



Responsibilities of Tour Guides in Religious Tourism

Tinna Rós Steinsdóttir

**Department of Tourism
Hólar University College**

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Tinna Rós Steinsdóttir

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Faculty Representative
Kjartan Bollason

Department of Tourism
Holar University College
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Department of Tourism
Holar University College
Hólar í Hjaltadal
551 Sauðárkrókur
Iceland

Telephone: 455 6300

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Útdráttur

Leiðsögumaður í trúartengdri ferðapjónustu ber á margan hátt sömu ábyrgð og leiðsögðumaður í hverri annarri ferðapjónustu. Ástæða þess er sú að ferðamenn í trúartengdri ferðapjónustu upplifa oft dýpri og sterkari tilfinningar en í annars konar ferðapjónustu, sem eykur mikilvægi virðingar og skilnings af hendi leiðsögumannsins. Þessar ályktanir eru dregnar af þeirri staðreynd að trú er afar persónulegt og viðkvæmt umfjöllunarefni.

Þegar leiðsögumaðurinn er vel undirbúinn, efnislega vel að sér og hæfur til að gegna starfi sínu getur trúartengd ferðapjónusta dýpkað trú ferðamannsins. Skýr dæmi um þetta má sjá í hinum svokölluðu pílgrímsferðum. Trúartengd ferðapjónusta getur líka dýpkað skilning ferðamannsins á öðrum trúarbrögðum og þeim menningarheimum sem eru byggðir á þeim, þegar hann heimsækir helga staði sem tilheyra öðrum trúarbrögðum en hann tilheyrir og/eða þekkir. Þegar skilningur á öðrum trúarbrögðum eykst eru allar líkur á að umburðarlyndi gagnvart þeim fylgi í kjölfarið. Trúarbrögð eru ein helsta orsök stríða og annarra deilna í heiminum í dag. Hæfur leiðsögumaður í trúartengdri ferðapjónustu getur því spilað lykilhlutverk í að stuðla að friði og jákvæðri hnattvæðingu með því að fræða ferðamenn og hjálpa þeim að skilja og bera virðingu fyrir annars konar hugmyndafræði. Á sama tíma getur óhæfur leiðsögumaður ollið miklu tjóni með því að sýna trúarbragð eða venjur innan þess í röngu ljósi.

Auk þess að sinna upplýsingagjöf og menntunarhlutverki er mikilvægt að leiðsögumaður í trúartengdri ferðapjónustu myndi góð tengsl við ferðamennina í hópnum, geti metið þær oft sterku tilfinningar sem ferðamennirnir upplifa í ferðinni og sýni skoðunum hvers einstaklings virðingu.

Í þessari ritgerð verður eigindlegri aðferðafræði beitt til að freista þess að svara þeirri spurningu hvar helsta ábyrgð leiðsögumanns liggur í trúartengdri ferðapjónustu, og hvernig hún er öðruvísi en í annars konar ferðapjónustu.

Lykilorð: Leiðsögumaður, Trúartengd ferðapjónusta, Fræðsla, Umburðarlyndi og Virðing.

Abstract

When guiding a group of travellers, the tour guide needs to be aware of the responsibilities that accompany the job. In religious tourism these responsibilities are slightly different from other kind of tourism since it generally includes more emotions and requires more respect and understanding than others. These assumptions are drawn from the fact that religion is a very personal and sensitive subject.

When tour guides are well prepared, knowledgeable and qualified, religious tourism can be used to deepen the traveller's faith. This can especially be seen in the case of pilgrimages. Religious tourism can also increase traveller's understanding of different religions and cultures based on them, when they visit a site that belongs to another religion. With increased understanding of different religions, increased tolerance is likely to follow. Today, with religion being one of the biggest causes of wars and dispute in the world, a qualified tour guide can play a vital role in peace building and globalisation by helping people to understand and respect those with different ideologies. In the same sense, an unqualified and badly prepared tour guide can cause great damage to both the local site and the travellers partaking in the tour by portraying the religion badly.

As well as informing and teaching, the tour guide also needs to be able to connect to the travellers, evaluate their feelings, which can often be rather intense, and show respect to each individual and their opinions.

Qualitative research will be used in this dissertation to try to answer the question where the tour guide's responsibilities mainly lie, and how they differ between religious tourism and other kind of tourism.

Keywords: Tour guides, Religious Tourism, Education, Tolerance and Respect.

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Abbreviations

FTA	Faith Travel Association.
IRLA	International Religious Liberty Association
NTA	National Tour Association.
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.
UNWTO	United Nation's World Tourism Organization.
WRTA	World Religious Travel Association.

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1 Introduction

When thinking about religious tourism, the first thing that comes to mind for many people is often the pilgrimage tours; Christian people that travel to the Holy Land where they believe Jesus lived, preached and died (See the Holy Land, no date), Muslims that head to their holiest site, Mecca, where Muhammad was born in 570 (The Major Religions of the World, no date) or Hindus that take on the Char Dham which consists of the most sacred Hindu temples (Shreekheta, no date). Religious tourism, however, is about so much more than pilgrimages and that is an important factor when taking the subject into consideration.

It can be argued that tourism has always been around, since people have always been traveling. Throughout history the motives for travel have, however, changed radically, leaving the term tourism subject to change as well. Historical evidence demonstrates that people often embarked on travels for religious reasons and religious tourism has been named as the oldest form of non-economic travel in the world (Jackowski and Smith, 1992, in Timothy and Olsen, 2006). One of the most renowned examples can be found in the Biblical account of Mary and Joseph travelling from Nazareth to Galilee to register, as Caesar Augustus had proclaimed that all the inhabitants of the world should do so. Later in the same story also, as the three wise men and shepherds travelled by the guidance of the North Star, to visit the new born Baby Jesus in Galilee. (Holy Bible, 1982: Matt 2:1-2 / Luke 2:1-20). Other historical evidence dates back well before Biblical narratives and both medieval and Roman accounts demonstrate that travel has been an integral part of societal and cultural development. While this is the case, the concept of commercial or modern tourism is a nineteenth century idea. Modern day tourism began taking shape in the mid 1800's when a man named Thomas Cook started offering affordable commercial trips to the middle class, thereby opening up the world of tourism to an entirely new market group. Consequentially, Cook is often referred to as the father of tourism. What many people do not realise however, is that the motivation behind Cook's business pursuit was his faith in Jesus Christ and his desire to bring people to the Holy Land. His original tours were just a jumping off point but his true goal was not achieved until 1868 when he finally guided his first group of Christian travellers through the Biblical places of the Holy Land (Hamilton, 2005).

As Cook's underlying ideas towards tourism spread, religious tourism began gaining more popularity. As a result, today many of the world's most popular tourist destinations are religious sites and landmarks that people visit, often without it having specific religious meaning to them. For example, Lonely Planet editor, Jheny Osman (2014) issued a list of 10 of the world's greatest wonders for a popular travel. Four of the ten landmarks on her list were religious sites, including: the Taj Mahal in India, the Angkor Wat in Cambodia, the Al Khazneh in Jordan and the Great Pyramid of Giza in Egypt. Further examples of religious landmarks being visited by often nonreligious travellers are the thousands of yearly visitors who flock to the Buddhist and Hindu temples in Asia and to the churches in the western world. These places have gained popularity amongst modern day travellers, largely due to their historical rather than religious significance, and because they are often

amongst the oldest symbols of civilization. For that reason it is impossible to discuss history without considering religion, and vice versa. As a result of that, religious tourism often becomes an unintentional part of a traveller's itinerary and, in many cases, the religious significance of the site goes unnoticed, leaving the traveller unaware of the fact that he or she had taken part in religious tourism.

These “hidden” effects of religious tourism form the basis of the research undertaken for this B.A. dissertation. The ideas explored in this paper were developed during and a visit to the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque in Abu Dhabi, followed by visits to several temples in the South of India. The tour guide who led the author and her group through the Sheikh Zayed helped cast light on numerous misconceptions surrounding religious tourism and he can be credited as the individual that most influenced the origin of this dissertation. In his tour of the mosque, the tour guide took every opportunity to educate the group about his Islamic religion and explain the origins of various misinterpretations that lead to misunderstandings about Islam. He made it clear from the beginning of the tour that all questions were welcome and would be answered to the best of his knowledge, without bias or offence. During the two hour tour, the guide taught and shared a great deal about the Islam religion, its practices and its followers. Individual discussions followed the tour, where the guide passionately expressed his personal beliefs in how religious tourism could make the world a better place by increasing the understanding and tolerance between different religious groups. During later travels to the South of India, additional discussions on the importance of the accurate representation of a site's religion were had with the locals, who were employed as tour guides in temples there. The discussion was mainly focussed on personal choice and behaviours conducted by travellers at religious sites and during religious rituals and they sparked further realisation of the importance of the role that tour guides hold during religious tours. Fascination with these ideas grew and sparked the interest that led to the research behind this dissertation.

1.1 Thesis Statement and Structure

This dissertation will address the challenges that face tour guides in religious tourism; the responsibilities that they hold and the expectations of those embarking on religious tourism. It will consider the effects that personal emotions can have on religious tourism as well as the opportunities it can create regarding cultural and religious understanding and how this opens possibilities for increased cultural and religious tolerance in a world filled with intolerance and ignorance. Religion is a sensitive topic and for tour guides leading such groups, there are innumerable things that must be taken into consideration.

The three main questions this dissertation intends to answer are as follows:

1. What responsibilities does a religious tour guide have towards the religion in question and to the people that practice that religion?
2. What responsibilities does a religious tour guide have towards the travellers?
3. What are the responsibilities of the traveller when visiting a religious site?

To answer these questions the dissertation will be divided into six main chapters, each divided into respective sub-chapters.

This first chapter is an introduction to the topic of religious tourism and the responsibilities of the guide. It will explain both the author's reasons for choosing this topic, as well as how the argument will be structured and how it is intended to answer the questions posed above. The second chapter draws together all the information that was gathered and puts it forward in several sub-chapters. The third chapter will explain what research methods were used in the writing of this dissertation. In chapter four all conclusions will be presented and then addressed in the discussions in chapter five. The sixth and final chapter will put forward the final words. After the final words there is the list of references used for this dissertation.

2 Religious Tourism and the Responsibilities of the Guide

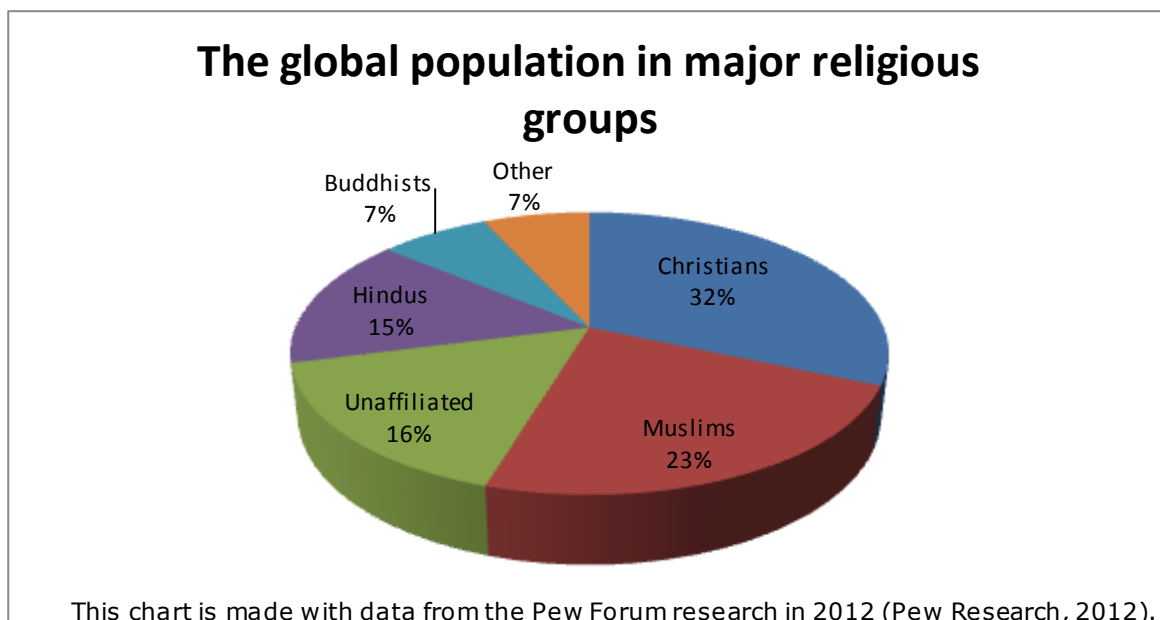
2.1 The Core Concepts

In order to fully understand the concept of religious tourism it is best to commence with a full understanding of the concepts behind it.

2.1.1 Religion

It is difficult to obtain accurate numbers as to how many people belong to each region, mainly because in most religions there is no emphasis on recording the number of followers. An additional obstacle in this calculation is that we do not have a complete record of all of the world's religions. From the available data it is, however, possible to make a rough assumption about the division of people within the world's biggest religions. According to a study conducted by the Pew Forum in 2012 (Pew Research, 2012) shown in the chart below, about 65% of the world's population belong to the world's three biggest religions: Christianity, Islam and Hinduism.

Chart 1: The Global Population in Major Religious Groups



In a world where so many religions thrive, freedom of religion is important and, consequently, is acknowledged as a basic human right. In the year 2000 the International Religious Liberty Association (IRLA) addressed this matter head on by issuing guidelines regarding responsible dissemination of religion or belief, as an attempt to “[a]ccept the

increasing reality of religious pluralism and with the aim of strengthening religious liberty, tolerance, dialogue, and respect for equal rights for all” (International Religious Liberty Association, 2000).

2.1.2 Tourism

There are several different definitions to be found on the concept of tourism. The United Nation’s World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) (no date), which is the leading international organisation in the field of tourism, defines tourism as “a driver of economic growth, inclusive development and environmental sustainability and offers leadership and support to the sector in advancing knowledge and tourism policies worldwide.” According to the UNWTO (2013) tourism is now one of the largest and- fastest-growing economic sectors in the world.

Despite different definitions of the modern term tourism as a leisure activity, the core practice as such is not a very complicated one and has existed for hundreds of years. The earliest excursions that were made had, however, more to do with survival than leisure, with people traveling between places in search for safety, food, water or better climate to name some examples. Tourism as we know it today emerged later and was the privilege of the rich for a very long time (Pond, 1993). It was this concept of tourism as accessible only by the rich that Thomas Cook wanted to change when he began offering train rides for people of all classes to travel between Loughborough and Leicester in 1841 (Hamilton, 2005).

Whether it is for leisure, educational or religious purposes, tourism offers travellers a global platform to get to know and understand the world better, which is an important factor in the world’s globalisation. People who do not have the understanding of different cultures are more likely to have eyes for their own culture alone and believe it to be better than all other cultures. One of the biggest challenges of globalisation is to make sure that this does not happen but rather that a new common global culture is created “which increasingly becomes the broader social context of all particular cultures in the world” (Beyer, 1994:9).

2.1.3 Religious Tourism

Religious tourism is a relatively large sector within the field of tourism and is commonly categorised as cultural tourism (Shinde, 2007). Jackowski (2000, in Timothy and Olsen, 2006) estimates that 240 million people embark on pilgrimages every year. Pilgrims are, however, just one group of religious tourists, with more people taking religious tours out of curiosity rather than religious experience (Timothy and Olsen, 2006). The concept of religious tourism is considerably bigger than people often think and that is proven by how many people have taken part in religious tourism without being aware of the fact that they are doing so (Shinde, 2007). According to Larsen (2012) the definition of religious tourism has expanded greatly from when the term first arose. In short it can be said that religious tourism is everything from going on a pilgrimage where the sole purpose of the trip is to visit a Holy site, to visiting a religious site merely for its historical or architectural importance. Kevin Wright (2008) defines religious tourism, or faith-based tourism as it is widely known, as a travel to a religious destination, travel with a spiritual intent or leisure

travel with fellowship intent. In a webcast interview with John Phibler (WRTA Religious Travel, 2009) Wright clarifies his definition by dividing it into four categories, 1) a travel to a religious destination, 2) a travel with a missionary or humanitarian intent, 3) a travel to a religious gathering like a conference or a convention, 4) a travel meant for fellowship and leisure intent. While Wright says that the first categories are the “bread and butter of faith based tourism,” the last one, travels for fellowship and leisure intent, is the fastest growing one and offers great variety of tours.

Religious tourism has increased greatly in the last fifty years, with the biggest increase occurring in the 1990s and its growth continuing ever since. One cause for this increase is the fact that the definition of religious tourism is constantly expanding and thereby offering travellers more variety and choices within the sector. According to Wright (2008), religious tourism now embraces twelve different vacation segments; pilgrimages, missionary, cruises, leisure/getaways, conferences/conventions, destinations/attractions, retreats/guesthouses, Christian camps, adventure/active, volunteer vacations, student/youth and family/intergenerational. Timothy and Olsen (2006) mention how New Age spirituality is now included in the term as well, causing it to cover the ever expanding group of people travelling, mainly to Asia, for spiritual reasons.

With religious tourism covering so many different segments, there are many stakeholders that benefit from it. According to the National Tour Association (NTA), faith based travel includes the providing of transportation, lodging, food/beverage, travel arrangements, tour packages and other related travel and hospitality services to people of faith or to a place of faith (Faith based Travel Market: Reference guide, no date). Basic examples of stakeholders are in many cases the same as with other forms of travel, namely: travel companies, hotels, restaurants, insurance companies etc. Many stakeholders feel fortunate to be involved in religious tourism, because as Boissevain (1996) points out, cultural tourism is not necessarily as seasonal as many other forms of tourism. It is often connected to religious festivals or holidays, but in general it occurs throughout the year (Larsen, 2012).

Despite its popularity and fast growth, religious tourism remains the most understudied area within tourism with many key stakeholders just recently realising its popularity (Timothy and Olsen, 2006).

International Organisations

With tourism being an ever growing market, it is important to keep a good overview of it. In order to do so, several international organisations have been founded. The largest of those being the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the United Nation's World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). Religious tourism, being one of the fastest growing branches of tourism (World Footprints, no date), has its own organisations. Amongst the biggest of those is the Faith Travel Association (FTA). It was created by the National Tour Association (NTA) and launched in early 2014. FTA developed from the ruins of another agency with similar goals: World Religious Travel Association (WRTA) that was forced to file for bankruptcy in January 2011, after having been steered by the NTA since 2009. WRTA had been founded by the aforementioned Kevin Wright, who was later hired by the NTA and took part in founding the FTA. When the WRTA failed, Wright assured people that it was not due to lack of demand for faith

based tourism because that was constantly increasing, but rather, due to a lack in both resources and staffing (Baran, 2014). According to their webpage, the NTA is “dedicated to being the trusted source for education, community, networking and publications within the faith-based travel industry” (Faith Travel Association, no date).

2.2 Opportunities and Threats in Religious Tourism

Larsen (2012) said it best when he said: “travel breaks down walls and builds bridges of understanding and respect”. With religion being one of the main causes for violence and wars in the world today, Larsen stresses the opportunities that lie in using tourism to offer people increased understanding of the world, which usually results in increased respect. There are, however, threats involved in using this opportunity as well, especially if the site being visited is not prepared well enough or if the tour guide is not educated and well informed of the religion and/or site in question.

2.2.1 Importance of Religious Tourism

Boissevain (1996) mentioned solidarity amongst local people as one of the characteristics of tourism. In some cases communities are empowered by increased tourism to their area and feel proud of travellers wanting to come and visit their community rather than another one. The locals start to realise their uniqueness when they see themselves through the eyes of the travellers and become more aware of their own ways of life when they see the fascination it calls out in the traveller. Boissevain considers this increased self-confidence to be one of the factors that compensates for the negative aspects that tourism can have on a community.

There are also opportunities in taking religious people on pilgrimages within their own religion. Thomas Cook’s ambition to bring people to the Holy Land is an example of this, and he believed that the tour would deepen and intensify their faith. From his first trip to Levant, Egypt and Palestine in 1868, Thomas Cook took thousands of people on successful pilgrimages to the Holy Land and believed these trips to prove the effectiveness of religious practice (Hamilton, 2005).

Another strong appeal people feel towards religious tourism is its relation to culture. Beyer (1994) explains that religion and culture have extremely strong ties and more often than not cultures get shaped by their religion, with religious traditions often having to survive cultural alterations towards a more modern way of life. Beyer, however, goes on to say that in some cases religious traditions align themselves with the global whole and away from the culture the tradition had identified itself with in the past. In his opinion there are, therefore, two different directions a religious tradition can take within globalisation: approaching the global system from the perspective of a particular sub-global culture or from a global culture in general.

“Tourism in a globalizing world means not only new demands but also new opportunities.” (George et al, 2009:5). Tourism widens the traveller’s horizon, introduces new ways of life and increases understanding and appreciation of the world. There are great opportunities

for this within religious tourism, especially if looking at the wide group of people that religious institutions can reach. Beyer (1994) mentions that religious institutions have a great strength to reach not only their followers but also people outside the religious realm and he believes that ecological crisis might for example bring more non-believers to start listening to the religious message. Granberg-Micaelson also believed in the power of religious institutions and called for their help at the Rio summit in 1992, to share the power of their spirituality in the attempt to overcome the destruction of the earth and poverty (Beyer, 1994).

2.2.2 The Religious Traveller

By going on a journey, the everyday traveller is usually seeking an escape from their normal routine. Boissevain (1996) explains that the traveller often believes that by stepping away from their regular responsibilities and way of life they will recharge their batteries both mentally and physically and be better situated to cope with whatever they get handed to them upon return. The traveller often adopts new behaviours whilst travelling and, in some cases, opts for a totally new personality and/or identity and temporarily becomes another person whilst on travel. This temporary change Boissevain refers to as wearing 'leisure clothes'. Rabotić (2010) supports Boissevain's explanation that by travelling the traveller is often looking for the opposite of their daily lives and looking to get into new, extraordinary, different and exciting situations.

Thomas Cook believed in this freedom that people often feel when traveling and considered travel to widen people's social circles. This is why he felt it important that travel be an opportunity for everyone, even the poor. In fact, he believed that the poor needed to travel more than anyone else in order to escape the harsh reality of their daily lives. To him, religious tours were about getting closer to God. He wanted to offer other people the feeling of deepening their love for God and their understanding of the Bible by walking the same paths that are mentioned within its pages. His dream to one day bring people to the Holy Land was the drive behind his entire travel endeavour. These tours took him 24 years to materialise, but when he finally made it happen he took several tours and led hundreds of people through the Holy Land in the following years (Hamilton, 2005).

Cook believed that the experience sought by a traveller embarking on a religious tour was deeper than that sought by a general traveller. Tours to India are a good example of this. Many people from the western part of the world go to India to seek answers, peace or a redefinition of their own self. The activities in which travellers partake in their search for these things are in most cases related to religion, since both of India's biggest religions, Hinduism and Buddhism, are very peace-oriented and focused on people finding their inner self (Anti Superstition, no date).

Religious travellers might have several different motivations for wanting to take a religious tour. Cindi Brodhecker (2012) says that the motivation is seven fold: 1) To enrich their faith. 2) To refresh their souls and bodies. 3) To experience fellowship with others. 4) To participate in mission and volunteer work. 5) To raise funds. 6) To have fun. 7) To connect with their community. She then goes on to say that whilst some people are looking to spend time with people from the same religion to enjoy worshiping with them and grow from them, others are looking to interact with people of other religions to learn from them

and to better understand their culture. Then there are those who travel because of obligation. In Islam for example the fifth pillar of the religion is the Hajj. The Hajj tells Muslims that they have to take a pilgrimage to Mecca once in their lifetime if they are physically and financially able to do so. The pillars are the religion's primary obligations and define the basic identity of Muslims. This fifth pillar is considered to be the one that is "the most significant manifestation of Islamic faith and unity in the world" (Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, no date). The question of what religious travellers are looking for is therefore quite a difficult one to address and has several correct answers. It is impossible to put down an overall assumption as to what the religious traveller, or any traveller for that matter, is looking for when embarking upon a religious tour. What can, however, be assumed is that the religious traveller is always traveling with a purpose. Paul Larsen (2011), chairman of NTA's Faith Tourism Advisory Council, says that this purpose is why it is so important that the tour guide or the tour operator listens to the traveller. When able to identify traveller's hopes and expectation, they are much more likely to be able to fulfil them. Two travellers that sign up for the same tour might be taking it for completely different reasons and in search of completely different things, despite them perhaps practicing the same religion and even coming from the same church.

2.2.3 Threats of Religious Tourism

The loss of privacy is probably the biggest downside to all cultural tourism. Sometimes the government decides to turn a site into a tourist destination without asking opinions from the worshipers and inhabitants around the site and then turn the common life of the local people into a show to lure travellers in. This is a known problem within cultural tourism in general and can often cause sites to lose their cultural identity. These mainly become problems when tourism happens too fast and the local people become vulnerable because they have not been able to develop the skills necessary to handle mass tourism. Where these problems occur, locals are more likely to become hostile towards the whole concept of tourism and the traveller. They can also result in the locals becoming an easy target for exploitation by tour operators or directly by the travellers themselves (Boissevain, 1996).

Local religious festivals are another thing that tourism can affect and change. Boissevain (1996:137) makes a few examples of these, one being religious festivals in Malta. These festivals have changed rapidly from being about people from the village gathering to join together in worship and devotions and celebrate a religious festival, into big and spectacular commercial events that people from all over come to take part in. Whilst some might consider this a great development and an example of globalisation, others will argue that this is causing people to lose their sense of community and the festivals to change their religious value for a commercial value.

2.3 The Religious Tour Guide

Rabotić (2010) discusses how the act of guiding travellers is one of the oldest activities known in human history, even though it has only recently received any real academic attention. This newfound attention is probably thanks to Cohen (1985) who was one of the first to ever turn scientific attention towards the act of guiding. According to him the role is mainly about social mediation and cultural brokerage.

Tour guiding can be a rather difficult job and often highly misunderstood by those who fascinate over the exciting and diverse life that the tour guide must lead. Diversity is something that can be found within the job, but not always, since often the tour guide facilitates the same tour over and over again without any diversity what so ever (Pond, 1993). Complexity is another thing that the job can entail, given that people can expect their tour guide to fulfil greatly diverse tasks with hardly any limits as to what situations a tour guide can be faced with handling. Rabotic (2009) takes Black (in Pastorelli, 2003) as an example but she identified the role of the tour guide in general to be six-fold: information provider, social facilitator, cultural host, motivator of conservation values, interpreter of the natural and cultural environment and a people mover.

Pond (1993) agrees that a tour guide's job description varies greatly from one guide to another but she carries on addressing their role as educators. According to Pond, tour guides more often than not have little or no professional or academic support and do not consider it to be important. This opens up opportunities for volunteers who are perhaps interested in the site in question or the history behind it to become more popular for the job due to their supporting knowledge. Pond goes as far as arguing that in many cases this results in the volunteers, or so called docents, to be the best tour guides. This lack of professional and academic support that Pond believes to be the fact within tour guides in general is quite a serious issue if true, since many see the tour guide mainly as an educator. This educational aspect means that a tour guide can give a place an entirely new meaning to a person by filling the experience of visiting it with historical facts and deeper thoughts. In some cases tour guides can also offer travellers access to new sites or closed off parts of a site that they have already visited, thereby further enriching their experience (Rabotic, 2010). This matter of education and understanding is especially crucial in religious tourism and the tour guide needs to always make sure all information being relayed is accurate and up to date. Most rules, regulations and norms within religions seem to be timeless and indisputable but there are still some that are subject to change and redefinition (Riis and Woodhead, 2010). Despite Pond's conclusions that tour guides in general do not find education of value, various studies confirm that the majority of guides see themselves mainly as information-givers (Holloway, 1981). In a survey Rabotic (2010) conducted amongst 176 American participants on a sightseeing tour, the results support this, clearly demonstrating that according to the participants the tour guide's role was considered to be mainly that of an information provider.

Thomas Cook is a good example of this. He was considered to be a fantastic tour guide, especially in his trips to the Holy Land. These trips meant a lot to him personally and were, as has been said before, his lifelong dream and motivation to start a tour operator in the first place. Religion was always very important to him and as a young boy nobody could match his knowledge of the Bible, neither of the Old nor the New Testament (Hamilton, 2005). The knowledge and passion that he had carried with him from a young age most likely played a vital role in making him such a good tour guide. According to Pond (1993) the tour guide's passion for something is more likely to affect the travellers than the actual information given out. Having said that, tour guides must be careful not to have their passion take over their professional behaviour, but remain neutral and respectful towards all travellers and others around. Cook's passion for his faith sometimes got him into trouble when he wrote articles for his own newspaper. While most of the articles were considered fresh, he also got criticised for being very influenced by his Bible readings.

Even in matters that had nothing to do with religion. His biased opinions made many consider him to be unreliable, resulting in him losing trust amongst some (Hamilton, 2005).

2.3.1 Responsibilities towards the Religion and the Culture

Evans-Pritchard (1965) said that to have a non-believer speak about religion was like having a blind man speak about colours. Based on this, he would probably argue that a tour guide would need to be a worshiper of the religion in question to be able to teach others about it. Personal knowledge and understanding of the religion and being able to share personal experience with the travellers is very valuable, but the tour guide still needs to be neutral towards the people in the group by not imposing any personal opinions upon the traveller but rather respecting the fact that some in the group might not share the religion of the place being visited.

Keeping their opinions to themselves does not mean that the tour guides should lie to their travellers. On the contrary, integrity and expertise of the tour guides are very important and together help both the locals and the travellers to build trust. The tour guide especially needs to be well informed on the contentious issues at hand. These contentious issues are, for example, the rituals, the practices, the dietary observations, the dress code and other issues that affect worshipers' everyday life and are likely to be of curiosity to the group of travellers or affect them in the way that they need to adjust to them whilst visiting. Having a tour guide that is well familiar with these things will cause the travellers to be less likely to offend the locals and/or worshipers with their behaviour.

Putting on the 'leisure clothes' mentioned previously can be an example of this, as it can in some cases offend locals and in other cases be of amusement to them (Boissevain, 1996). The travellers decision what to wear to a religious site, if to participate in a ritual or not and if to wear symbols of other religions are a part of those 'leisure clothes' has to be considered. This comes into Cohen's (1985) second point mentioned previously, of the importance of the tour guide's cultural brokerage. Cohen also put emphasis on the tour guide's role as an interpreter. Pond (1993), however, distinguishes between a tour guide and an interpreter, saying that in general she considers interpreters to be more educated. In many cases the distinction is minor. To explain the meaning she puts into the word interpreter she seeks the National Association's definition of interpreting, which says it is "the art of revealing meanings and relationships in natural, cultural, recreational and historical resources" (Pond, 1993:28). This is obviously an important part of any kind of tourism but especially religious tourism and other historical or cultural tourism that focuses mainly on understanding and learning about the surroundings. If the tour guide does not communicate information regarding the religion and the site in question well enough, the travellers do not have a firm enough ground for interpretation and as a result, will not get to know and understand the religion and/or the site well enough. The tour guide does not need to agree with everything the religion teaches, but needs to know about it, respect it, and share it with the travellers, who could add to their experience by doing their homework on these things beforehand and have a basic understanding of the religion in question before going to the site (Broadhecker, 2012).

2.3.2 Responsibilities towards the Traveller

According to Pond (1993) the only deadly sin a tour guide can commit is to show lack of care towards the travellers. The travellers need to feel that the guide cares for them and if they feel that, they will repay with the same care. In any kind of tourism, tour guides should put emphasis on connecting with the travellers in the group and gaining their trust. Broadhecker (2012) agrees with Pond and says that building a good relationship between a tour guide and a traveller is one of the single most important things in religious tourism. This is especially important in religious tourism where emotions are often involved since the whole concept of it is to visit sacred places, such as temples, shrines and churches, and often religious emotions are bound to those places (Riis and Woodhead, 2010). Pond (1993) does however warn tour guides not to get too close to their travellers but to have a clear balance between personal and professional relationship by, for example, not interacting with the travellers outside of the organised schedule. This is more likely to cause problems with tour leaders that spend days with a group, rather than tour guides that usually only take a group to visit a specific site and do not spend time with them outside of that visit.

Riis and Woodhead (2010) address the issue of emotions from the viewpoint of the tour guide and use the example of an icon. The painter that painted the icon may have only seen it as a job and not bear any personal religious feelings towards it. All odds are, however, that the painter hopes that the work will become a religious objectification that will capture and provoke religious emotions amongst those who might see it. In a tour, the tour guide is the painter. While the tour guide's passions might lead to a better tour and a tour guide who is too opinionated might wreck a tour, the tour guide needs to realise what the importance of the tour is to the people taking it, regardless of their own feelings or lack of feelings towards it.

There is no way of assuming a traveller's general reaction to a sacred place. The same sacred place can bring about very different feelings within people (Riis and Woodhead, 2010). In Stinger's (1999) opinion, the power to provoke such strong and various emotions within people is one of religion's greatest powers. While some are overwhelmed by a place, others might not be feeling anything at all or feel a totally different kind of fascination. The feeling also varies between what the traveller is looking for in the first place. As has been discussed, some go on religious tours as a part of their religious experience. They are in search of serenity, deeper meaning or increased understanding of their own faith whilst others, sometimes in the same group of travellers, are merely there to see the beautiful architecture, learn about the great story behind the site or simply because the site was listed somewhere as a must-see tourist attraction. The tour guide is responsible to fulfil the needs and expectations of everyone in the group, which can sometimes consist of people from all of these different groups.

In the attempt to cater to everyone in the group, the tour guide must keep a close eye on the travellers in the group and constantly attempt to read them, trying to identify the emotions going on (Riis and Woodhead, 2010). Evaluating other people's emotions can be very difficult and so the tour guide needs to rely on the traveller's acts and symbols in trying to understand their feelings. This can be especially tricky since the individuals in the group are likely to be experiencing very different emotions (Evans-Pritchard, 1965). This is

another example of the importance of the tour guide getting to know the travellers before and during the tour, to help with these evaluations.

In trying to fulfil the traveller's hopes and expectations it is better to pin-point what those are early on in the tour. A tour guide can never assume that those in the group have knowledge about the place in question or know what rules to follow (Black, Ham & Weiler, 2001), which makes it that much more important for the tour guide to map out what information is already there in the beginning of the tour. Knowing this will also help the tour guide evaluate how far to go when interpreting parts of the tour and how much to leave for the traveller to interpret based on personal experience, and to decide what to put emphasis on in the hopes of making the traveller happy.

Often religious tours to a sacred place are organised around the times of religious services or prayer times. When a traveller is present at any rituals or services, it is a big question whether to participate or not. A tour guide should be aware of services coming up and explain to the travellers what will be happening, if they are welcome to join in and then what will be expected from them. It is also important for the tour guide to keep in mind the impact that it might have on the traveller to take part in a service or ritual, regardless of whether the person is a follower of the religion in question or not, and know how to deal with the aftermath. Emotional effects can be very intense when individuals join together to participate in a ritual action, since feelings magnify in collective ritualised gatherings (Evans-Pritchard, 1965).

As has been mentioned before another great pressure on tour guides is to educate their group of travellers and know answers to all their potential questions. Due to this pressure, tour guides sadly often result to giving false information or simply making up stories to look better in the eyes of their travellers and fulfil this role (Rabotić, 2009). This is a very dangerous development. Pond (1993) says that truthfulness and accuracy are the essential virtues of a tour guide, excluding the make-believe stories or myths that are an important part of the history and experience of some places. She says that "too often, mythology is associated only with the ancient cultures; however, no culture, era, city or region is without its myths" (Pond, 1993:144) It is important for tour guides to distinguish between accurate historical stories and myths and make sure that travellers in the group are confident about which is which.

2.4 The Future of Religious Tourism

Religious and spiritual travels have grown substantially in recent years, alongside the growth of tourism in general. Globus, an international tour operator, conducted a study in December 2011 that was answered by 635 potential religious travellers and 207 past religious travellers in the United States. The study showed that religious tourism had grown by nearly 5% from their original travel study in 2007, despite difficult market conditions due to global recession during that time. The study also showed that 85% of past religious travellers intended to take another religious tour at some point, 33,3% of those in the next two years. (Joanna Dyer, 19 April 2014).

This 5% increase in religious tourism since 2007 is in line with the long term forecast of increased tourism, put forward by UNWTO's Tourism Towards 2030 project. According

to this project, international tourism is supposed to increase by 3,3% a year from 2010 until 2030. That increase has been reached every year from 2010 up until now (World Tourism Organization, 2013). The strongest growth in tourism in 2012 was in Asia. This might be related to the mass increase in spiritual tourism previously mentioned. It is, however, difficult to verify since very few countries have religious travel as an option when asking travellers for their reason for travel. Timothy and Olsen (2006) say that not only is religious tourism increasing as a result of expanded definition of the term, but actual pilgrimages are also increasing. They point out how this is especially interesting in the light of declining religious practices and affiliation around the world.

Tour guides and their responsibilities play a vital role in the future of religious tourism. These responsibilities have been identified throughout this chapter and have mainly to do with their role as educators and information providers as well as the importance of them caring for their travellers and identifying their emotions. Tour guides can serve as a bridge between the travellers and the locals and need to share information well enough for neither group to feel offended during, or following, a tour to a religious site. Religious tourism that is build up from qualified and trustworthy tour guides is likely to keep growing and positively affecting the world's globalisation in the years to come.

3 Methods used

Three different methods were used when writing this dissertation, secondary data, semi-structured or semi-standardised interviews and data collecting through a survey that was then followed up with a few informal interviews.

The secondary data was collected from the literature on religious tourism. The Bible was also used to give examples, but that was the only religious literature.

The first interview that the author attempted was an informal one with a tour guide at the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque in Abu Dhabi. Nowhere in this dissertation is that interview used as a reference due to the author not having been able to contact the tour guide in question after that tour to get his permission to use him as a reference. That was, however, the interview that laid the foundation to this writing and influenced it greatly. While the research and writing of this dissertation took place, the author interviewed three other individuals: a 58 year old Hindu priest in India that asked to remain anonymous, Joanna Dyer who is a religious travel manager at Globus family brands and Ghyas Taleb who owns and runs an Islamic tour operator in France. Due to time difference, schedule difficulties and language barriers, most communication was done through emails. They started with the author sending out a list of questions that were open ended, as is a custom in semi-structured interviews. In follow-up to those questions, email communications continued, bringing with them new and interesting information that had not been delivered through the initial questions. In addition to these email communications, one interview was conducted through Skype, with the Hindu priest. While the Skype interview was very insightful, it also felt less structured than those done through emails. As often happens with semi-structured interviews, the fact that they offer open ended questions often results in the answers often taking on a life of their own and directing the discussions in a completely different direction than they were originally meant to go (Berg, 2001). This can often bring with it information that the interviewer had not thought to ask and can therefore be a positive thing. In this case, however, the interview felt too informal and unstructured since the priest had so much information he wanted to share. The email communications felt considerably more structured and limited in a good way. While all the questions put forward still were open ended and offered the interviewees room to share their thoughts and experience, it also gave them the opportunity to go over their answers and in the authors opinion delivered a more focused and thought out conclusion. This being said, cultural and personal differences might also play a vital role in how the answers were put forward.

In both the interviews and the talks conducted in continuous to the survey, the author tried to create a personal relationship with those being talked to the best she could. Riis and Woodhead (2010) say when conducting personal interviews the interviewee is more likely to capture the real emotions of the interviewer and better understand how the interviewer associates those emotions with religion.

3.1 The Survey

To get a sense of understanding from people around the world, the author created an online survey with a few questions related to religious tourism and the tour guide's responsibility. The survey was made open for everyone to answer, with the focus on getting as a diverse group as possible in regards to age, culture and religion to answer the questions. The author was hoping it would result in certain patterns amongst people of similar groups. Interestingly that was not the case when reviewing the answers submitted.

In total there were 69 people that replied to the survey, from age groups of 18 to 75+. Those 69 who took part came from four different continents and 19 different countries, those being Iceland, Sweden, India, USA, Canada, New Zealand, Afghanistan, Egypt, Kosovo, Australia, England, Wales, Germany, Switzerland, Russia, Scotland, Kenya, Slovakia and Lithuania. 41 participants in the survey were Christians, 5 Muslims and 2 Hindus. 17 were not religious and the remaining four belonged to other religions.

Nine out of those 69 said that their personal place of worship was a popular tourist destination, so they could relate to religious tourism from a local worshiper's point of view.

The survey was anonymous, but 10 participants contacted the author after having submitted their answers with questions or further musings. These led to further, informal, discussions about the survey and the topic in general. Parts of these discussions were kept in mind when writing this dissertation.

4 Conclusion

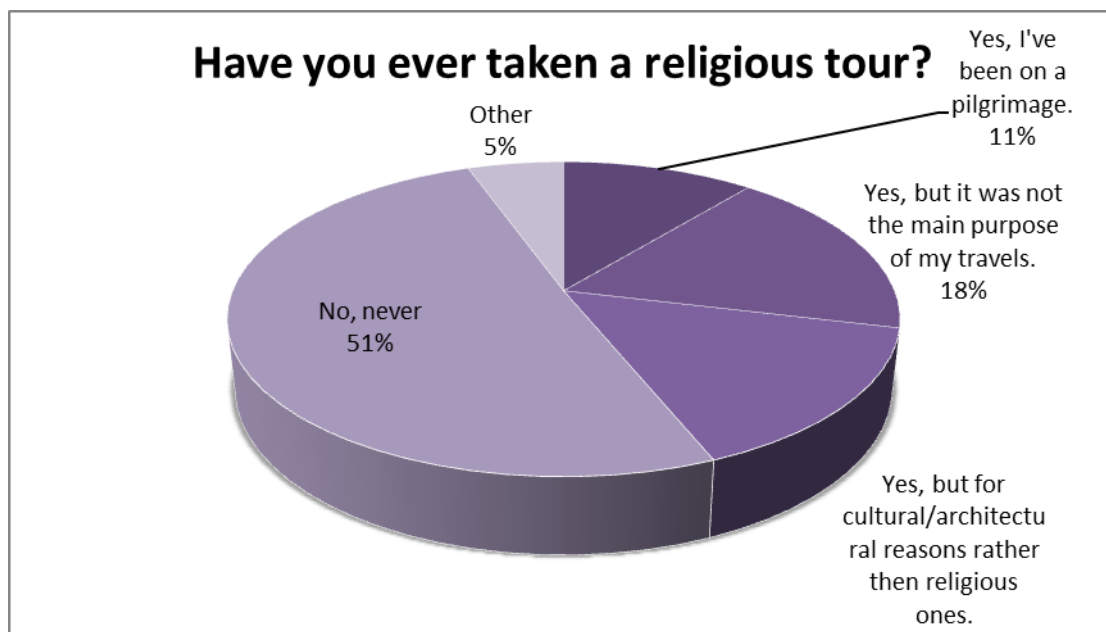
The results from the previously mentioned survey, conducted when writing this dissertation, as well as the information gathered from the interviewers that the author spoke to, the information from the literature used, was in most cases well supported.

4.1 Religious Tourism

Joanna Dyer, religious travel manager with Globus tour operators, agrees with the leisure element constantly becoming a more important part of religious tourism and that has caused leisure to become a big emphasis in tours that are offered by Globus (Joanna Dyer, 16 April 2014).

As previously mentioned the concept religious tourism is constantly expanding, causing people to often not realising its breadth of the definition. In an online survey the author conducted when writing this dissertation, 38 of those 69 who answered the questions said that they had never taken a religious tour. When following up on ten of those people it turned out that eight of them had, in fact, taken a religious tour without realising that they had. This proves how religious tourism is a considerably broader concept than many realise. Many associate it solely with pilgrimages and only 11% of those who answered the survey had taken a pilgrimage tour at some point in their lives, in comparison to 33% that had visited a religious site as a part of a tour that had an additional purpose. Most of those did not consider it to be a religious tour until they were told it was so.

Chart 2. Survey replies on religious tours taken.



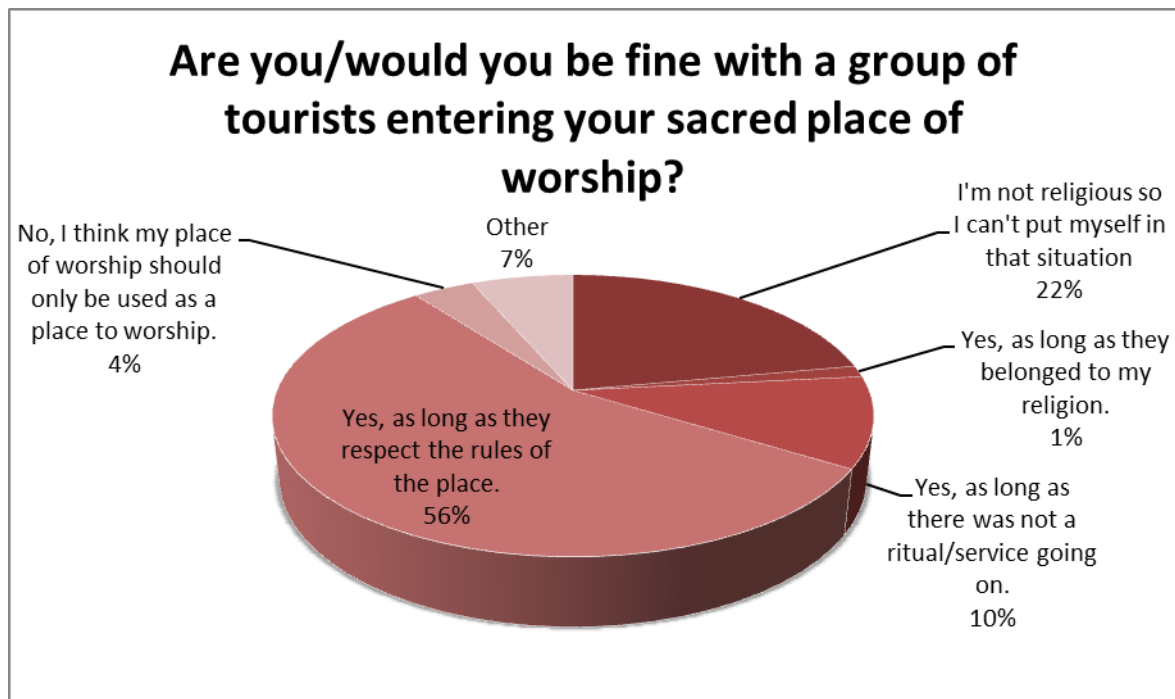
4.2 Opportunities and threats in Religious Tourism

In the survey conducted, many suggestions were made as to how religious tourism could bring positive impacts to a community or a religion. Correcting other peoples' misconceptions of different faiths was the most frequently mentioned suggestion. For example, one of the participants of the survey mentioned how when visiting mosques, women are required to cover themselves up according to Islamic law. With the women having to wear certain outfits, it gives the tour guide a great platform to explain the reasons behind these sartorial regulations.

The Hindu priest interviewed is a part of a small community in the South of India. He does not get many travellers to visit the temple where he serves and says that Hindu worshipers are often unhappy with their temples welcoming tourists, especially given that the Hindu religion does not seem to approve of opening up its temples to tourists (Anonymous, 28 March 2014). Despite their disapproval, temples are amongst the biggest tourist attractions in India. This has made many of them lose their meaning for worshipers, the Taj Mahal being a good example, whereby the act of worship has taken a step aside and tourism has taken over the temple.

In the previously mentioned survey, 40% of those who replied were worried about the impact religious tourism could have on the religious community. Most of their concerns had to do with matters which should not be an issue if a qualified tour guide was to accompany the group. Many participants worried about travellers not showing respect towards the religion and the site in question and that causing difficulties between the travellers and the locals or the worshipers. 56% of those who replied to the survey said that they were fine with travellers entering their place of worship as long as they respected the rules of the site. Only 4% considered their place of worship to be solely that and should be closed to travellers and less than 1% said that they were fine with it only if the traveller was of the same religion. Results can be seen on the following chart.

Chart 3: Survey replies on tourists entering a sacred place of worship.



Some of other the fears expressed by those taking part in the survey were: wrong information sharing from the tour guide and travellers taking the tour to get access to the place of worship in order to make a scene. One mentioned a fear of tour guides trying to brainwash travellers into turning to the religion being discussed. There is a fine line between sharing information with people and preaching to them. Religious tourism should indeed be about educating people, but not about forcing beliefs onto people.

Another participant mentioned that while religious tourism could have great impact on the battle against prejudice and discrimination, it can also increase prejudice if the tour guide is not careful in discussing the evolution that religion has gone through, loosening up on prejudices that might have been a part of the religion in the past. A couple of replies also addressed worries that a worshiper would become an object of religious tourism and in that context raised the importance of being considerate towards the worshipers and never creating a situation where the worshipers would feel uncomfortable practicing their religion. Among other concerns were environmental issues and loss of cultural identity.

4.3 The Religious Tour Guide

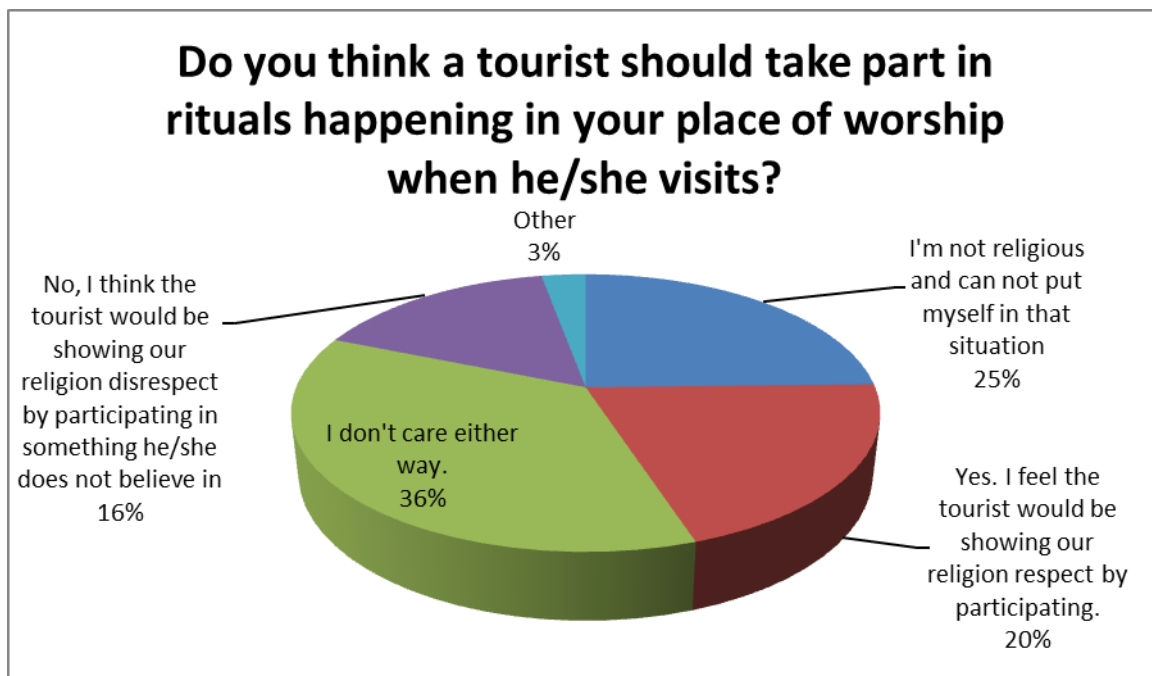
The tour guide's role as an information provider was clearly stated in the survey with 38 of the 69 who replied mentioning education and/or information sharing as the tour guide's main responsibility. Many of those surveyed mentioned their hopes that this education would eventually increase peoples' understanding and tolerance of other religions and increase the depth of understanding of those who are worshipers of the religion in question. The aforementioned Hindu priest in India who was interviewed in relation to this dissertation spoke about this concern as well, placing emphasis on what a vital role the

tour guide plays in gaining the travellers trust to create a valuable platform to share about the religion's ethics, rules, values and history (Anonymous, 28 March 2014).

Joanna Dyer (22 April) pointed out that with religion being so tied with history there was really no way to address one without the other. Knowing the history will also assist the tour guides and the traveller to conduct appropriate behaviour when on religious sites. When visiting a sacred place it is important to take into consideration the meaning that this place might have to another person and the rituals conducted therein. The previously mentioned Hindu priest said that on the rare occasions that his temple receives visitors he did not expect them to take part in the rituals going on, but he did feel that it was important that they respected them and if they wanted to take part then they were welcome to do so. For a tour guide to lead a group through a Hindu temple it is, in the priest's opinion, especially important that the guide has knowledge and understanding of the religion and its past since Hinduism has a very rich history and it takes time to understand it and its values (verbal reference, 28 March 2014). Both Joanna Dyer and Ghyas Taleb also mentioned the importance of the tour guide showing respect to the religion and its worshipers in speech as well as conduct.

In the author's survey the importance of respect towards the religion was clearly stated as well as the tour guide's responsibility to explain the rituals to their groups, especially when a ritual was in progress whilst the group was present. Asked if they felt that the travellers should take part in the rituals, regardless of their faith, opinions were very different as can be seen in the following chart.

Chart 4: Survey replies on tourists taking part in rituals.



When asked about the tour guides main responsibilities, Joanna Dyer (24 April 2014) said that their priority should be to fulfil the expectations of the travellers and it is important that the tour guide always respects the traveller's feelings and faith. She said this could be very challenging, especially when a tour guide was guiding a group of travellers mixed

with people from different religions, some that are there for religious reasons and others who do not belong to the religion in question and are there for other reasons. It is, however, possible when the tour guide is qualified. She says that some religious groups choose to take a spiritual guide on these travels, such as their priest, and in those cases the guide is expected to offer spiritual guidance to enhance the travellers' experience. When this is not the case the tour guide should be effective regardless of own faith and all personal opinions. Ghyas Taleb, in contrast to Joanna, does not have the same trust in the tour guide's potential ability to handle such situations and dynamics and thus does not recommend a group of travellers to be mixed between those going on a pilgrimage and others who are going on a more of a leisure tour. In his opinion the tour guide will never be fully able to cater to both groups at the same time. He has even less faith in this working out when the group consists of people from different religions.

When asked about religious bias amongst tour guides, the three interviewees: the Hindu priest, Joanna Dyer from Globus and Ghyas Taleb, all agreed that the tour guide should be well informed about the religion in question and the history behind it but they should not share their personal religious opinions with their groups (verbal reference and per emails, 28 March to 24 April). This matter is especially important when guiding a group of people that belong to different religions, or even just different churches within the same religion. Joanna Dyer (verbal reference per email on 22 April) says that this has been an issue with Globus's tours before, despite them being marketed especially for Christians. As an example she mentions Jesus's resurrection. While most Catholics believe that the resurrection happened inside the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Protestants believe it to have happened at the Garden Tomb. The Globus team now visit both places on their tours to Israel and cater to both beliefs. In these situations it is extremely important that the tour guide remains neutral and does not share any personal opinions or feelings but explains both sides, answers questions about the actual site and always maintains respect towards the controversy of the actual resurrection.

5 Discussions

The main research question in this dissertation asked about the responsibilities of a religious tour guide. The question was divided into three main topics: the tour guides responsibilities towards the religion in question and the people that practice it; the tour guides responsibility towards the travellers; and the traveller's responsibility when visiting a site.

The literature studied to answer these questions was well supported by the survey and the three interviews that followed. Combined, the results from the three methods used give good indication as to where the tour guide's main responsibilities lie.

5.1 What responsibilities does a religious tour guide have towards the religion in question and the people that practice that religion?

What struck the author as interesting, was that results from the survey showed a vast variation of opinions' amongst the participants, with no clear similarities in answers based on geography, gender, age and more importantly, faith. That demonstrates how many of the religious disputes around the world are often built on miscommunication and fear of the unknown.

Both Joanna Dyer and Ghyas Taleb mentioned the responsibility of education to be the tour guide's main responsibility in religious tourism. Results from the survey supported this idea, with 55% of those who replied to the survey, mentioning education or information sharing as the tour guide's main responsibility. The importance of this is no less towards the religion itself and those who practice it than it is towards the traveller. By increasing their knowledge and understanding of the religion in question, odds are that traveller's tolerance towards it will increase as well. If the tour guide, however, does not do the religion justice, maintains commonly considered misunderstandings or does not show respect to other religions while educating and guiding their group, they might do the opposite and increase people's intolerance and ignorance towards the religion. Their responsibility is therefore great in regards to bringing forth correct information and doing so in an appropriate manner.

This also addresses the importance that information sharing can have in averting offensive behaviour from travellers during their visit. Travellers that are part of different religions, different cultures and therefore different traditions, can risk being offensive simply by maintaining their usual habits. A tour guide that possesses knowledge and understanding of the religion in question can prevent these incidents from occurring, by explaining what should be avoided and why. According to the survey, most people still accept travellers' to visit their place of worship, regardless of their faith and of whether a ritual was in process

or not. If the traveller's do not behave in an respectful manner, worshiper's willingness to accept them into their sacred place will most likely decline, resulting in a loss of respect and tolerance between the different groups in question.

5.2 What responsibilities does a religious tour guide have towards the travellers?

Travellers that embark on a religious travel generally have a purpose to the tour. In most cases it is impossible to assume what that purpose is, since the reason behind such travels can vary considerably from one person to another. With the purpose and the reason behind the travel unknown, the tour guide can experience great difficulties in identifying the traveller's expectations. Joanna Dyer spoke about the tour guide's responsibility to fulfil the traveller's expectation and how important it is to do so. It inevitably makes the tour guide's job difficult when they do not know what the expectations of the travellers are and therefore are uncertain of what aim they are trying to reach.

When the tour guide knows the travellers it makes it easier for them to show care and respect. Joanna also mentioned the importance for the tour guide: to respect the opinions and different religions of people in the group; to keep their personal opinions to themselves and to cater to the emotions that arise within the traveller. Furthermore, at the same time a tour guide should never share their own feelings or personal opinions about matters related to the religion or the site. In this regard, staying neutral is an important factor in getting everybody in their group to feel connected to the tour guides and develop trust towards him. Ghyas Taleb agrees with Joanna on this matter, but does not share her faith in the tour guide being able to fulfil the travellers' expectations when guiding a group of too diverse people that, for example, belong to different religious groups.

The tour guide needs to make the traveller feel safe during the tour. This brings us back to the educational importance of the tour guide. A guide that is confident, knowledgeable and well informed about traditions and cultural differences etc. will make the travellers feel safe, gain their trust and is more likely to identify and fulfil their expectations.

According to the survey, 20% of those who replied said they thought travellers should partake in rituals if they were to happen while the traveller was there, regardless of the traveller's personal faith. 36% those who replied did not care either way and 16% were against it. With more than half of those who replied to the survey feeling fine about a traveller partaking in their ritual, it is important that the tour guide informs the traveller right away if it is advisable, and if so, go over the ritual with the tour guide in preparation for what is to come.

5.3 What are the responsibilities of the traveller when visiting a religious site?

Tour guides can never assume that travellers who take a tour have any knowledge about the religion and/or the culture in question. Travellers need to show respect to rituals happening at the site, as well as they must follow traditions and rules regarding dress and

behaviour. Despite the tour guide being responsible for the people in the group, the travellers must be equally responsible for their own experience, which enriches when they take the time to study their destination. This is why travellers should be responsible for doing preparation work before going on a tour, in order for them to get as much as possible out of it.

In any case, the traveller should be well aware of what kind of tour they are partaking in and be mindful, that the tour in question is in fact a religious tour. As previously discussed, many do now realise just how broad the concept of religious tourism is. According to the survey, only 11% of the 69 that answered said that they had taken a religious tour, while 51% said that they had not. When discussing with ten of those who had claimed they had never taken a religious tour, it turned out 8 of those 10 that actually had without realising it.

6 Final Words

Results from the survey and the three interviews conducted when writing this dissertation verified what the literature had told us in chapter 2. Religious tourism is an ever growing sector that entails much emotions and sensitivity and can be a powerful tool in fighting the religious intolerance and misunderstandings in the world.

Tour guides in religious tourism have a greater responsibility to respect the emotional and spiritual well-being of their religious travellers, more so than tour guides engaged in non-religious tourism. This is due to the very personal nature of religion and the many emotions connected to the sacred places visited aligning with the traveller's purpose and experience. Therefore, religious tourism tour guides often have greater influence in terms of the overall religious experience of the traveller. This influence and responsibility makes it that much more important that the tour guide is extensively knowledgeable about the religion and the sites, and qualified in delivering that information in an interesting and respectful way.

In a world where religion is one of the main underlying causes for wars and various versions of disputes, the increase in religious tourism for leisure or curiosity is in the author's opinion a positive thing that, if used correctly, can little by little lead to a better world.

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Appendix A

Online Survey questionnaire

Question 1: How old are you?

Answer options:

- <18
- 18-24
- 25-35
- 35-45
- 45-55
- 55-65
- 65-75
- 75+

Question 2: What country are you from?

Question 3: What religion do you belong to?

Answer options:

- *Christianity.*
- *Islam.*
- *Hinduism.*
- *Buddhism.*
- *I am not religious.*
- *Other (please specify).*

Question 4: Do you practice your religion?

Answer options:

- *Yes.*
- *Yes, but more out of a habit than because it means something to me.*

- *It varies.*
- *No.*
- *Not really, but it still matters a lot to me.*
- *I am not religious.*

Question 5: Have you ever taken a religious tour?

Answer options:

- *Yes, I have been on a pilgrimage.*
- *Yes, but it was not the main purpose of my travels.*
- *Yes, but for cultural/architectural reasons rather than religious ones.*
- *No, never.*
- *Other (please specify).*

Question 6: Is your place of worship a popular tourist destination?

Answer options:

- *Yes.*
- *No.*
- *Other (please specify).*

Question 7: Are you/would you be fine with a group of tourists entering your sacred place of worship?

Answer options:

- *I am not religious so I cannot relate to that situation.*
- *Yes, as long as they respect my religion.*
- *Yes, as long as there is not any kind of a ritual/service going on.*
- *Yes, as long as they respect the rules of the place.*
- *No, I think my place of worship should only be used as a place of worship.*
- *Other (please specify).*

Question 8: If a tourist visits your place of worship, do you think he/she should take part in rituals and worships, regardless of if they belong to the religion in question or not?

Answer options:

- *I am not religious so I cannot relate to that situation.*
- *Yes, I feel a tourist would be showing my religion respect by participating.*
- *I do not care either way.*
- *No, I think the tourist would be showing my religion disrespect by participating in something he/she does not believe in.*
- *Other (please specify).*

Question 9: What do you think is a religious tour guide main responsibility? (Optional)

Question 10: Do you see any big opportunities and/or problems with religious tourism? (Optional)