

Dervishes on mystic Rumi’s path whirl for god

By **Emrah Gurel**
The Associated Press

KONYA, Turkey — To prepare for the ritual ahead, Omer Kilic and his 14-year-old son dress in white robes, drape black cloaks over them, and don cone-shaped hats called “sikke.”

The tennure robes symbolize funeral shrouds, the cloaks a tomb, and the hats a tombstone — outfits that are part of a centuries-old tradition performed by the whirling dervishes of Turkey.

The dervishes, a Sufi order of Islam that is rooted in mysticism, are chiefly known for the “sama” ritual in which they spin in unison with prayers and verses from the Quran.

Kilic has belonged to the order for 23 years. Now a tennure tailor, he is teaching his craft to his apprentice and son, Toprak Efe Kilic.

Kilic says the religious path first appeared to him in a dream. He decided to start training as a dervish a few days later.



Each year, the dervishes of the Mevlevi order perform their unmistakable act of devotion in the Turkish city of Konya, where thousands of people attend a weeklong series of events and ceremonies

that mark the death of the 13th-century Islamic poet, scholar, and Sufi mystic Jalaladdin Rumi.

Rumi, who is known as Mevlana in Turkey, was born in 1207 in Balkh, a city renewed focus on guest experience and the eateries are evolving as they respond to the shift towards healthier food,” Bandal said.

In Colombo, Nayananda began cycling to work and growing food at home after markets ran dry and it became difficult to feed his family of four.

In Sri Lanka and elsewhere in Asia, a wave of COVID-19 infections in China after it dropped its pandemic controls has revived worries over the risk of a return to shutdowns and other restrictions. But Nayananda says he’s hopeful.

“What is important is to learn to live with what we have in our hands,” he said.

ROBUST RITUAL. Whirling dervishes of the Mevlevi order perform during a “Sheb-i Arus” ceremony in Konya, Turkey, on December 16, 2022. The dervishes, a Sufi order of Islam that is rooted in mysticism, are well known for the “sama” ritual in which they spin in unison with prayers and verses from the Quran. (AP Photo/Emrah Gurel)

that now is part of Afghanistan. He settled in Konya in central Turkey, where he died on December 17, 1273. He is regarded as one of the most important Sufi philosophers, and members of the Mevlevi order follow his teachings.

Instead of mourning his death, the ceremonies in Konya celebrate what his followers believe is Rumi’s union with god. The main feature of the “Sheb-i Arus,” or “night of the union,” is the ritual in which the whirling dervishes revolve with their right hands symbolically turned up toward god and their left hands turned down toward the Earth.

Ahmet Sami Kucuk, the head of the dervishes in Konya, described the whirling as an “end” and a state one attains after years of training and discipline.

In 2005, the U.N. cultural agency proclaimed the practice as an example of “the oral and intangible heritage of humanity.”

The structure holding Rumi’s tomb in Konya is a museum and a pilgrimage site. One pilgrim, Mohammad Mobeen Dervesh, a Kashmiri living in the United Kingdom, said all lovers of god come to the site to honor Rumi.

Two years after the COVID-19 pandemic’s strict lockdowns, tourism official Abdulsettar Yarar said the site attracted more than 3.1 million visitors this year, 10% of them from abroad.

Mehmet Guzel in Konya and Robert Badendieck in Istanbul contributed to this report.

South Asian eateries try “going local” as recovery strategy

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trends that are here to stay as they engage customers who are now a health conscious-aware segment with deep pockets,” Baheti said.

“The entire food industry has realized the importance of promoting better health and the potential of wellness-based menus,” Baheti added. “Eating local and eating fresh also helps in reducing the carbon footprint since the dependence on transportation and refrigeration reduces the emission of greenhouse gasses,” he said.

As the food services industry rebuilds itself, restaurant owners say some

practices born out of necessity during the pandemic can offer a way forward.

Many urban communities are experimenting with plant-based diets and growing farm produce on their rooftops and in backyards.

Siddharth Bandal, a partner at the Hideaway café and bar in the western Indian state of Goa, said they’ve learned to be nimble enough to adapt to changing customer behavior.

“It possibly made the sector stronger by exposing the weak spots and the industry has shown its resilience by adapting quickly. The pandemic made everyone more alert about hygiene. There is a

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JANUARY 9
Street Roots
9-10:30 a.m.
211 NW Davis St, Portland
Cultivate Initiatives
11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Lents Park

JANUARY 11
Portland Rescue Mission
11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
13207 NE Halsey St, Portland
The Rosewood Initiative
1-4 p.m.
14127 SE Stark St, Portland

JANUARY 12
Nightstrike
7-9 p.m.
Under the Burnside Bridge

JANUARY 16
Clark Center
9-11 a.m.
1437 SE MLK Blvd, Portland
Doreen’s Place
11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
610 NW Broadway St, Portland

JANUARY 17
Union Gospel Mission
2-3 p.m.
3 NW 3rd Ave, Portland

JANUARY 18
Cultivate Initiatives
11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
12505 NE Halsey Street, Portland

JANUARY 19
Nightstrike
7-9 p.m.
Under the Burnside Bridge

JANUARY 23
Street Roots
9-10:30 a.m.
211 NW Davis St, Portland
Cultivate Initiatives
10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Lents Park

JANUARY 24
Cultivate Initiatives
11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
247 SE 82nd Ave, Portland

JANUARY 26
Nightstrike
7-9 p.m.
Under the Burnside Bridge

JANUARY 28
Love Your Neighbor
12-2 p.m.
526 SE Grand Ave, Portland

JANUARY 30
Clark Center
9-11 a.m.
1437 SE MLK Blvd, Portland

Doreen’s Place
11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
610 NW Broadway St, Portland

JANUARY 31
Union Gospel Mission
2-3 p.m.
3 NW 3rd Ave, Portland