

THE THEORY OF “UNIVERSAL PEACE” IN THE WORKS OF MAWLANA JALAL AL-DIN BALKHI (RUMI)

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Abstract. This article discusses the theory of “Universal Peace” in the works of Mawlana Jalal al-Din Rumi and acquaints the reader with the meaning and essence of the poet’s love-filled and humanistic poetry. The poet considers the word “Love” as the axis of human peace and friendship, and he strived to eliminate hatred and hostility among people, leading them toward true unity and harmony.

Keywords: Jalal al-Din Rumi, Masnavi-ye Ma‘navi, Diwan-e Shams, love, universal peace, religion

Introduction.

The study of the invaluable works of Mawlana Jalal al-Din Balkhi (Rumi) in the past has played an important role in calling humanity toward peace and unity. Even today, it is necessary that his enchanting and love-filled poetry be used as a spiritual weapon to ensure the tranquility of the peoples of the world. The President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirmonovich Mirziyoyev, has repeatedly spoken on this subject, which is highly commendable. In particular, in one of his addresses in 2018, the words of our head of state became both an inspiration and a motivation for me to write this article. I found it necessary to quote a passage from that address here:

“...Today we are living in an era of rapid change. Across the world, the struggle of interests and the intensity of competition are steadily increasing, and the international situation is becoming ever more tense. Uzbekistan has always remained faithful to its traditions of interethnic harmony and religious tolerance and will never deviate from this path. In our country, priority attention is paid to strengthening mutual respect, friendship, and solidarity among representatives of different nationalities and religious confessions. Strengthening the health of our people and establishing a healthy lifestyle is a matter of vital importance for us. I repeat: if we ensure peace and health, we will achieve everything else” [1].

Furthermore, Shavkat Mirziyoyev has twice, in 2017 and in the current year, 2025, delivered remarkable speeches at the United Nations on the theme of global peace, earning the recognition of the international community.

Sources also show that the life of Jalal al-Din Rumi coincided with a turbulent period, as conflicts and contradictions among religions and sects had reached their peak at that time. Rumi emerged as a poet of peace and friendship, calling people to unity and reconciliation. For this noble service, the peoples of the world recognized him on the stage of eloquence as the sage of the land of love and beauty. As we read in his poetry, Rumi regarded human beings as the greatest miracle of God’s creation and constantly preached and promoted their unity and solidarity. He explained that it is love alone that has the power to overcome divisions and dissolve conflicts.



*Millati ishq az hama dinho judost,
Oshiqonro millatu mazhab Xudost [12, 193].*

Material and methods.

Jalal al-Din Rumi developed the theory of “Universal Peace”. His ideas were immediately embraced and warmly acknowledged by all. This theory subsequently had a profound influence on the works and creations of great thinkers and scholars of the world, as well as on the unity and interconnectedness of the civilizations of various nations and peoples.

Not only during his lifetime but also after Rumi’s passing, from the 13th century up to the present day, the theory of “Universal Peace” has repeatedly been put into practice. Time and again, in critical moments of turmoil, it has served to unite and reconcile peoples in multiethnic and multireligious countries such as Turkey and Greece, India and Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan, the Arab world and Russia, Tajikistan and Azerbaijan.

*Karda o’ro masehiyon ma’bud,
Dida o’ro yahud xub, chu Hud.
Isavy gufta: o’st Isoi mo,
Mo’savy gufta: o’st Mo’soi mo.*

Indeed, it was his humanistic ideas that were able to captivate the hearts of people of different faiths and made him beloved throughout the world. Today, too, the times demand that the delicate works of Mawlana Jalal al-Din Rumi, filled with love, affection, and compassion, be studied and promoted so that people may understand one another and live together in peace and harmony.

*Biyo, to qadri yakdigar bidonem,
Ki to nogah zi yakdigar namonem.*

The purpose of writing this article is to influence the education and upbringing of humanity, especially today’s youth, through Rumi’s peace-promoting works. That is why Rumi himself states in one of his verses that the aim of his writings is education and moral training. As he says:

*Bayti man bayt nest, iqlimest,
Hazli man hazl nest ta’limest.*

In this regard, it is appropriate to highlight Rumi’s relationship with his spiritual master, Shams of Tabriz, as an exemplary model. As researchers point out, there was a time when Rumi wrote poetry under the pen name “Khamush” (“Silent”), and his poems were not particularly powerful or influential. But after Shams of Tabriz entered his life, the knots of Rumi’s heart were untied. From then on, he began composing poetry as effortlessly and fluidly as flowing water.

Discussion and results.

The place and time of the meeting between Shams of Tabriz and Jalal al-Din Rumi have been likened by great scholars of literature to “Majma‘ al-Bahrayn” — the confluence of two seas. Yet when he lost Shams once again, the fire in his heart grew ever stronger. He longed for Shams, yearning to see him once more, or at least someone like him. From this, one can understand that Rumi’s burning love was, in fact, a quest for a peaceful life and the company of noble human beings.

*Binmoy rux, ki bog’u gulistonam orzuzt,
Bikshoy lab, ki qandi farovonam orzuzt!
Dy shayx bo charog’ hamegasht girdi shahr,
K-az devu dad malulamu insonam orzuzt!*

Indeed, Shams of Tabriz shone in Rumi's life like the sun, illuminating the sky of his thoughts. Rumi, in turn, was able to absorb that light within himself and, through poetry imbued with the radiance of love, enlighten the world for eternity. As we can see, the *Dīvān-e Kabīr*, also known as the *Collected Works of Shams of Tabriz*, is the very embodiment of that burning and creative love, born from the profound impact that Shams had on Rumi.

It should be emphasized that from Rumi's own time up to the present day, numerous scholars and commentators across the world have studied and written interpretations of his poetry. For instance, the Sufi scholar Rasul Hodizoda has pointed out that Jalal al-Din Rumi, like Abu Abdullah Rudaki, Abulqasim Ferdowsi, Abu Ali Sina (Avicenna), Omar Khayyam, Nizami Ganjavi, Sa'di of Shiraz, Hafez of Shiraz, Abdurrahman Jami, Abdalqadir Bedil, and others, elevated the fame of Persian-Tajik culture and literature to an unparalleled and universal level [11, 28].

As noted above, it was his universal love that raised him to such heights. It must be remembered that Rumi lived during an era marked by intense religious and sectarian strife and bloodshed. Yet he rose with his pen to struggle against such divisions. He introduced the theory of "Universal Peace", teaching humanity that in this transient world, conflict and opposition are futile. Rumi managed to rise above the boundaries of sectarianism and present himself as the image of the perfect human being (*insān-e kāmīl*).

*Chy tadbir, ay musulmonon, ki man xudro namedonam,
Na tarsovu yahudiyam, na gabru na musulmonam!
Na sharqiyam, na g'arbiyam, na barriyam, na bahriyam,
Na az xoki tabiiyam, na az afloki gardonam!*

We see that even today, wars and conflicts are flaring up all over the world. People have forgotten the words of Mawlana, who once brought human beings closer to one another. The present situation, just like in Rumi's time, demands that we once again establish "universal peace." For this purpose, the poet's love-filled and humanistic verses can serve as a valuable guide. However, to deeply understand the world of Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi, merely reading his poetry is not enough, for the meanings of his verses are not simple and easy to grasp. For instance:

*On chy zi mo shuniday, on zi Xudo shuniday,
Chun hama guftugo 'i mo hast, zi guftugo 'i o'.*

At the same time, in order to understand his intricate thoughts, which he skillfully wove into his poetry, it is also necessary to turn to the scholars who have studied his works. In this regard, we may recall the words of the renowned Iranian researcher Abdulhossein Zarrinkoub: "After Attar, Sufi poetry reached an unfamiliar height, which Jalaluddin Muhammad Balkhi conquered, and after him it remained a peak unique to him and unattainable for all ages and generations of humankind" [2, 172].

Undoubtedly, Mawlavi represents the pinnacle of Persian mystical ghazal, for he himself traversed the winding stages of the spiritual path and vividly depicted that inner journey in his poetry. For this reason, Rumi's poetry is the fruit of his own life and mystical experience, often composed spontaneously in gatherings of dance and *sama'*, in moments of ecstasy. As he himself says:

*Tu mapindor, ki man she'r ba xud mego'yam,
To ki bedoramu hushyor yake dam nazanam.*

Rumi's disciples collected his peace-inspiring poems in the Masnavi-ye Ma'navi and the Divan-e Kabir, also known as the Divan-e Shams. It can be said that no poet before him, nor after him, extolled peace and friendship to the same degree as he did. In his verses, he places the value of human beings, along with the love and affection that the Creator of the universe has placed in the human heart, above all else.

In particular, he regarded love as one of the greatest miracles of creation, constantly urging and inspiring people by showing that this divine gift transcends religion, nation, and creed. In his view, love and devotion have the power to connect the earth with the heavens. For this reason, he praised the greatness of love and emphasized that peace, harmony, freedom, and the flourishing of the world depend upon this very love.

Chist fuzun az du jahon? Shahri ishq!

Behtar az in shahru diyoram nest...

Xeshi man on ast, ki az ishq zod,

Xushtar az in xeshu taboram nest!

As can be understood from Rumi's poetry, human love is deeply connected with their eternal destiny, like a golden chain that binds them inseparably. In other words, God has placed love as a trust upon humanity's shoulders, and human beings have come into this world precisely to bear the burden of that trust. They endure the pains and joys of love in order to return it to its true Owner, all while striving to rediscover their own essence.

This profound idea is masterfully illustrated by Jalal al-Din Rumi in the introductory verses of the Masnavi, where he vividly portrays the journey of the soul – its separation, longing, suffering, and ultimate quest to return to its origin.

Bishnav az nay chun hikoyat mekunad,

Az judoiho shikoyat mekunad.

Az nayiston to maro bibridaand,

Az nafiram mardu zan nolidaand.

Sina xoham sharha-sharha az firoq,

To namoyam sharhi dardi ishtiyog.

Har kase k-o' dur mond az asli xesh,

Boz jo 'yad ro 'zgori vasli xesh.

Here, the symbolic image of the reed flute represents the human being who is consumed by the burning fire of love and is constantly searching for the Beloved. Only union can bring him peace and silence. From these reflections, one may conclude that earthly love—love between human beings—is itself but a fragment of Divine Love, and through its own unfolding, it ultimately leads to that higher, transcendent love. The confirmation of this truth can also be found throughout Rumi's other poems.

To naqshi visoli do 'st bo most,

Moro hama umr xud tamoshost.

On jo, ki visoli do 'ston ast,

V- alloh, ki miyoni xona sahroost.

On jo, ki murodi dil baroyad,

Yak xor beh az hazor xurmost.

Or this:

Ishq bar dil menihad bunyodro,

Oxir, ey jon, az ki xoham dodro?

Digaron ozod sozand bandaro,

Ishq banda mekunad ozodro.

Koshky hargiz nazody modaram,

Chun kunam in baxti modarozodro?

Researchers have determined that Jalal al-Din Rumi composed his ghazals under the pen name of his passionate master, Shams al-Tabrizi. For it was Shams al-Tabrizi who suddenly awakened the spark of love within Rumi's heart and consciousness. The very first ghazal of the Divan of Shams, which begins with this verse, serves as clear evidence of this fact.

Many great figures of the world have spoken about Jalal al-Din Rumi, regarding his passionate poetry as a call to friendship and loyalty, to gratitude, love, and compassion. For instance, Shaykh Sa'di admired Rumi's poetry and, concerning one of his ghazals, wrote: "No better ghazal has ever been composed, nor will one ever be. I have the desire to travel to the land of Rum to visit that sultan and to rub the dust of Rum on the soles of his feet." And that ghazal is as follows:

Har nafas ovozi ishq merasad az chapu rost,

Mo ba falak meravem, azmi tamosho kirosht?[6, 68]

Mawlana Abdurrahman Jami also acknowledged Rumi's Masnavi-yi Ma'navi and, with sincere admiration, gave it the following praise:

Masnavii Ma'navii Mavlavay,

Hast Qur'on dar zaboni pahlavay.

Man chi go'yam vasfi in olijanob,

Nest payg'ambar vale dorad kitob.

Muhammad Reza Shafiei Kadkani, in his article "The Life and Works of Mawlana" (Adab Journal, no. 5, 1992), discusses key aspects of Rumi's ghazals, noting in particular that "Without a doubt, in Persian literature and Islamic culture — and beyond that, in human culture as a whole — no poetic collection pulses with as much movement, life, and love as the Divan of Shams."

Henri Massé, at his retirement ceremony at the Sorbonne University in France, spoke about Persian literature as follows:

"I have devoted my life to Persian literature, and to make you, the scholars and intellectuals of the world, understand what this marvelous literature is, I have no choice but to make comparisons. I must say that Persian literature rests on four great pillars: Ferdowsi, Sa'di, Hafez, and Mawlana (Jalal al-Din Balkhi). Ferdowsi is equal to, and greater than, Homer of Greece. Sa'di reminds us of the philosopher Anatole France, though he surpasses him in wisdom. Hafez is comparable to the German Goethe, who himself admitted to being a disciple of Hafez and considered himself enlivened by the very breeze wafting from his world. But in all the world, I have not found a figure to whom I could compare Mawlana. He is unique and will remain unique forever. He is not merely a poet; rather, he is above all a sociologist, and especially a consummate psychologist, who knows the essence of humankind and of God with precision. Recognize his worth, and through him, come to know yourselves and God. And if, until the end of my life, I were to say nothing more, these few words would suffice for me." [10]

As mentioned earlier, Rumi expressed the doctrine of "Universal Peace" (Sulh-i kull) through the concept of "Love." An insightful discussion of this concept can also be found in the article "The Phenomenon of Love" by the scholar of Sufism Ja'far Khulmuminov, which is worth reading. In this work, the author analyzes the notion of "Love" by comparing the ideas of the Western thinker Sigmund Freud and the Eastern polymath Ibn Sina, and in several places he also brings in Rumi's perspective on "Love," which helps to understand Rumi's mystical world of love. He writes:



*“For thousands of years, philosophers, scholars, and poets of the world have reflected on love, written about it, and debated it. They have sought to define a formula for love, so that its recognition may be easier and its comprehension simpler. But truly, what is love? What kind of phenomenon is it? What is its essence? And how can one distinguish true love from that which is not? How can one differentiate love from pleasure? How should love be defined and explained? How can we know, among the countless mental and emotional states of human beings, which one is truly love?

The phenomenon of ‘Love’ has remained an unsolved mystery in the history of human thought. As Sayyid Muhammad Mashkut wrote in his ‘Introduction to Ibn Sina’s Treatise on Love’: ‘It is astonishing that everyone constantly speaks of love, yet with all the diverse definitions provided by various groups of scholars — from theologians and physicians to psychologists, writers, philosophers, and mystics — the reality of this truth is still seen only as a shadow behind the thick veils of nature. Indeed, none of these definitions has lifted the veil from the unknown reality of Love. At most, they may serve to distinguish the concept of love, which is inscribed directly on the page of the mind, from other notions.’” [13]

The scholar points out elsewhere: “Ibn Sina regarded ‘love’ as a kind of physical and psychological ‘illness,’ and this was a purely medical view. But from the perspective of the Austrian psychologist and neurologist Sigmund Freud (1856–1939), the founder of psychoanalysis, ‘love’ was seen as a form of psychological weakness.” He then quotes Freud: “We become defenseless in the face of anxieties (sufferings) when we fall in love, and we become miserable and despairing when we lose the beloved or the love we once possessed.” [7,183]

The author of the article further remarks: “In the story of ‘The King and the Handmaiden’ in the Masnavi-i Ma’navi, Rumi — without mentioning Ibn Sina by name — employs his methods found in the Canon of Medicine to discover the beloved and to treat the lover’s malady. Why does Rumi not mention Ibn Sina by name in this tale? Perhaps because of the difference in their intellectual orientations: Ibn Sina’s intellect leaned more toward Aristotelian Peripatetic philosophy, whereas Rumi’s intellect was more Platonic and mystical in nature.” [8, 24–32]

Ja’far Muhammad’s comparisons grow deeper and more thought-provoking: “It is said that the true lover’s eye perceives no flaw in the beloved. The moment a lover notices any fault in the beloved, his love ends. Rumi illustrates this with a story: A lover would cross the turbulent Tigris every day, safely reaching the other shore to be united with his beloved. But one day, while in midstream, the thought of a blemish on the beloved’s body crossed his mind — and he drowned. This perspective of Rumi forms the basis of the Islamic-mystical worldview of the East, which emphasizes the sacredness and divinity of love. By contrast, Freud’s theory of ‘erotic love’ is based on raw, animalistic desires and unrestricted instincts in romantic relationships.” [8, 24–32]

He concludes: “It may be said that love is an inner, spiritual phenomenon of the heart. In its perfection and beauty, it is unique to human beings, and it cannot be defined or expressed precisely within the framework of any philosophical category or confined to any mathematical formula or axiom. One can only say that it is a sweetness that contains bitterness, and a bitterness that contains sweetness. This phenomenon may be observed to some degree in all mammals, but its most beautiful, complete, and perfect manifestation is revealed only in the heart and inner world of the human being.” [8, 24–32]

Thus, the understanding of Rumi’s poetry is by no means simple. His essential and inner meanings are best grasped by those deeply familiar with Islamic philosophy and Sufism. Perhaps

it may also be understood by those who, like Rumi himself, are natural-born lovers. In fact, Rumi was a lover at heart, and he often spoke in veiled, symbolic language, repeatedly making allusions to this in his works. As he himself hints:

Man chu lab g'yam labi daryo buvad,

Man chu lo go 'yam murod illo buvad.

Conclusion.

In conclusion, Jalaluddin Rumi was a true lover, and it was precisely love that elevated him to such a high rank. It is fitting to call him, like his master Shamsuddin, "Sultonul-Ma'shuqin" — "The Sultan of Lovers." May his pure soul always remain joyful, radiant, and a source of inspiration and guidance for those who lack compassion and humanity. In the words of a poet:

Shod bosh, ey Balxu ey farzandi Balx,

Ey mehin farzandi bemonandi Balx.

Shod bosh, ey Kuniya, ey xoki ishq,

K-az tu tobad oftobi poki ishq.

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