless wretch from among them rushed forward [to commit his evil deed] (the Qur'an, 91: 7-12).

who has reached perfection" (Leaman, 2006, 302), through religious and spiritual growth and finally to be able to go to heaven. They believe that life does not end in this world and there will be a judgement in the hereafter so that they live in this world for a purpose. Furthermore, they believe that reaching perfection happens through belief in the six articles of faith, which include belief in (the existence, unity, and attributes of) God, belief in the Angels, belief in the Holy Books, belief in the Prophets, belief in the day of Judgement[67], and belief in God's predestination. Moreover, perfection can also be obtained through sincere relationship and communication with God, which is maintained through fulfilling religious duties. Within this framework, one theology student understood and defined spirituality in terms of an Islamic understanding of life as a journey. Accordingly, in Islamic tradition, life is perceived as a journey, the beginning and end of which is God. Human beings come from Him; He breathes (into them) from His spirit (the Qur'an 15:29). All souls become witnesses that God is their Lord (the Qur'an 7:172), the purpose of a person's life is serving and worshipping Him (the Qur'an 51:56), and after death human beings are brought back to Him (the Qur'an 32:11). On the day of judgement, they are judged and rewarded or punished according to their deeds in this life (the Qur'an 101:6-8).

Therefore, in order to reach *al-insan al-kamil*, human beings should purify their selves. In Islamic tradition, transformation of the self and reaching perfection is explained through spiritual development and several levels of the self:

1. *an-Nafs al-Ammarah*: The evil commanding, inciting self
2. *an-Nafs al Lawwamah*: The blaming, self-accusing self
3. *an-Nafs al-Mutmainnah*: The secure self, the self at peace
4. *an-Nafs ar-Radiyyah*: The content, pleased self
5. *an-Nafs al-Mardiyyah*: The gratified, pleasing self

First two lower levels are mentioned in the Qur'an as "… the (human) self is certainly incites to evil …" (the Qur'an, 12: 53) and "… the self-reproaching self …" (the Qur'an, 75: 2). The last three higher levels are mentioned as "O thou human being that hast attained to inner peace! Return thou unto thy Sustainer, well-pleased, accepted [and] pleasing, accepting [Him]" (the Qur'an, 89: 27-28). The purpose of life is to transform the self from the lowest level to the highest level, which is the purest form of self, and to reach perfection. For a detailed discussion on the levels of self, see Aydin, H. (2010) Concepts of the self in Islamic tradition and western psychology: a comparative analysis. Studies in Islam and in the Middle East (SIME), 7:1, 2-20.

[67] "The apostle, and the believers with him, believe in what has been bestowed upon him from on high by his Sustainer: they all believe in God, and His angels, and His revelations, and His apostles, making no distinction between any of His apostles; and they say: "We have heard, and we pay heed. Grant us Thy forgiveness, O our Sustainer, for with Thee is all journeys' end!"" (the Qur'an, 2:285)

7.6.1.2 Relationship with God

Allah[68], the Arabic word for God, is one of the dominant emerging themes from the findings of this research. Belief in God, having a relationship and connection with Him, belonging to Him, and being one with Him were frequently used phrases in relation to the subjects' understandings of spirituality. The current study also found that the attributes of God written in the Qur'an play an important role in shaping the relationships between the participants and God. The findings of our research indicate that the subjects attribute positive meanings to God, most of which seem to depend on some verses from the Qur'an[69]. Their understanding of the Islamic concept of God is similar to the definition of God by Sharif (1963), "God is, thus, a living, self-subsisting, eternal, and absolutely free creative reality which is one, all-powerful, all-knowing, all-beauty, most just, most loving, and all good" (p. 138).

The relational dimension of spirituality was very dominant in almost every individual case of this research. The majority of the subjects associated spirituality with relationships, whether it was a person's connection with God, and/or with other people, and/or with the environment, and/or with him/herself. This significant dimension of spirituality covering intrapersonal, interpersonal, and transpersonal relationships, as discussed in Chapter 2, is emphasised in Islamic tradition as well, and it might be argued that Islamic emphasis on this topic has some influence here. The term God's covenant/ the bond with God is mentioned in some verses as a realization of weaknesses and dependence of human beings on a transcendental power and a gradual cognition of God's will and establishing this bond makes God "closer to man than his neck-vein" (the Qur'an, 50: 16):

> Those who break Allah's Covenant after it is ratified, and who sunder what Allah Has ordered to be joined, and do mischief on earth: These cause loss (only) to themselves. (The Qur'an, 2: 27)

[68] The word God instead of Allah is used throughout the dissertation.
[69] Two examples of such verses are:

"All praise is due to God alone, the Sustainer of all the worlds, the most Gracious, the Dispenser of Grace, Lord of the Day of Judgement …" (the Qur'an, 1: 1-4)

"He alone is truly-forgiving, all-embracing in His love." (the Qur'an, 85: 14)

> Can, then, he who knows that whatever has been bestowed from on high upon thee by thy Sustainer is the truth be deemed equal to one who is blind? Only they who are endowed with insight keep this in mind: they who are true to their bond with God and never break their covenant; and who keep together what God has bidden to be joined. (The Qur'an, 13: 19-21)

Asad (1980) interpreted what God has ordered/bidden to be joined as:

> The "covenant" is, in this context, a general term embracing the spiritual obligations arising from one's faith in God and the moral and social obligations, resulting from that faith, towards one's fellow men. This refers to all ties arising from human relationships -e.g., the bonds of family, responsibility for orphans and the poor, the mutual rights and duties of neighbours -as well as the spiritual and practical bonds which ought to exist between all who belong to the brotherhood of Islam (cf. 8:75 and the corresponding notes). In its widest sense, the phrase "what God has bidden to be joined" applies to the spiritual obligation, on the part of man, to remain conscious of the unity of purpose underlying all of God's creation, and hence -according to Razi -man's moral duty to treat all living beings with love and compassion (Asad, 1980, surah 13, note 42-43).

Islamoglu (2008) states that the term covenant might be understood as a metaphorical or spiritual commitment, which is ordained to be held fast by God. It includes ties that should not be broken, which are a person's connection to him/herself, a person's connection to God, a person's connection to other human beings, and a person's connection to nature, and the universe. He states that these ties are all about human beings and life on earth and sundering these ties/relationships causes misguidance; and on the contrary, protecting these ties guaranties civil and social tranquillity and peace. The majority of the participants of this research who defined spirituality in relational terms mentioned similar feelings and they expressed that peace, happiness, joy, pleasure, and relief are manifested when they experience spirituality, during and after their interactions with God, other people, nature, the universe, and the world. For instance, it is reported that spirituality helps the soul reach peace, rest, and satisfaction, which is considered as inner peace. Within the Islamic context, God's covenant encompasses the relational dimension of spirituality, and therefore, it covers social life by establishing moral duties of humankind. The significance of the relational dimension in Islamic tradition has been reflected in Turkish society and it has played an important role in lives of Turks since Islam has been embraced as the dominant religion, which has been influential in mainly shaping the cultural settings, people's thoughts, and life styles in Turkey. According to the findings of this research, as can be in other cultures and countries, relationships, connections, and communications were very important for all of the subjects. When we consider the fact that the social dimension seems to be stronger than the

individualistic dimension in Turkey, this result is expected. The relational dimension of spirituality is examined further in the section on spirituality untethered from religion.

This dimension of spirituality 'relationship with God' might also be called as the experience of the sacred, which is considered as the basis of spirituality by Harris and Morgan (1998) and by Pargament (2007), as previously discussed. Moreover, Engebretson (2004) examined spirituality among 15 to 17-years-old teenage boys through a qualitative study and they categorized spirituality into several themes one of which was the experience of the sacred other. They stated, "The first component of spirituality therefore is an experience of the sacred other, which is at once above and beyond but also within human existence" (p. 270). The findings of our research also show that God is the sacred for the majority of the subjects.

The findings of our study also reveal that one subject defined spirituality as sincerity to God, the level of this sincerity, the level of the relationship and closeness between a person and God. She stated that as the relationship gets stronger, a person reaches higher levels of spirituality. The results of our study match those observed in earlier studies. For instance, the findings of a study conducted by Dalmida and colleagues (2012) on meaning making and spirituality among predominantly Christian African American women with HIV indicate that one of the dominant themes emerged from the data was having belief in God. Their participants "described the practice of having faith in God, trusting God, or believing in God's abilities as an essential part of their spirituality" (Dalmida, et. al., 2012, 752). Spirituality was also categorized as a process, journey, and connection to God/ higher power/ spirit. Their participants reported that they experienced spiritual growth through connection with God in this process or journey (p. 748).

Correspondingly, Rose (2001) found that the respondents mainly used two concepts while defining spirituality, one of which was connection with the Divine:

> Firstly, the concept of *connection* which involved: keeping in touch with, relating with, being filled with, engaging with, coming closer with, moving towards, and union with the Divine, in whatever way the Divine was envisaged –theistically or non-theistically. (p. 198).

Furthermore, the Muslim participant in the research defined spirituality as "the relationship or connection between a 'Man and God'; the more this relationship develops, the higher are the phases of spirituality that a man can reach" (p. 204).

Another interesting finding of our study is that only one participant from the department of Theology used the term transcendent power and connection with this power while describing spirituality. She noted that the transcendent power, for her, was God. Spirituality means a close relationship with Him, and peace that she found in this affection. It is found that none of the other participants used a terminology including divine, transcendent, the sacred, supreme/higher/greater/ultimate being and power in order to name God in their speech.

In our research, one interviewee explained God as the creator, who was beyond the material and sensible world. This finding reminds us of the results of a study conducted by Gall and colleagues (2011) on the understandings of spirituality and religion among the participants from several nationalities through an Internet research Web site. One of the universal themes that emerged from their analysis was the personal experience of transcendence in both traditional and secular terms. They defined spirituality as "a belief in a god or higher power that exists beyond the self and the mundane world" (Gall, et al., 2011, 167). The participants in their study also stated that belief in a higher power or god could exist within and outside of religious contexts; belief did not require a form of practice. However, there is a difference between the results of our study and their investigation. Accordingly, none of our participants pointed out that belief in God could exist without religious contexts. Nonetheless, even though some subjects stated that they believe in God and relate spirituality to relationship with God, all of them did not practise practise religion.

Another important and interesting finding of our research is that none of the participants mentioned Islamic mysticism (*tasawwuf*) while defining spirituality. It is an important and interesting finding since *tasawwuf* plays a significant role in the Islamic Turkish tradition, and therefore, it is expected to find some tendencies towards this tradition in a Turkish sample. However, the research revealed that only one participant who related spirituality to religion defined it as being one with God and disengagement from the self when you pray to Him, to be close to Him, to be one with Him. Her statements and definition of spirituality reflected the traces of Sufism/*tasawwuf*/mysticism in Islam[70] even though she did

[70] Mysticism was not examined in detail in this dissertation due to its broad nature and the limitations of the study, as mentioned in Chapter 2. However, Islamic spirituality will briefly be discussed here since it is helpful to explain the related finding of the research.

not refer to it. Sufism[71], Muslim/Islamic mysticism, can traditionally be defined as the esoteric and inward dimension of Islam and teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (Nasr, 2008; Burckhardt, 2008; Francesconi, 2009, 113).

> Sufism is the spiritual path and mystical way in Islam that leads the seekers toward the divine knowledge (haqiqa); while sharia is the Islamic law organizing the actual social life in Muslim societies, as a religious authority producing the structure of these societies. (Akman, 2009, 47)

In this tradition, servant of God is named as *salik*/ spiritual traveller, because he/she is on a spiritual path. *Salik's* religious experiences have three stages: *tawajud*, *wajd*, and *wujud*. *Tawajud* is spiritual excitement and wilful rapture gained from the patience in trouble, and it is gained with a person's effort. *Wajd* means ecstasy and "combines the meanings of intense feeling and finding" (Lewisohn, 2014, 39). It is a sudden spiritual excitement, which appears immediately after religious practices and *dhikrs* (remembrance of God and repetitive prayer in mystical Islam (Geels, 1996, 229)). *Wujud* means being, existence, presence, entity, and finding; and it is the stage of knowing the secret of oneness of God. The self is eliminated and immersed, and everything is annihilated, while finding the oneness of God (Ozkose, 2007). As stated above, the theology master's student summarized these stages when she described spirituality; she mentioned forgetting the self during the worship and being close and one with Him, however, she did not refer to *tasawwuf* during the conversation.

7.6.1.3 Fulfilling religious duties

The findings of our research show that some subjects emphasized the importance of several religious duties for being a spiritual person. One interviewee, who defined spirituality as sincerity to God, the level of this sincerity, the level of the relationship and closeness between a person and God, highlighted the necessity of the rituals to provide this sincerity. She noted that being busy with worldly affairs makes a person become distant from Him. Another subject, also, underlined the importance of religious rituals and worship in order to maintain spirituality; she asserted that they were the most essential elements of spirituality for her. The findings of our study also indicate that some participants stressed that the thought of having a pure heart is not enough for being a spiritual person. They stated that this idea is very

[71] For more information, refer to Chittick, W. C. (2008). Sufism: a beginner's guide. Oxford: Oneworld.

common in Turkey; people believe that they are Muslims believing in God, and they accept the Qur'an as the holy book, yet they do not practise religion as it should be practised. The subjects believed that these people thought that having a pure heart was the most significant thing, and God judges people according to their hearts and intentions, therefore, for them, religious rituals and practices are not important. Therefore, some subjects repeatedly stated that this was not enough to be a spiritual person and they highlighted the necessity of religious rituals in order to be a spiritual Muslim. Yildirim (2006) explains the relationship between spirituality and religious rituals in Islamic tradition as below:

> In Islamic teachings, spirituality is an integral part of daily life. Only through spirituality does life find its essence and meaning. Regular practices, such as the five daily prayers, and other religious obligations, rituals, and exercises have a specific spiritual purpose. They aim to enable people to live at a high level of spirituality through self-purification and spiritual training. … Through this training, people are educated to be able to observe spirituality in their lives. That is why religious practices and spirituality cannot be separated from one another; they should go hand in hand. (p. 71)

The findings of our study show that for half of the participants (four from the department of Theology and two from the department of Psychology), religious duties were important, however, only five of them considered religious duties as prerequisite for spirituality. For example, one theology student reported that spirituality is inner peace and to reach into the soul at peace, in complete rest, and satisfaction, as mentioned earlier. He added that to run after worldly pleasures is a temporary ambition. According to Him, in order to become spiritual, a person should meet God's requirements; follow His orders and abstain from His prohibitions, since fulfilling religious duties is the essential foundation of spirituality. According to the results, contemplation, *salat*, prayer, being thankful and testifying, fasting, almsgiving, and reading and understanding the Quran, the sayings of prophets and saints were the religious duties that were discussed by the subjects who thought that these religious practices are also spiritual practices, which are essential for spirituality. Religious duties and practices such as the Islamic rites of contemplation, *salat*, prayer, and fasting are regarded as the main source of the relationship with God, and therefore, of spirituality. These findings are in agreement with those obtained by previous research. Spirituality was found to be related to practices in addition to belief in God and connection with Him by some studies in literature. For instance, Rose (2001) asked the subjects what is necessary to live a spiritual life. The answers demonstrate that there are two specific views: First, worship or practice, which "incorporate(s) *activity* in a spiritual direction, which is a vital component for this kind of life –whether, as some respondents suggested, regular prayer,

obedience, reading scriptures, discipline, following precepts or commandments, specific commitments, or service to others." Second, spirituality is "*connection* –whether as a relationship with God, always being aware of Allah, or in allowing an awareness of the divine to 'colour' one's life" (p. 200).

The subjects who associated spirituality with religion defined spirituality in terms of belief, relationship with God, fulfilling religious duties, belief in the afterlife, and learning Islam through reading and understanding the Qur'an, the sayings of the prophets and saints, and they stated that action is important in order to be a spiritual person. This finding, which emphasizes the importance of action including practices and rituals, is in line with what Pargament (2007) argues; accordingly, people may comprehend aspects of their lives as sacred in both theistic and non-theistic ways. He provides some information about the theistic sense regarding the monotheistic religions, for example, followers read the holy books sent by God to reach the sacred, and feel that they are personally experiencing the events written in these books as if they were in the scene. However, he argues that knowledge and wisdom are not sufficient without action. "To live most fully within the realm of the sacred, individuals must enact their spiritual understandings of the world through ritual and practice" (Pargament, 2007, 81). Likewise, in Islamic tradition, religious rituals and practices are considered as the foundations of spirituality, as stated earlier. Pargament (2007) states, "The five pillars of Islam refer to the pathways that lead the adherent to submission to the will of Allah" (p. 78). He also defines other ways to conserve the sacred. For instance, Prophet Mohammad built many relationships with communities and nations to share his wisdom (Pargament, 2007). Correspondingly, McInnes Miller and Van Ness Sheppard (2014) reported that some of their participants considered submission to the will of God, obeying Him, and following religious duties as the components of spirituality.

In the same way, Underhill discusses the recommendations of earlier spiritual writers on the two regular spiritual practices which are mortification and attending to God, and she interprets and translates these activities as prayer and dealing with ourselves (Underhill, 1999). Moreover, Culliford (2012) states that these activities might be retranslated as honest self-inquiry and meditation or mindfulness. All of the world religions have spiritual practices such as meditation in different forms, contexts, and methods. These spiritual practices, including meditation, contemplation, mindfulness, contemplative prayer, or in the Islamic sense, a Qur'anic (Arabic) word and an act of worship, ***tafakkur*** help a person understand him/herself, others, and the universe precisely. The finding of our study shows that this

worship has been one of the most significant practices for some participants and it is regarded as a foundation of spirituality. *Tafakkur* "does not have a precise English translation" (Badri, 2000, xiv), yet, the words considering, reflecting, pondering, thinking deeply, meditating, meditation, and contemplation are the closest ones to *tafakkur* in meaning. However, they "do not give the term *tafakkur* its true Islamic religious dimension" (Badri, 2000, xiv). Badri (2000) differentiates meditation and *tafakkur* as:

> The meditative procedures of Eastern religions tend to sacrifice conscious sober thinking in order to obtain altered states of consciousness, whereas *tafakkur* as an Islamic form of worship is a cognitive spiritual activity in which the rational mind, emotion and spirit must be combined. (p. xiv)

In Islamic tradition, contemplation, reflection, and thinking should mainly be over the creation, over ourselves, over life and death. What makes Islamic contemplation successful is "psychological ingredients such as thought, imagination, and feelings" (Badri, 2000, 29). There are four stages of *tafakkur*: (1) Knowing the objects through sight, hearing, touch, smell, taste, and imagination. (2) Inspecting the aesthetic aspects of these objects and appreciating them with feelings and passion. (3) Thinking about the Creator of these created objects and appreciating the Creator. (4) Repeating these three stages, remembering God, and finally reaching spiritual cognition, this is considered as the final stage. Both believers and nonbelievers can experience the first two stages, yet only the believers can achieve the last two stages (Badri, 2000). *Tafakkur* makes a person "more loving toward and fearful of God and His sublime Attributes" (Badri, 2000, 31). Self-knowledge and self-awareness, as mentioned in the definitions of spirituality by some participants, are also examples of *tafakkur*, which leads a person to God to know God through contemplation. In Islamic tradition, the motto "whoever knows himself/herself [his/her soul], knows his/her Lord," which has been repeated since the time of Prophet Muhammed, explains the procedures of *tafakkur* briefly. The importance of *tafakkur* is emphasized and this activity is ordered and encouraged repeatedly in the Qur'an. One subject, a psychology student, noted that spirituality means *tafakkur* to her. She reported that to look at the world with a deeper insight and to see the art in the creation makes her feel inner peace, which helps her reach God. This explanation and description of spirituality indicate that she experiences the stages of *tafakkur*. Some described spirituality in a similar Islamic manner, yet they did not use the term *tafakkur* itself to define this kind of religious contemplation. Moreover, the concept of contemplation stands for *tafakkur* in the dissertation.

Moreover, the participants who related spirituality to fulfilling religious duties stated that fulfilling religious duties helps them in coping with adversity and give them peace and happiness. It is found in literature that Islamic spirituality interventions based on Islamic tenets including religious practices such as prayer, fasting, charity, recitation of the Qur'an are employed in many fields of nursing such as medical, surgical, and psychiatric. It is argued that these practices are used in order to "balance and harmonize body mind spirit of patients" and to provide complete treatment both bodily and mentally (Mardiyono, et al., 2011, 119).

Salat is an Islamic prayer, which is practised five times each day (early morning, noon, afternoon, evening, and night) by the followers of Islam in order to fulfil God's commands and to draw nearer to Him. Muslims believe that it "restrains from shameful and unjust deeds" (the Qur'an, 29: 45). *Salat* is performed individually or in groups in Islamic tradition. However, an important and interesting finding of our study shows that even though some respondents included mosque when describing spiritual places, none of them mentioned communal worship (communal *salat*) in the definitions of spirituality, which is very significant in Islamic tradition. In other words, only individual *salat* as the spiritual ritual of some participants emerged from the findings of our study. Therefore, it might be understood that the interviewees who related *salat* to spirituality without mentioning communal *salat* imply praying five times a day individually, either in their own places, houses, or in the mosques. Similarly, the findings of a study conducted by Rose (2001) on what spirituality meant to professionals show that group worship is not very important for the majority of Muslim respondents in his research.

Prayer (dua, invocation, supplication) is another significant religious spiritual practice in Islamic tradition; it is believed that God cares for people if they pray and supplicate Him (the Qur'an, 25:77)[72]. A great number of our subjects considered this practice important and they strongly associated it with spirituality. Likewise, many American Muslim participants in a study conducted by AlRavi and colleagues (2012) accepted prayer (*dua*) as one of the traditional healing practices. For them, prayer was a primary spiritual Islamic ritual that had strong healing benefits in the spiritually based therapies. In another study conducted by Trevino and co-authors (2012), it is found that the participants of their research mentioned

[72] Say, "What would my Lord care for you if not for your supplication?" For you [disbelievers] have denied, so your denial is going to be adherent. (the Qur'an, 25:77) (Sahih International).
Say (to the Rejecters): "My Lord is not uneasy because of you if ye call not on Him: But ye have indeed rejected (Him), and soon will come the inevitable (punishment)!" (the Qur'an, 25:77) (Yusuf Ali).

prayer as the single religious and spiritual practice while defining spirituality. The participants asked God for prolonged life, for a cure to their disease, and for help, and they thanked Him (p. 627). In a similar manner, the only common practice was prayer related to spirituality in Dalmida and colleagues (2012)'s research. The majority of their subjects also engaged in daily prayers, which included saying grace before meals, meditation, and reading particular scripture. The findings of our research reveal that for the majority of the participants, prayer is a spiritual activity that does not require a person to actively practise his or her religion. For instance, one respondent reported that she is not a religious person; however, she experiences spirituality through her prayers and she thinks about God almost every day.

Gratitude (shukr), namely being thankful to God for everything including life and health is an important component of spirituality. In our research, even though most participants were grateful to God for His grace, there was only one theology student who mentioned being thankful to God when he defined spirituality. Gratitude appears as an important foundation of spirituality in other studies, such as an investigation conducted by Dalmida and colleagues (2012). Correspondingly, Manning (2012) examined six women's experiences of spirituality using qualitative methods. One of the major themes of his research was 'being profoundly grateful' that is grounded in the participants' relationships with the Transcendent being or God. The subjects expressed gratitude to God for everything, such as their good or bad experiences, and their family and friends. Moreover, they stated that gratitude is essential for their spirituality.

Fasting one of the five pillars of Islam[73] provides acknowledgement of the grace of God, advances the appreciation of His gifts in life, and enhances gratitude (El-Azayem & Hedayat-Deba, 1994). Two participants in our study considered fasting as an essential component of spirituality, and regarded it as a spiritual practise. It was found that fasting along with prayer is related to spirituality for both practising and non-practising participants.

Sadaqah (voluntary charitable giving) is one of the charity practices of Islam, which is performed by Muslims in order to fulfil God's will. It includes giving away wealth to the kinsfolk, the orphans, the needy, the wayfarer (the Qur'an, 2: 177). It should be done out of recognition of others without hurting the needy. It is an act, which makes human relationships

[73]The basic acts in Islam are Shahada (Faith), Salat (praying five times each day), Zakat (Charity), Sawm (Fasting), and Hajj (Pilgrimage to Mecca). They are considered compulsory to be performed and practiced by Muslims.

strong and fulfils their covenant. *Sadaqah* is encouraged by God in order to ensure social order and peace. It might help provide social balance among groups who have different economic levels. It might be performed not only through donating money or property but also through helping others in other ways. Furthermore, giving *sadaqah* ensures our proximity to God through providing piety, and therefore spiritual purification. Moreover, it ensures inner cultivation, builds discipline, and it has positive effects on life in general (Bensaid & Grine, 2013). Two participants of our research from the department of Theology mentioned *sadaqah* when they described spirituality. They stated that giving money to people in need and making donations and the emotions people feel when they do these good deeds are all associated with spirituality. They emphasized that they feel peaceful and extremely happy when they give *sadaqah*. The majority of the respondents emphasized the importance of helping others in their lives and they related it to spirituality, only these two subjects used the religious term *sadaqah* in order to explain their understanding of spirituality in relation to religion.

Religious texts and materials especially ***the Holy Qur'an*** might be considered as a user guide for human beings; as a manual that assists people through teaching how to foster spirituality, how to improve spirituality, and maintain a spiritual life. Some participants reported that learning Islam through reading the Qur'an and the sayings of the prophets, saints, and other people who follow Islamic tradition is necessary for them in order to be a spiritual person and to strengthen their spirituality. This finding is in accord with previous studies. For instance, Dalmida and colleagues (2012)'s investigation reveal that one of the most common spiritual practices performed by the subjects of their research was reading spiritual materials or texts (i.e., Bible).

As some participants highlighted, religion, belief in God, relationship with Him and fulfilling religious duties might be considered as foundations of spirituality; however, if people do not feel what they do, it cannot go beyond a soulless ritual. "When the central part of religion becomes but ritualistic behaviours that bind people together and keep existential anxiety at bay, religion's core spirituality is lost" (Van der Merwe, 2010, 6). Similarly, one subject described spirituality as a state of feeling. For her, religion and religious practices are not spirituality; if they were called spirituality, then, spirituality would be an empty phenomenon; the only way of making them spiritual is performing them spiritually.

7.6.2 Spirituality untethered from religion

The most important and interesting findings of our research are the themes unrelated to religion that emerged in the definitions of spirituality. Accordingly, spirituality without religion was defined as: connectedness within one's own self, self-discovery and self-awareness, inner voice, nourishment of the soul, mindfulness, critical thinking about existence and aims in life, thinking deeply on any subject, making subjects and experiences meaningful, purpose in life, world-view, way of life, ideology and mission in life, to read the writings of philosophers, belief, state of mood, feelings, and emotions, relationship with other people, being honest, sincere, and conscientious, and feeling peace in these relationships, being a good person and doing good deeds, developing empathy with others and being of service to others, morality, and values relationship with the environment, with the universe, with the world, and with nature. These findings pretty much reflect the findings of other research conducted on diverse age groups and on people with various backgrounds in western literature. For instance, the majority of the respondents of the study conducted by Rose (2001) stated that spirituality could be experienced without having any religious belief. They believed that being affiliated to a religion is not prerequisite for spirituality, and spirituality covers a wider spectrum of beliefs and activities than religion. The subjects of his research suggested several ways to experience spirituality, such as:

> In the wonder of nature, in joy and the arts, in humanism, football, the funeral of Princess Diana, mutual tolerance for all living things, in acts of complete selflessness, and in service. (p. 202)

Moreover, Harris & Moran (1998) stated that even though spirituality is employed as a restricted traditional religious concept earlier, it is recently recognized as "ecumenical, future-oriented, and more relevant [...] than religion" (Harris & Moran, 1998, 83). Likewise, the findings of our research also pointed to the non-religious understandings and perceptions of spirituality, which has a more worldly structure than having a religious form.

The majority of the participants, seven students, five from the department of Psychology and two from the department of Theology, thought that spirituality could exist without religion. For example, one from the department of Psychology and one from the department of Theology noted that to experience spirituality has nothing to do with religion,

and therefore, there is no relationship between the two. One anti-religious psychology student stated that she is trying to maintain her spirituality without recourse to religion. Her perception of spirituality is not shaped within a traditional context, and therefore, she does not base her understanding of spirituality on any religious settings. In fact, she was against religion, therefore her standpoint revealed itself as a rejection of religion and tradition. This finding is in accord with recent studies indicating that being against religion leads to separating spirituality from religion. An investigation conducted by Egan and colleagues (2011) shows a similar fashion. They found that their subjects predominantly had an anti-religious tendency, and therefore, distinguished spirituality from religion. In a similar manner, Ubani & Tirri (2006) discovered that their subjects usually did not make positive connections between spirituality and ecclesiastical affairs in their expressions and definitions of spirituality.

In addition, one theology student also mentioned that she was not practising religion effectively. However, she was trying to do as much as she could to be a spiritual person with regard to what she understood from the concept of spirituality, again, without relating it to religion. According to their statements, these two subjects might be identified as spiritual but not religious individuals[74], which is the contemporary mantra in the West (Yamane, 2007) (see Chapter 2 for a detailed discussion on SBNR), despite the fact that they did not use this expression. The reason for not using this identification might be lack of knowledge that there is such an expression in contemporary psychological terminology. In fact, such an expression has not been used in Turkish language yet.

The findings of our study also indicate that even though some participants thought that spirituality and religion might be related, the majority of them stated that they are not identical terms, and therefore, they could not be used interchangeably. This result supports the literature on contemporary spirituality that signifies the differences between the two terms, and therefore, does not give a room to religion in order to be used as synonymous with spirituality (Hayes, 1984; Heelas & Woodhead, 2005; Ayten & Uysal, 2009). Moreover, it is also found that some interviewees in our study regarded spirituality as a broader concept than religion. Five subjects out of seven, except the two who could be identified as spiritual but not religious, stated that spirituality could embody religious themes and sentiments, though it also had a wider context and so could not be limited to religious contexts alone. This finding is

[74] Even though one of them stated elsewhere that her spirituality decreased over time, she was still spiritual.

consistent with other research in literature, which shows that spirituality is a more comprehensive concept (i.e. Nelson, et al., 2002; Kostak, 2007; Cetinkaya et al., 2007; Moberg, 2010). For example, Egan and colleagues (2011) state that some of their participants thought that religion could be a foundation of spirituality; however, they had a wider understanding of the concept. For them, these two terms were related but different.

7.6.2.1 Belief, ideology, worldview, and way of life

The findings of our study show that apart from the participants who regarded belief in God as one of the foundations of spirituality, two subjects considered belief without any reference to religion as one of the elements of spirituality. For one of them, it could be any kind of belief or belief system, which determines a person's life entirely. For the other one, spirituality is associated with belief in one's own self and own power to be useful in life. Belief is found to be important for the majority of interviewees in one way or another. This result is in line with those of previous studies. For example, Egan and colleagues (2011) found that their subjects "often used 'beliefs' in their articulation of spirituality" (p. 315).

One participant in our research defined spirituality as her way of life, life style, and her perspective. She told us that spirituality was how she looked at life. Her understanding of spirituality is like a journey on a road; walking to the end of life, a journey in which everyone is also walking via different directions. Her aim is to be a spiritual person and to cultivate her spirituality in this life. Another participant defined spirituality as an ideology, which directs and enlightens a person. The other reported that spirituality sheds helpful light in her life. These findings match those observed in earlier studies. For instance, Egan and colleagues (2011) found that a way of life is one of the foundations of spirituality. Moreover, King and colleagues (2014)'s investigation also shows that for some subjects, spirituality is a way of life. These subjects were committed to their belief and value systems. In their study, this definition of spirituality is sub-categorized as devotion. Most of their respondents' worldviews were shaped by their religious beliefs. Even though some participants of our research specified that religion was not vital for spirituality including their ideologies and worldviews, their stories reveal that the majority of them devoted themselves to be a good person, and religion played a role in shaping their identities, perspectives, worldviews, and way of life.

Indeed, the ideas, thoughts, and ideologies determine the worldviews of people and shape their way of life and life-style. Culliford (2012) refers to belief, which is a spiritual theme, as a form of attachment to "a thought, idea, or set of related ideas […] (and) ideology" (p. 41). Furthermore, Singleton and co-authors (2004) define spirituality in a comprehensive way, and they state that it cannot be limited to only belief, practice, and experience. They note that spirituality "includes a way of life and a way of making sense of life" (p. 254). In a similar manner, Gall, Malette, and Guirguis-Younger (2011) created a theme called life perspective as an element of spirituality. Moreover, they argued that spirituality is a life code guiding people how to live their lives; it is a conceptual framework, which helps people figure out the existence in the world and experience it, and understand daily life (p. 166).

7.6.2.2 Connectedness within the self, self-discovery, and personal journey

The findings of our study revealed that some subjects understood spirituality within an individualistic context and as being connected within the self. They mainly considered it a self-discovery or a kind of journey. In addition, they related it to the existential questions, which focused on the meaning and purpose of their existence and life. According to the findings, spirituality means an interior journey and a discovery of the self regardless of any relation to religion. It is defined as: inner processes, self-knowledge, self-awareness, turning back to the inner world and discovery of the inner world, critical and analytical thinking, nourishment of the soul, and questioning and asking asking existential questions such as why am I in this world, where did I come from, why did I come to the world, where am I going to, and how can I be useful for this world and humanity (see Chapter 6 for more details). In addition, answering such questions is regarded as everyone's duty by the participants.

Moreover, it is also found that other people and other creatures on earth such as a cat or a bird, and nature can help discover the self in the journey of spirituality. Additionally, it is believed that some activities might make people turn to their inner world and make them happy and peaceful such as reading. One subject reported his spiritual rituals as contemplation and discovering himself. He added that he read some philosophers' works in order to find support in this request. Overall, the purpose of this journey is regarded as self-development. These descriptions remind us of one of the major themes of spirituality explained by Culliford (2012) as "the idea of journeying through life with the constant possibility of growth towards personal maturity," a journey within the self to find the self (p. 38).

The results of our study are consistent with those of Gall, Malette, and Guirguis-Younger (2011) who found that spirituality is understood as a journey. One of the emerging themes in their investigation on the perceptions of spirituality and religiousness was 'core self'. They assert that

> This theme represents the essence or existential nature of an individual. Spirituality exists as a central element of one's deepest self. Some embrace this aspect of self as one's essential spirit or soul. As part of the core self, spirituality represents a process of life journey and reflection, a cornerstone in the development of self-awareness and conscious living. (p. 165)

While defining spirituality, the participants of their study used a language including phrases such as, everything that makes me me, our spirit/soul/self, self-awareness, conscious living, self-knowledge, personal journey, personal transformation and growth, self-transcendence, and self-actualization. The findings of our study echo similar definitions attributed by the subjects of our research. Likewise, the results of Egan and colleagues' (2011) study on perceptions of spirituality reveal several themes such as religious, humanist/ existential, and summative aspects, and they included belief as a sub-theme under the humanist/ existential dimension of spirituality.

Our study indicates that the participants used expressions emphasising the self very often. This result reminds us of what Luckmann (1990) states, people value individualistic expressions such as personal fulfilment and self-expression. Accordingly, themes such as self-realization and personal autonomy that are more dominant than earlier because of the cultural shift (Luckmann, 1990), in other words, a subjective turn –spiritual revolution in modern culture from life-as religion to new forms of subjective-life spirituality (Heelas and Woodhead, 2005) (see Chapter 2 for detailed information). They claim that "religion which tells you what to believe and how to behave is out of tune with a culture which believes that it is up to us to seek out appropriate answers for ourselves […] subjective-life spirituality serves and reflects contemporary core values" (p. 126). Accordingly, people who embrace a contemporary understanding of spirituality consider their inner selves as the authority of their lives instead of traditional organized forms of religion. These people refuse the religious regulations and live in accordance with their desires, according to their own standards. These kinds of people might also be considered as "who make their own desires their deity" (the Qur'an, 25: 43; 45: 23). Heelas and Woodhead (2005) also argue that "subjective well-being culture" is "the most widespread culture" in the present-day Western world (p. 83). Therefore, people tend to prioritise the self before other things. Even though our subjects also

emphasised the importance of the selfthey did not show any tendency towards narcissism, on the contrary, in some cases it is found that they reported that they cared for others before themselves. Some subjects who did not relate spirituality to religion, emphasized the importance of discovery of the self, purpose in life, and personal fulfilment, and no narcissistic tendency was observed in their statements. On the other hand, the majority of the participants highlighted the interpersonal dimension of spirituality and its significance in their lives. This result is in line with those of previous research. For example, Campbell and Miller (2011) also asserted that spirituality was not found to be associated with narcissism in early, middle, and late adulthood.

7.6.2.3 Mindfulness

The findings of our study indicate that mindfulness is regarded as one of the elements of spirituality. The participants who defined spirituality as mindfulness reported that mindfulness means trying to enhance their attention to the present moment, and to think deeply focusing on objects and matters. Another interesting and significant finding is that some subjects emphasized that mindfulness was not only a practice of contemplation; it was also useful if it brought action with it, referring to doing something good for the world and humanity. For instance, without endeavouring to solve problems in the world, such as helping the needy, mindfulness was not enough to be a spiritual person, and mindfulness alone did not mean spirituality. Furthermore, the subjects noted their concerns about living in an age of rush. They asserted that this constant running did not allow human beings, including them, to stop and think often, and therefore, they could not find enough time to ponder about important things in their lives. This finding is consistent with the approach taken by Cook and Powell (2013):

> Our post-modern culture is geared increasingly to a way of life that does not question deeply such things as the meaning of birth and death, why we are here and what it is all for. Instead, social norms often emphasise aspiration to goals of material ambition and success. For many, it seems that this can result in estrangement from the most fundamental spiritual needs and values of humankind. (p. 385)

The findings of our study also show that mindfulness is helpful for our participants in order to discover themselves and understand their existence in life. Mindfulness techniques

such as meditation and contemplation are ways of the discovery of the self and identity. In this context, some of our subjects' definitions of spirituality reflected these practices. Mindfulness is a Buddhist and Taoist way of viewing and understanding human experience, which has recently become a method of therapy. It is, in a sense, communication with the self and the world, and awakening. In Taoism, 'being mindful' means not worrying about the past or the future or the outcome, the mind focuses on the present moment. A person thinks on himself/herself, his/her feelings, over a theme, an idea, an event, world around himself/herself, on the higher power or universe with concentration without judgement, and therefore, he/she perceives and understands himself/herself and others more accurately.

Moir-Bussy (2010) explained mindfulness as

> A wakeful awareness or presence to both the internal and external workings of oneself, again for the purpose of opening one to an inner consciousness. Thich Nhat Hahn, a Buddhist, sees the purpose of mindfulness as the development of what he terms ''interbeing'' – being in touch will all aspects of one's relationship to others and to the universe. This includes inner and outer relationships, connectedness, in the present moment. (p. 178)

Even though the concept of mindfulness is originated, and developed in Buddhist and Taoist philosophy; and therefore, it is influenced by Eastern philosophies, it does not belong to a specific religion, and it is a universal concept and a basic human capacity (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). Mindfulness is a spiritual experience, which is "simply a method of mental training" (Davies, 2015, 191). In addition, inner consciousness and self-awareness are included within the process.

7.6.2.4 Meaning and purpose in life

The findings of our study show that meaning and purpose in life are foundations of spirituality for the most subjects. These subjects question ultimate concerns in life, and ask existential questions to themselves, which encourage them to think about the meaning of their lives. These results support previous research on the understandings of spirituality. For example, the results of a study conducted by McSherry and Jamieson (2013) on the nurses' perceptions of spirituality and spiritual care show that meaning and purpose are important elements of spirituality for their participants. Moreover, Roehlkepartain and colleagues (2006)

articulate that young people have ultimate concerns in life, which are related to the concept of spirituality.

Our study indicates that spirituality means critically thinking about the existence in the world and the meaning of life to the participants. One interviewee stated that spirituality appeares when a person wants to attribute meaning to something, in other words, when he/she wants to make sense of something. These definitions of spirituality as questioning and asking existential questions might also reflect Viktor Frankl's meaning-centred theory logotherapy, which "focuses on the meaning of human existence as well as on man's search for such a meaning" (Frankl, 1992, 104). Similarly, Doyle (1992) defines spirituality as "the search for existential meaning" (p. 302). Accordingly, a human being is considered as "a being whose main concern consists in fulfilling a meaning" (Frankl, 1992, 109). He also writes, "Man's search for meaning is the primary motivation in his life […] which can be fulfilled by him alone" (p. 104). The will to find a meaning can clearly be observed in the discourses of our participants more than the other motivations such as the will for pleasure and the will for power in defining and describing the term spirituality. To find meaning in life, which is considered as an element of spirituality, is top priority for the participants even though they believe that spirituality brings them happiness and joy. In a similar manner, Gibson (2014) categorizes this component of spirituality as "making sense of life and making sense of living" (p. 526).

The majority of the participants of our study associate spirituality with purpose as well as meaning in life, and consider it very important. They noted that spirituality is about understanding the purpose of their existence in life, to determine their missions, and everything that is done in service of this mission. They reported that they try to do their best to achieve their goals in life. Some stated that their goals are related to be a good person for the sake of humanity. This finding is in accord with the results of recent studies. For instance, purpose is one of the main themes that was emerged in the study of King, Clardy, and Ramos (2014). Their subjects also had goals to achieve, which gave meaning to their lives and which were associated with spirituality. These goals consisted of a wish to glorify God and to serve Him, being a good person, and living intentionally. A Muslim boy who participated in their study believed that he is sent to the earth to serve God and to do good deeds. Meaning and purpose were also present in the definitions of spirituality in a study conducted by Egan and colleagues (2011), and these two terms were often used together. Similarly, in our study, the participants frequently referred to meaning and purpose together, and sometimes they used

them along with mission in life. In another study conducted by Engebretson (2004), all of the exemplars reflected on purpose and future hope, and in this study, self-commitment was manifested as a significant component of spirituality. The subjects had strong ambitions to study hard and to have a good career in the future, which, they believed, would bring a happy life. In this study, purpose was associated with spirituality and it was noted that "an important principle was to aim high and to do the best that you possibly could with your life" (p. 273).

7.6.2.5 Mood, feelings, and emotions

Another interesting finding of our research is that some subjects related spirituality to mood, good feelings, and emotions. They defined spirituality in terms of their state of mind, and mood, and experiencing feelings and emotions, through art, music, poetry, photography, success, and such, and being moved and inspired by beauty in nature and in relationships. To them, spirituality means romantic feeling. It refers to nourishment of the soul through things people like, things for which they have an ambition, things they wish to do or things that give them joy, energy, and power to live. In addition, spirituality is considered as the cause of light and happiness in a person's eyes. These experiences awaken awe, arouse wonder, lead to depth, and infuse the participants with the inner power to live. In other words, spirituality is, as suggested by the subjects, a desire to live, to discover the beauties in the world, and to fall in love with life. It is also considered a positive construct, and the resource of good feelings and emotions such as peace, happiness, and relief, which the participants feel in their relationships with a Higher Being, with others, and with nature and the universe. They used the word inner very often in conjunction with words such as peace, happiness, and serenity. This finding is consistent with the results of previous research. For example, the study conducted by McSherry and Jamieson (2013) show that their participants attributed similar meanings to the concept of spirituality.

Furthermore, another interesting finding of our research shows that restlessness, anxiousness, and unhappiness arise when a spiritual hunger and thirst is felt. The results of our study are also in line with Culliford's suggestion that "joyfulness and wonder are often reflected in the experience and expression of adult spirituality" (Culliford, 2012, 36). He states that the exploration of spirituality is recreational, which refers to enjoyment, excitement, relaxation, and becoming refreshed. Moreover, Vaillant (2013) refuses the

definitions of spirituality referring to ideas, sacred texts, and theology and he states that eight positive emotions, which all involve human relationships, constitute the definition of spirituality (p. 591). These emotions include love/attachment, trust/faith, awe, joy, gratitude, compassion, forgiveness, and hope. He defines spirituality as "the amalgam of the eight positive emotions that binds us to other human beings and to our experience of "God" as we may understand her/him" (Vaillant, 2013, 591).

In addition, Stoll (1989)'s definition of spirituality summarises an individualistic understanding of the concept, which is thoroughly similar to our participants' definitions:

> Spirituality is my being; my inner person. It is who I am –unique and alive. It is me expressed through my body, my thinking, my feelings, my judgements, and my creativity. My spirituality motivates me to choose meaningful relationships and pursuits. Through my spirituality /I give and receive love; I respond to and appreciate God, other people, a sunset, a symphony, a spring. I am driven forward, sometimes because of pain, sometimes in spite of pain. Spirituality allows me to reflect on myself. I am a person because of my spirituality – motivated and enabled to value, to worship, and to communicate with the holy, the transcendence. (p. 6)

Like in Stoll's definition of spirituality, the majority of our participants used personal and possessive pronouns, such as I and my, indicating "a sense of ownership in their language" (McInnes Miller & Van Ness Shepperd, 2014, 298). McInnes Miller and Van Ness Shepperd (2014) report a similar fashion in their study on what spirituality meant to psychotherapy masters and doctoral students. They comment on this finding emphasizing the "personal empowerment, freedom of choice, and the ability to speak openly about personal choice […] in the United States, in contrast with other places and societies of modern day" (McInnes Miller & Van Ness Shepperd, 2014, 298-299). As discussed earlier, having a non-religious understanding of spirituality along with this finding (using a possessive language) is a very important finding of our study since it might be considered as an indicator of freedom of thought and speech. This finding demonstrates that our participants are able to construct their own definitions independent of traditional structures.

7.6.2.6 Relationship with others

As previously discussed, our study shows that spirituality was not only defined as being a personal phenomenon by the participants but also as being a social one. Therefore, another initial component of spirituality that emerged from the findings of our research was

relationship with and connection to other people. Families and friends in particular played an important role in all of the subjects' lives. This finding of our research is in agreement with the findings of previous studies. For instance, Gall and colleagues (2011) found that "spirituality is experienced in one's everyday relationships with family, friends, and the greater community" (p. 168) by their participants. Correspondingly, Nolan and Holloway (2014) affirm that "spirituality is experienced through relationships and those relationships may be with an external or 'higher' source, or they may be proximate, for example, sources of spiritual strength may be experienced through families, friends, or communities" (p. 43).

Another important finding of our research is that the participants of our study considered several ways of experiencing and expressing spirituality in relational terms. They included contributing to the world through donation and charity, acts of service to human beings, caring for others, being responsible for others, and willingness to help people in need around the world regardless of their religion, nation, and colour of skin. Our subjects also emphasized the importance of offering positive emotions and human qualities such as love, compassion, honesty, and empathy. Therefore, spirituality might be categorized as a socially oriented outward notion covering these interpersonal terms, attitudes, and behaviours. The participants also related spirituality to prosocial behaviours such as empathy and altruism. Prosocial behaviours refer to any actions intended to benefit another person or the others other than oneself (Aronson, Wilson & Akert, 2005). They also cover behaviours "such as helping, comforting, sharing and cooperating" (Batson & Powell, 2004, 463). Altruism and empathy are considered as innate traits, and according to the empathy-altruism hypothesis, feeling empathy makes people engage in altruistic behaviour (Batson et al., 1981). "Altruism is the motivation to increase another person's welfare; it is contrasted to egoism, the motivation to increase one's own welfare" (Batson & Powell, 2003, 463). Nonetheless, the motivation behind the helping behaviours might be either altruistic or egoistic (Saroglou, 2013; Batson, et al., 2002). Our participants' discourses of spirituality exhibited a selfless other-oriented motivation rather than self-oriented egoistic one. None of them mentioned any self-concerns while talking about helping others as mentioned previously. It was likely that they all had sincere feelings towards people and particularly to people in need. For instance, a way of experiencing spirituality is explained by a psychology student as helping others, even if it means cutting down on her own needs. She thought that she might need something but if another person is in greater need than she is, then she cares for the other person first. For her, to feel that you are useful to others is spirituality. Another subject highlighted the features of a

spiritual person as being compassionate to other people and not being selfish. The participants emphasized the importance of love in relationships in order to maintain sincerity and longevity. This finding reminds us of Culliford (2012)'s statements reporting that love and wholeness in relationships are regarded as the main dimensions of spirituality; "people love whatever and whomever they feel inseparably, intimately and eternally bound to […] (they) feel wholeness in combination with whoever, wherever or whatever" (Culliford, 2012, 42). Love, trust, genuineness, honesty, forgiveness, and respect are also regarded as the key elements of relationships among people in literature (Mok et al., 2010; Clark et al., 1991; Mayeroff, 1971).

The findings of our study are consistent with other research as well, which found that relationship with others and helping behaviours were two major components and dominant themes of spirituality. For example, in a research on the perceptions of spirituality among teenager boys conducted by Engebretson (2004), the interviewees were asked to explain their relationships with others in terms of spirituality. The findings demonstrated that the respondents felt a strong need for others, and their families and friends played an important role in their lives. Moreover, they felt alive in their relationships, which gave meaning and purpose in life. Engebretson (2004) categorises social behaviours as 'values, service, and action for justice' and states that the majority of the respondents

> Exhibited a strong sense of altruism, expressed in terms of treating others as you would want to be treated. Importance was attached to treating others fairly, not causing trouble for others, and helping people as much as one could. (p. 275)

In a similar manner, a study conducted by Rose (2001) found that the majority of the exemplars expressed that "a life imbued with love, that is, filled with altruistic activities, and loving kindness" is essential to spirituality (p. 204). Likewise, the results of a nation-wide New Zealand study on spiritual care conducted by Egan and co-authors (2011) indicate that some subjects employed relationships in their definitions of spirituality, for instance, one of them "expressed spirituality in relational terms, with people and the land" (p. 316). Similarly, King and colleagues (2014) explored the psychological constructs relevant to spiritual development of adolescents from eight religions and six countries. The findings of their study reveal three main categories including transcendence, fidelity, and behaviour. One of the sub-themes of the last category was contribution. Accordingly, the majority of their respondents who were categorised under this sub-theme reported that they provided service to people. In the same way, the findings of a research conducted by Dalmida and colleagues (2012) show

that the majority of their female participants "discussed helping, doing for, and being there for others as means of expressing their spirituality" (p. 752). In addition, O'Hanlon (2006) regards spirituality as a triarchic concept, which comprises "a connection to someone or something beyond oneself, a sense of compassion for others, and a desire to contribute to the good of others" (p. 7).

Our study also found that relationship with God and/or religion help some subjects have good relationship with people, and connection to God or a higher power play an important role in the socialisation processes of people. This finding is in line with previous research. For example, the participants of King and colleagues' (2014) study emphasized the importance of connection and relationship "whether it was to a divine other, family, humanity, nature, or an absolute truth" (p. 196). Subjects of their research mentioned "an awareness of God through family, friends, or faith community" and "a connection to others through God" (p. 196). The findings of Hodder (2009)'s research on young people's expressions of spirituality showed that growing in their relationship with God led the participants to grow personally which also led an increase in their relationships with people. Moreover, Hood and colleagues (2009) assert that religion plays an important role in connecting individuals to each other, fostering group unity, and socialising; "religious affiliation opens important social channels for interpersonal approval and integration into society on many levels" (Hood, et. al., 2009, 19). However, the majority of our participants who stated that spirituality means relationships with people did not mention religion or God while defining spirituality. For these interviewees, having strong relationships with other people, communicating with them, behaviours and attitudes towards them, sharing feelings and ideas with them, showing love, respect, and compassion to them regardless of any religious affiliation were important components of spirituality.

This finding of our study, which is the relational dimension of spirituality is very important for the participants whether they consider it as connection with a higher power, or other people, family and friends, or within one's own self, is consistent with previous research. For example, the results of a qualitative research conducted by McInnes Miller and Van Ness Sheppard (2014) in order to explore psychotherapy students' discourses on spirituality show that spirituality is perceived as a relational connection, and their subjects used several terms such as 'connection', 'relationship', 'attunement', and 'interconnection' while constructing their definitions of the concept of spirituality. In a similar manner, the

findings of our study show that the participants highlighted the relational aspects of spirituality such as the connection with the divine, with others, and with nature.

7.6.2.7 Values and morality

Another important finding of our study is that the participants who attributed a social meaning to spirituality also related spirituality to values and morality, these two themes as the foundations of spirituality are unanimous among the subjects. In fact, one of the most important findings of our study reveals that morality is the only major theme in terms of its association with spirituality. The third part of the interviews consisted of picking up linked words with spirituality, which were listed on a card, and interestingly twelve out of twelve participants put a tick for morality. One participant highlighted that spirituality is nothing to do with religion yet it is everything related to being of service to people. In addition, values are also regarded as attributions of spirituality along with morality. For instance, spirituality is perceived to be a value system, the values that make a person human such as love, respect, tolerance, compassion, being respectful to everyone, and having conscience. However, one subject stated that she does not think that spirituality is an experience by itself; she believed that it is 'the values that are given to a person by his/her family and then by his/her environment in the process of socialization' and 'these values are sustained in the future relationships'. Another interviewee stated that being spiritually mature does not mean being religious, it means having morality and living in accordance with social rules and moral codes, it is about being fair to people and not stealing.

These results match those observed in earlier research. Morality and values were found as two of the basic components of spirituality in many studies on spirituality (Egan et al., 2011; Vachon, 2008). Furthermore, prosocial behaviour is often associated with morality in literature (Batson, Thompson & Chen, 2002). Whether it is placed within a religious context or separated from religion, "moral attitudes, including emotions […] are a major psychological and sometimes psychiatric side of young spirituality" (Coles, 1990, 108). For example, most of the participants in a research on psychological constructs related to spiritual development of adolescents conducted by King, Clardy and Ramos (2014) stated that spirituality refers to what matters most to them, such as relationships, virtues, and morality. These moral convictions included being a righteous person, not doing wrong to others, and living a moral life. Likewise, according to the findings of Gibson (2014)'s study, spirituality

is described from a non-theistic, value-based perspective. Moreover, similar results are revealed in Egan and colleagues' (2011) research, many of their subjects mentioned the terms 'values' and/or 'ethics' in their definitions of spirituality. For example, one exemplar stated that spirituality is "a sort of an ethical code to live by" (p. 315). Burke and Miranti (2001) also stated that spirituality leads human beings to grow and develop a value system and to be creative. They asserted that everyone has their own subjective unique values, accordingly, "value is an important attribute to spirituality because it identifies the objects, relationships, or ideals that have priority within an individual's life" (Stephenson & Berry, 2014, 11-12).

Our study also found that one subject stated that she is not practising religion precisely but she is a good person. This important finding reflected a popular motto in Turkey, as previously mentioned and highlighted by some subjects, which is 'I am a good person', 'I have a pure heart', or 'I have a clean conscience. People who define themselves as 'I am not religious but I am a good person' express that they believe in God, yet for them, religious practices are not necessary. Therefore, they do not practise what is ordered by God and written in the Qur'an. They believe that the Qur'an is sent to them from God and everything written in it is the real word of God; however, they think that they do not have to practise religious rituals. For them, being a moral person is the essence of spirituality. This situation and finding seem to be consistent with of Clark (2003)'s who states that spirituality is equated with being a moral and good person, and he argues that people who sever their connection with religious affiliation still want to be identified as "moral and good," and therefore, they identify themselves as spiritual but not religious (Clark, 2003, 1053).

7.6.2.8 Relationship with nature and the world

Relationship with nature, the universe, and the world is another important theme that emerged from the findings of our study. One participant who thought that spirituality is not necessarily related to religion stated, 'Spirituality is something you feel when you look at nature and witness the beauty in it'. Another one reported, 'Looking at the environment directs a person to spirituality since it helps think and understand the purpose in this environment and question the meaning of life'. Another one emphasized our responsibility towards nature and the world. The atheist participant in our study noted that she feels inner peace when she establishes relationship with animals. She explains what she understands from spirituality as she feels peace when she feeds cats and gives milk to them in their garden.

Similarly, another subject highlighted “love of animals” in her definition of spirituality. These results are in line with those of previous research. For example, the findings of a study conducted by Engebretson (2004) show that the subjects had concerns about the world and its future. Accordingly, they “hoped for a world without terrorism and war, for a more just world and a more equitable sharing of the world’s wealth, for safe asylum for refugees and for (a) safe and clean environment in the future” (p. 275).

Connection to nature and the universe is also regarded as a vital element of spirituality in other studies. For instance, Gall and colleagues (2011) articulate

> Spirituality represents a belief in a universal connection, a connection “with nature, other human beings, and deity, (it) is manifested in one’s connection to nature or the environment. This belief in a connection with the greater universe underpins an individual’s sense of meaning and understanding of life purpose. (pp. 168-169)

Moreover, Tacey (2005) discusses ecospirituality, a new expression of spirituality among the young people, which is also broadly called the spirituality of nature. Accordingly, it is seeking experiences within nature and a way to express spirituality. Furthermore, King and colleagues (2014) discovered that a sense of transcendence that occurs in the context of nature is one of the foundations of spirituality for some of their participants.

7.6.2.9 Non-religious spiritual practices

The findings of our study show that some subjects reported their non-religious spiritual activities when they defined spirituality and they considered these practices very important. According to one psychology student, reading books, especially biographies are essential to experience spirituality. For her, another non-religious spiritual activity is walking, she reported that she walks alone and thinks about her life. Deep critical thinking about her actions when she goes to bed is also one of her spiritual rituals. For another participant, making surprises and giving gifts to her friends are spiritual activities. One theology student explained his spiritual rituals as writing; he believed that he gets inspiration when he is writing, particularly at night. He also recalled composing poems when he was an undergraduate student. In addition, he considered photography as a spiritual activity. He stated that every time he looks at the photographs he took, he sees different things in them. Feeding animals, wandering in green fields, watching birds are also some examples of

spiritual practices that our subjects reported. These findings are consistent with previous studies. For example, the results of a study conducted by Engebretson (2004) show that many participants in the study mentioned non-religious spiritual activities as

> 'Forgetting or distracting' activities, such as listening to the radio, listening to comedies, reading, or listening to music. (p. 275)

Moreover, as stated earlier, Rose (2001) found that his subjects engaged in non-religious spiritual activities, such as arts, football, and even the funeral of Princes Diana. Furthermore, McSherry and Jamieson (2013) found out that some of their participants referred to art, creativity, fulfilment, poetry, and music in their definitions of spirituality. In a similar way, Culliford (2012) gives examples of non-religious (secular) spiritual practices such as

> Contemplation, yoga, t'ai chi and similar disciplined practices, contemplative reading of literature, poetry, philosophy, etc., engaging with and enjoying nature, appreciation of the arts and engaging in creative activities, including artistic pursuits, joining clubs and societies, co-operative group or team activities, sporting, recreational or other, involving a special quality of fellowship, maintaining stable family relationships and friendships, and acts of compassion (p. 221)

All human beings are spiritual and have the potential to experience spirituality, as discussed in detail in Chapter 2, even though they cannot be aware of it all the time, and cannot identify what they experience. They can engage in spiritual practices "giving them meaning and adding to a sense of purpose, a feeling of belonging, of working towards being whole, living wholesome lives and being their true selves", yet cannot name it as spiritual practice (Culliford, 2012, 220).

However, the findings of our research indicate that none of the participants considered t'ai chi, reiki, reincarnation, fortune telling, horoscope, sorcery, quantum, and UFOs as spiritual beliefs and practices. Only one subject stated that she regarded such beliefs and practices as related to spirituality when she saw them on the list given by the researcher in the third part of the interview in order to pick the associated words with spirituality. Moreover, different from the findings of the study conducted by Ubani and Tirri (2006) among another study population, none of the participants of our study referred to paranormal beliefs such as spiritism, raising spirits, exorcism, and consulting to a medium, these words were missing in our participants' definitions and perceptions of spirituality. Furthermore, they did not include "paranormal experiences that are more often identified as spiritual but not religious, the report of alien abductions, experiences triggered by specific chemicals and near death experiences"

in their definitions (Hood & Chen, 2013, 427). In addition, none of them talked about popular forms of spirituality including "astrology, crystals, reflexology, alchemy, rebirthing, tarot, aroma therapy, tantric sex, divination, candles, intuitive medicine, bio-rhythms, numerology, telepathy, pyramids, and essential oils" while describing and defining spirituality (Stark, et al., 2005, 7).

In conclusion, spirituality is narrowly regarded as a non-material phenomenon. However, it is widely understood in terms of its association with religion. Belief, regardless of religious traditional forms, is one of the main foundations of spirituality for the interviewees. Their (religious and non-religious) beliefs are embedded in their worldviews and these beliefs influence their thoughts, and compose their ideologies and missions, which are also regarded as foundations of spirituality. They live according to their "principles of action" that are determined through their beliefs (Harris, 2006, 52), and therefore, their way of life and life-styles are formed and shaped, which are regarded as elements of spirituality. They make meaning of life and everything depending on their beliefs, in other words, they interpret life events and their experiences through their beliefs. Their beliefs give them purpose in life, as Pyysiainen (2003) states. They regarded purpose and meaning in life as foundations of spirituality. Their beliefs also influence their emotions and behaviours (Van der Merwe, 2010). Again, through their worldviews, they built relationships with themselves, others, and God or higher power, with their environment, with the world, nature, and the universe. The relational dimension of spirituality is very dominant in almost every individual case of this research. The values and morality of our subjects are shaped in their connections and relationships, which are established based on their (religious and non-religious) beliefs, and these participants regarded values and morality as important elements of spirituality. In addition, they experience and express their spirituality through some practices. Their beliefs, ideologies, worldviews, missions, and meaning and purpose in life, the meanings they attribute to everything, how they maintain their relationships, their values, and understandings of morality, and practices might be different from each other. However, what is common for all of the participants is that spirituality is what is (the most) important and meaningful in life to them. Whether it is understood in terms of the sacred, holy, divine, and transcendent or secular, mundane/ordinary, and worldly; whether it is defined religiously or non-religiously, spirituality is something valuable for all subjects. For some, their religion is important, for others, their families and friends. For some, their worldviews and ideologies are important, for others, the creation. For some, the state of mood is important, for others, the nourishment of

the soul. In addition, spirituality is all about good feelings for them, namely, it refers to what makes them feel good. It is the resource of all good feelings and emotions. It is something that gives them the joy of living, happiness, peace, and relief. It is also, what supports and strengthens them in difficult times. It is what constitutes their identity. Spirituality is the identity factors without which their identity would not make sense to them, the identity factors that make them who they are. These are all interrelated dimensions of spirituality; they relate to one another. In short, the findings of our research give us little windows into the participants' humanity.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

"Have we not expanded thee thy breast and removed from thee thy burden, which weighed down thy back, and raised high the esteem (in which) thou (art held)? So, verily, with every difficulty, there is relief: verily, with every difficulty thereis relief. Therefore, when thou art free (from thine immediate task), still labour hard, and to thy Lord turn (all) thy attention" (The Qur'an, 94:1-8) "My Lord! I have never been unsuccessful in my prayer to Thee" (The Qur'an, 19:4) "O my Lord! Increase me in knowledge" (The Qur'an, 20:114)

8.1 Introduction

Following the discussion of the findings presented in the previous chapter, the final chapter aims to fit into the overall thesis by briefly reviewing the main points of the study in a more general form. This chapter intends to remind the reader the context and direction of the research. In addition, it focuses on the key findings of the study concisely. Moreover, in this chapter, contributions of the study are explained. Finally, this chapter will end with implications and recommendations for further research.

8.2 Review of the study

Before presenting the main findings of the study in the next section, this part of the chapter will provide an overview of the thesis by showing how the bridge between the research questions and the findings of the study was established in order to refresh the reader's understanding of the overall research. Therefore, this section looks back, summarises, and brings together the main areas covered in the previous chapters.

The present study has been designed to explore the perceptions of spirituality among young people in Turkey and the role spirituality plays in their lives. Another objective of this investigation has been to examine whether contemporary understandings of spirituality in the West exist in a Turkish context. As discussed earlier in the thesis, the process of secularisation, westernisation, and modernisation has impacts on the individuals and on society, and therefore, it is assumed that people attribute different and presumably popular meanings to concepts including the concept of spirituality within the framework of the changes in Turkish society.

In order to set the background information it is worth noting that primarily, as stated in Chapter 2, the shift in the definitions of spirituality from one end of a continuum, which is deeply related to religious beliefs, affiliation, and practices, to the other end that is totally separated from religion, which was called 'religionless spirituality'. Furthermore, the reasons for the change in the meanings of the concept such as The Renaissance and Reformation movements, scientific revolution, urbanisation, geographical discoveries, and the process of secularisation were explained. In the same chapter, the popular and academic interest in the topic of spirituality was pointed out and the contested nature of the term was highlighted. Accordingly, the western literature review showed that different theories exist in the literature regarding the definitions of spirituality. Within this context, even though there are researchers, theorists, and scholars who argue that spirituality is bound up with religion, which is the traditional discourse of spirituality, an increasing number of studies indicate that growing numbers of people are identifying themselves as being spiritual and religious, or as being spiritual but not religious. These studies report that the multidimensional concept of spirituality has several elements and foundations such as the sacred, connections, meaning, purpose, values, and morality. In addition, it is clear in the literature that the sacred also turns to be a debated issue with some researchers arguing that it is not limited to a religious frame anymore. Furthermore, it was revealed in the same chapter that spirituality plays an important role in people's lives and there is a strong relationship between spirituality and physical and mental health, and well-being.

Nevertheless, it was also found that much of the current literature on such issues pays particular attention to the Christian majority populations in the United States, in the United Kingdom and in Europe, which is one of the gaps that have been addressed in the present study. It was emphasised that there is an urgent need to conduct a research on other cultural contexts including Muslims. Another significant finding of the literature review was related to

the age of the sample of the existing studies. It was found that there is a large volume of published studies investigating the issue of spirituality on adults, and very little is known about spirituality in other age groups including children, teenagers, and young adults. This indicates a need to understand the various perceptions of spirituality that existed among the young generation. Furthermore, the literature review demonstrated that a great deal of empirical research on the topic of spirituality employed quantitative methods; therefore, qualitative inquiries are needed in order to explore and gain insight into the views, understandings, and experiences of people from their own words. In view of the highlighted knowledge gap in the existing literature, as briefly mentioned at the beginning of the thesis and discussed further in the other chapters, the current study has attempted to illuminate young people's perceptions of spirituality through qualitative interviews conducted with university students in Turkey.

The third chapter of the thesis was set out to give detailed information about the topic of spirituality in Turkey and provide a background to the reader since the primary focus of the research was on the views of subjects from this region. The same chapter also covered a general overview of the current situation in the country, including the process of secularisation and its impacts on the society, the meanings of religion and spirituality, and literature on the topic. The Turkish literature review showed that there is the argument of Turkey gradually turning into a more religious and conservative country. Nonetheless, the effects of the process of secularisation on the society have been the subject of intense debate within the scientific community and public. In addition, it is revealed in the review that there is a growing body of literature that recognises the important influence of secularisation, westernisation, and modernity and other factors such as scientific developments, education, technological developments, capitalism, compartmentalization and privatization policies, economy, and urbanization in the lives of people in Turkey. Furthermore, an overview of religious life was explained with demographic variables in the same chapter. Moreover, the meaning of religion in Turkish was clarified, which refers to the way to be followed in all aspects from beliefs and practices to sociomoral issues and political economic matters with sincere and total submission and worship to God. Accordingly, human beings are indebted to God Who is their Creator and the main authority in life, for their creation, and they can repay the debt only themselves; therefore, they try to follow the complete way of life, which is a means to come closer to God, by fulfilling God's commands, prohibitions, and ordinances. In the same chapter, historical background of spiritual beliefs, and religious and non-religious

spirituality in Turkey were expounded, and it was stated that religious spirituality is more dominant in the country.

Another topic of focus in the third chapter was the meaning of spirituality in Turkish and the literature on the concept. The interesting aspect of the Turkish literature on spirituality is that four words are used in the studies, *maneviyat*, *ruhsallık, tinsellik*, and *spiritüellik*/*spiritüalite,* all of which mean spirituality. However, the review showed that even though all of these words are employed in academia, the most popular ones are *maneviyat* and *ruhsallık.* It was also found that the definitions of spirituality provided in both theoretical and empirical studies are mainly adopted from western literature. A further search on Turkish literature revealed that few studies focus on spirituality, and the majority of these studies consist of theoretical research. In addition, the vast majority of the empirical studies on spirituality are quantitative, many of which utilised three scales developed in western countries to measure spirituality. This situation indicated that there is an urgent need to discover the meaning of spirituality in Turkish culture, and accordingly, to develop scales appropriate to the Turkish context. Moreover, spirituality is dominantly studied in the field of nursing with nurses and patients. A great number of studies postulate and discover a connection between spirituality and physical and mental health, and they emphasize the importance of spirituality in finding meaning and purpose in life. Nevertheless, it was strongly highlighted that training on spirituality in university education is insufficient; therefore, nurses and other health care professions are not able to provide proper treatments and care because of the lack of professional knowledge and practice in the area. In short, the second and third chapters showed that an agreed definition of spirituality in both western and Turkish literature is missing.

In accordance with the data presented in the second and third chapters, this study has had the aim of exploring the meanings of spirituality attributed by university students in Turkey, keeping in mind the gaps in the existing literature. Accordingly, a proposed interview schedule was developed based on the literature review, research questions, and discussions with the researcher's supervisors, and pre-pilot and pilot interviews were undertaken with eight university students in order to test the loose interview schedule. Necessary edits on the schedule were made; continuing with the collection of the data for the research was collected through main interviews that were conducted with twelve undergraduate and postgraduate students from the departments of Psychology and Theology. Afterwards, the verbatim transcriptions and analysis of the data were completed. The problem of the research and

procedures of the study were explained in the fourth and fifth chapters, and the findings were presented in Chapter 6. Finally, the seventh chapter discussed, interpreted, and commented on the findings of the study.

Subsequent to this summary, the purpose of the next section is to provide the most important findings of the study.

8.3 Main findings of the study

8.3.1 The importance of spirituality in Turkey today

One of the major findings of the research is about the importance of spirituality for the interviewees. For all of them, spirituality is the most important thing in their lives. All of the participants reported positive views about spirituality. The study revealed that spirituality is not only a way/method of coping in difficult times including loss of a loved one, loss of property, during an illness, and being under trouble, but it is also a source of positive feelings and emotions such as happiness, joy, peace, pleasure, and relief. It is also worth noting that none of the participants reported any negative thoughts about spirituality and none of them related it with spiritual distress or anxiety. Moreover, the majority of the participants acknowledged the significance of discussion of the topic emphasising that, as mentioned earlier, the interviews reminded them of an important neglected issue in their lives on which they did not ponder very often.

The results of this investigation showed that the subjects are all familiar with the word spirituality (*maneviyat*) and they were able to explain what it entails to them clearly. The participants were asked to define four Turkish words, *maneviyat*, *ruhsallık, tinsellik*, and *spiritüellik*/*spiritüalite,* and according to their definitions, even though all of the subjects had an idea what *maneviyat* meant to them, the majority of them were not aware of the other three words, and they never used them in daily language. Furthermore, the results of this study indicated that the subjects did not use the word spirituality very often in daily language. Within this context, the majority of the students admitted that spirituality is not an everyday topic and that they did not think about it very often. This study also revealed that the

participants believed that other people similarly did not think about it very often. In addition, they were grateful for participating in such a study since it reminded them of a neglected dimension in their lives.

Another major finding of this research was that the most students did not hear the word at the university very often, and the majority was unhappy about this. Furthermore, some lecturers at the department of Psychology had a prejudice against religion; therefore, they did not use the word spirituality often due to its relation to religion. This also frequently led them to prefer the use of a hostile language towards religion and spirituality in class. It was also found that, for the majority of the subjects, the university was generally not considered as a spiritual environment.

8.3.2 The nature of spirituality in Turkey today

In addition to the importance of spirituality in their lives, some participants considered it as both a personal and social phenomenon. For them, one of the most common foundations of spirituality was morality, which was associated with the social dimension of the term. Moreover, this study revealed that spirituality was widely regarded as a universal concept, since it is mostly believed that everyone could experience spirituality by the majority of the participants. Furthermore, some students noted that the level of spirituality could change over time; it could increase or decrease, but nobody stated that it remained in the same level. Some subjects emphasized that spirituality is a non-material phenomenon.

8.3.3 The relationship between spirituality and religion in Turkey today

The findings of the study clearly showed that most participants separated spirituality from religion, which is another original finding of this study. The majority of the psychology students had a tendency towards understanding and explaining spirituality without the borders of religion, while the majority of the participants from the department of Theology perceived it in terms of religious beliefs, affiliation, and rituals. The subjects who associated spirituality with religion seemed to be highly religious individuals. However, interestingly, none of them

mentioned Islamic mysticism (*tasawwuf*), which is very important in Turkish Islamic tradition. In general, another important, interesting, and original finding of the research is that spirituality is widely considered as a broader term than religion by the subjects.

This study has additionally identified various definitions of spirituality provided by the participants, which included two major themes and several sub-themes. Accordingly, the findings related to the meaning of spirituality were divided into two categories as spirituality related to religion and spirituality untethered from religion, which is considered the most obvious and significant finding that emerged from this study. The sub-themes of the first major theme, spirituality related to religion, revealed in this study are:

- religious belief
- a person's relationship with God
- fulfilling religious duties such as, contemplation, *salat*, prayer, fasting, and almsgiving
- being thankful and testifying to God
- to read and understand the Qur'an, the sayings of the prophets and saints
- belief in the afterlife

The sub-themes of the second major theme, spirituality untethered from religion, emerged from the results are:

- connectedness within the self
- self-discovery and self-awareness
- inner voice
- nourishment of the soul
- critical thinking about the existence and aims in life
- making events and experiences meaningful
- thinking deeply on any subject
- mindfulness
- meaning and purpose in life
- belief
- worldview, way of life
- ideology and mission in life
- state of mind, mood
- feelings, and emotions

- relationship with other people
- being honest, sincere, and conscientious
- feeling peace in relationships
- being a good person and doing good deeds
- developing empathy with others
- being of service to others
- morality
- values
- relationship with the environment, with the world, with the universe and with nature

This result indicated that the contemporary understandings of spirituality in the West exist in Turkey to a certain extent. However, the subjects of our study did not mention some popular spiritual beliefs including spiritualism, reincarnation, and, arguably, UFOs, and spiritual practices such as meditation, yoga, and reiki. Only one PhD student in psychology who gained her master's degree in the United States selected all of the words written on the card, which the participants were given in the third part of the interview in order to pick up the words related to spirituality. There were thirty words on the card including mother earth, quantum, energy, fortune telling, horoscope, and sorcery. This student noted that she associated everything with spirituality.

The process of secularisation along with several factors that had a great impact on individuals and society was discussed in the second and third chapters. The chapters also included the situation in Turkey within the context, which was clarified with the data provided by various studies. It appears from the findings of our study that globalization has begun to dominate even the most private domains in life, such as one`s own religious and spiritual understanding. This becomes especially evident when we consider non-religious conceptualization of spirituality and its relative disconnectedness from tradition within the sample.

8.4 Contributions of the study

Having offered a final concise description of the major and original findings of this investigation, the contributions of the study are explained in this section. Investigating

spirituality is a continuing interest in various fields, such as theology, psychology, psychology of religion, psychotherapy, and nursing, and the past four decades have seen increasingly rapid advances in these fields. However, the present research has explored, for the first time, the perceptions of spirituality of the Turkish undergraduate and postgraduate university students in the departments of Psychology and Theology through conducting qualitative interviews. Therefore, this study might be regarded as an original contribution to knowledge and an innovatory piece of cultural analysis, and it fills a gap in the literature by shedding a new light on the essence of contemporary spirituality in a Turkish cultural setting, and enhances our understanding of the concept. The main goal of the current study was to contribute new aspects by illustrating the contexts within which the subjects formulated the concept of spirituality. Accordingly, notwithstanding the relatively limited sample, this work offers valuable insights into diverse understanding of spirituality in a Turkish context by delineating the main components of the concept described by the participants. The findings of this investigation confirms previous findings in the existing literature and contributes additional evidence that suggests spirituality is considered as a broader concept than religion, and it can be perceived, experienced, and expressed without the borders of an organized institutional religion for the subjects of this study.

This study also contributes to knowledge new ideas about the young generation of a non-western region, in this case Turkey, which is regarded as a bridge between the West and the East. Furthermore, it is believed that conducting the interviews with university students increased the originality of this study, since this population is very important for the future of a country, and the findings of research on this group sheds light on predictions about a country. Within the context of its results, this research might be an indication of globalization even penetrating the individual's spirituality. Accordingly, it shows that cultural differences are fading away and people tend to consider matters from similar perspectives, including the topic of spirituality. Moreover, the popular understanding of spirituality that is untethered from religion seems to be new to the Turkish audience, and therefore, more research is required on this topic in Turkish settings.

8.5 Implications and recommendations for further study

In addition to the provision of the contributions of this study to the literature on spirituality, this section focuses on the implications of the study and future directions. Primarily, it is important to highlight that if this study is the first attempt to empirically explore the perceptions of spirituality among university students from the departments of Psychology and Theology through conducting interviews, as stated earlier, it underlines the need for further research in this area. Accordingly, the findings of this research have significant implications for the contemporary perceptions of spirituality in a Turkish context, which indicate a great similarity to the understandings of popular spirituality in the West. Therefore, the evidence from this investigation suggests that with certain adjustments, the Western concept of spirituality can be applied in research that will be conducted with a Turkish population. In this context, these findings provide a useful framework for conceptualising spirituality for research, developing appropriate measurements of spirituality for Turkish society, or revising and adapting existing measurements, scales, and inventories in western literature in order to apply them to Turkish samples.

Despite the promising results of the current study, questions remain, and further work should be undertaken to answer these questions. In order to draw some generalized conclusions, more qualitative and quantitative research is required. For instance, case studies provide further information about the perceptions of spirituality, and therefore, strengthen the findings of our study and their meanings, and the general knowledge on this topic. Furthermore, studies on the perceptions of spirituality of other age groups and of wider population contribute to generalisation of the results of the study. Another avenue for further study would be research into different perspectives concentrating on people from different vocations and specific religious and/or spiritual groups keeping the findings of the current study in mind. In addition, longitudinal studies help understand the change in the level of spirituality along with the understandings of spirituality, for example from traditional to popular or vice versa. Besides this, research focusing on the new understandings of spirituality and their relationship with mental and physical health is also needed. As the study

revealed, the connection between spirituality and health is mainly studied in the fields of psychology of religion and nursing. Therefore, it is believed that new research conducted by researchers from various fields including medical sciences and psychology contributes substantial material to literature. One more future direction in terms of contributing knowledge to literature is the need to examine the traditional Islamic mysticism and its role in contemporary spirituality. It is also worth studying the similarities and differences between the perceptions of spirituality of Muslims of Turkey and other Muslim countries.

Regarding the recommendations for action, the findings of this study show that students in the departments of Psychology and Theology do not receive sufficient education on the topic of spirituality supporting the results of the earlier research conducted in the field of nursing and psychotherapy. This result implies the urgent need for involving spirituality in the university education curricula of several fields such as theology, psychology, nursing, and psychotherapy. Accordingly, it can provide academic and professional knowledge to students and help gain awareness as well as give students an opportunity to undergo training such as internship opportunities. Moreover, formal education and training programs and workshops should be given to alumni who seek to begin working as psychotherapists, psychologists, mental health professionals, nurses, spiritual care providers, pastoral counsellors, chaplains, or imams. Especially, students and graduates from the department of Theology who want to work in one of these fields should acquire clinical experience in order to be able to provide professional counselling and psychotherapy at hospitals. In addition, considering the results of the current study, which showed that spirituality plays an important role in subjects' lives, spirituality should be included in the counselling processes in psychotherapy when needed, and the clients should have the right to determine what is necessary for treatment in terms of a spiritual dimension. Within this framework, seminars, conferences, and congresses should be organised in order to inform human service sector providers about the topic of spirituality and its importance in life and to overcome and eliminate any bias. Furthermore, researchers and professionals should be sent to other countries in order to be trained about the contemporary spiritual care and therapy methods and such methods should be adapted to Turkish culture.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1. INFORMATION SHEET

Name of the Data Controller: Merve Altınlı Macić

Address of the Data Controller: 3.04 Keenan House, Old Dryburn Way Road, Durham, UK, DH1 5BN.

Title of the project: Turkish students' spirituality today

The purpose of this study is to gain deeper insight and understanding of the perception of spirituality in a Turkish student sample. Accordingly, qualitative interviews will be conducted with university students. I will conduct face-to-face, individual, verbal semi-structured interviews with 12 participants who will be recruited through lecturers in the departments of Psychology and Theology at Katip Celebi University and 9 Eylul University, in Izmir, Turkey. The interviews will last approximately one hour and will take place at a location that is chosen by the interviewees in order to make them feel comfortable in a natural setting. Participants will be informed about the intended study, the instructions, and procedure of the interview beforehand. They will also be informed that they are free to withdraw from the interview at any time and asked to sign a consent form. Interviewees will be asked to fill out the contact details form at the beginning of the interview. Data will be obtained using an audiotape tool. Participants will be asked a total of three main questions, their prompts, and probes. Audiotaped interviews will be transcribed verbatim by the principal researcher and emailed to participants for potential corrections.

In this project, sensitive personal data consisting of information about participants' religious and spiritual beliefs will be collected, and this data will be analyzed and used for research purposes. Data collection and analysis will be wholly anonymous. The audio-taped records will be transferred to the data controller's personal computer which is protected with a password, and will be held and stored there. Personal details of the participants will be kept until all the analysis is done. However, interview transcripts will not be destroyed at the end of the project and will be kept for other research projects if needed; data will be edited and personal identifiers will be removed from the data. All the data will be kept confidential, and

processed lawfully and fairly. The identity of informants will be used anonymously after collection and before processing the data; participants and specific places mentioned during the interviews will be given an alternative name on documents. The data will be processed in a secure environment. At the end of the project, participants will be informed about the research findings through email.

APPENDIX 2. TEMPLATE CONSENT FORM

TEMPLATE CONSENT FORM

[This template consent form is designed for research involving human participants and should form part of the informed consent process. It is not intended to be exhaustive. The core statements (in bold) form the basis of your consent form; the optional statements (in italics) should be amended/ deleted/ supplemented as appropriate. Please note that researchers applying to the National Research Ethics Service should use the NRES template consent form].

Title of Project: Spirituality in Turkey

Name of Researcher: Merve Altinli Macic

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated DD/MM/YY (version.....) for the above project	
2. I have had the opportunity to consider the information and ask any questions	
3. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason	
4. I understand that the interview will be audio recorded and that the recordings will be stored securely and destroyed on completion	
5. *I understand that my data will only be accessed by those working on the project*	

6. *I understand that my data will be anonymised prior to publication*	
7. *I agree to the publication of verbatim quotes*	
8. *I agree to the transfer of my data to countries outside the European Economic Area*	
9. *I am willing to be contacted in the future regarding this project*	
10. I agree to take part in the above project	

Name of Participant	Signature	Date
Name of Researcher	Signature	Date

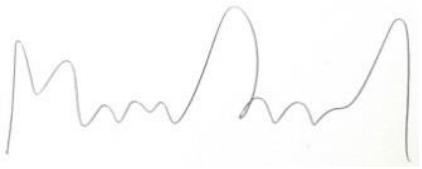
APPENDIX 3. ETHICAL APPROVAL LETTER

Durham University

To whom it may concern:

I confirm, in my capacity as Chair of the Dept. Theology and Religion Ethics Cttee, that Merve Macic submitted an ethics form (3rd November, 2014) which was subsequently passed.

03/11/14	PG	Merve Macic	Spirituality in Turkish Students



Dr. Marcus Pound,
24/01/2017

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