



# Mevlana Rumi: A 13<sup>th</sup> Century Scholar's Teachings to Foster Tolerance, Peace and Harmony

Maria Yousuf<sup>1, \*</sup>, Muhammad Ahmad Qadri<sup>2</sup>, Hafiz Osmanov<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Bioinformatics, Dow University of Health Sciences, Karachi, Pakistan

<sup>2</sup>Department of Political Science, University of Karachi, Karachi, Pakistan

<sup>3</sup>Department of Biochemistry, Azerbaijan Medical University, Baku, Azerbaijan Republic

## Email address:

drmariayousuf@hotmail.com (M. Yousuf)

\*Corresponding author

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**Abstract:** Mevlana Jalal-uddin Rumi, (1207-1273) a mystic, sufi, scholar and a poet, borned around eight centuries ago, contributed magnificently to promote humanity, love, peace, tolerance, compassion, respect to each other through education (sufisium, mysticism) and dialogue. Rumi strictly followed the Islamic teachings for building up peace in society as well as globally, as prophet PBUH says "You are all from Adam and Adam is created from earth. O servants of GOD be brothers and sisters". To foster love, tolerance, peace and harmony, Rumi stressed for provoking education and interfaith dialogue b/w the peoples of different religions, as education is the only weapon which we can use to transform the world (Nelson Mandela) and the dialogue provides ultimate framework of mutual acceptance to each other's identity along with existing rich diversity of culture and values. Therefore his message of interfaith universality is ruling without any religious discrimination and bias he says Rumi belongs to each one of them. His poetry and prose writings consist of spiritual content which is the universal language of the human soul. His magnum opus, masterpiece the Masnawi (collection of 25,668 couplets) captures the heart of spiritual lovers and seekers because of its truth, purity, divines and the concept of "oneness of GOD". Rumi inculcates in his Masnawi, "All my couplets are a climate of wisdom, all these stories teach a lesson" he narrated "our Masnawi is a shop of divine oneness whatever you see there, other than one is a false idol" Rumi was completely lost in the love of GOD as a result ultimately blessed with the most noblest form of divine wisdom through reflection and intuition, he says "I have become a lover and most people realized it but they didn't understand who is the one I Love".

**Keywords:** Mevlana Rumi, Masnawi, Tolerance, Peace, Harmony, Love, Inter-faith Dialogue, Intra-faith Dialogue

## 1. Introduction

Tolerance is the term which can be used in place of other words like patience, respect, mercy, generosity and forbearance; it's actually the vital element of moral system for living together in this world by respecting each other's faith, cultures, languages, values, norms and rights. It promotes by sharing knowledge, education, dialogue, openness, communication, freedom of thought conscience and believes. Tolerance itself a harmony within existing diversity and differences. It's not only the moral liability but the political and legal need too. It contributes to the replacement of culture of war by the culture of peace [1].

### *Rumi's Universal Message about Love, Peace and Tolerance*

According to Mevlana Rumi love is considered as an essential element of human creation, it's like the holy costume we are made up of

*"Our mother is Love! Our Father is Love  
we are born from love! We are Love!"*

*All Love Constitute a bridge leading to the divine love  
To Love human beings means to Love God (Masnavi)" [2]*

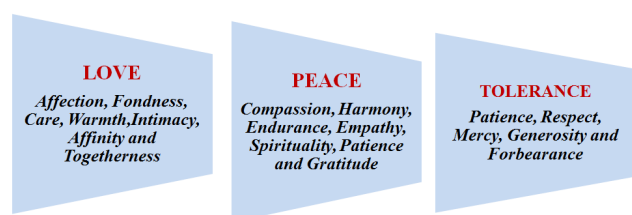
*"Be so tolerant that your heart becomes wide like the ocean,  
becomes inspired with faith and love for others, offer a  
hand to those in trouble and be concerned about everyone"  
RUMI [2].*

Peace promotes due to love, compassion, harmony, endurance, empathy, spirituality, patience and gratitude. It strengthens through respecting for the culture and values of other nations and countries, mutual trust, understanding and by giving the rights of people. It is foster by cooperation, collaboration, through inter-faith and intra-faith dialogue among different religions, sects, as well as through the process of reconciliation. As the Nobel Prize for peace winner Nelson Mandela says, *"If you want to make peace with your enemy you have to work with your enemy then he will become your partner"*. [3]

*"No one is born hating another person because of color of skin or his background and religion, people learn to hate and if they can learn to hate they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite hate"* [3].

In the book *Rumi and the Sufi path of Love* Peter Cunz says *"To write about Mevlana Rumi and his Sufi contribution today is like sending a drop of water into the ocean,"* He considered Mevlana Rumi was far more than a poet and a mystic. He was a holy man whose spirit illuminates the hearts of his followers even today [4].

To stimulate love, tolerance, peace and harmony Rumi, stressed to promote knowledge, education and dialogue (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Illustrating the universal Rumi's teaching indicators for promoting global Love, Peace and Tolerance.

Allah swt says,

*"Who taught knowledge by pen?"*

The light of knowledge shine and radiates from the nib of pen which is the significant milestone on the way of learning, therefore Education is the ultimate process which remove superiority complex in men and eventually foster sense of obedience in man, by purify his heart and soul with humility and humbleness by eradicating arrogance and sense of superiority from his mind. Superiority complex considered as disability, its roots are deeply planted in man, Godlike-feelings also inbreed from the same disease.

*O! Human being you are both a beast and an angel the animal-like body and the angelic soul come together and intend in you. Therefore you belong to both the heaven and the earth (Masnawi)* [3].

*"Minds are ranked according to their capacities; their level differs from ground upto the heaven"* (Masnawi) [3].

Autocracy and oppression are the resultant of superiority complex state of mind which ultimately gives birth to Pharaohs and Nimrods. This feeling of superiority complex is a mother of all radicalism, extremism and terrorism. It spoils the peace and destroys human societies; we can cure it through

knowledge and proper education. It condemn and discourages the expansion of superiority feelings in man, therefore it ultimately helps them to maintain, equilibrium and moderation. Knowledge can be attain, through three ways, (1) physical senses (2) spiritual senses and (3) intuition, this, ultimately promotes tolerance and emotional stabilities in societies. It inculcates humbleness in the individual which provides a fertile soil for human well being [5].

According to Rumi, education means *spiritual awakening*. As Allah swt says in holy Quran That God does not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves (13:11).

In other words, true transformation begins from *within a person*. Spiritual education obliges a man to pass through the process of the soul purification by (*self analysis*). It needs to address both the intellect (*wisdom*) and the heart, which helps to attain the position of "perfect man" (*alkamil human being*). Perfection is achieved by practicing virtues such as piety, justice, compassion, truthfulness, sincerity, patience and courage. The intellect is required for the purpose of appreciating the "signs of God." Rumi taught the need to achieve it through (self struggling) and become closer to the God. This requires spiritual *discipline*. [6].

Mevlana Rumi strongly believed and associates the societal peace with the individual inner peace of mind and for promoting individual peace, Rumi expressed it through his SAMA i.e (spiritual dance) whirling dervish, in which he demonstrate about the raising of holy spirit, the human being is turn his face to visualize the ultimate truth, for finding inner peace and happiness in the divine love and mercy of Allah swt. He humbly surrender himself in front of Allah swt, thus purify the soul, during SAMA, the dervish's arms are widely open, with his right arm turned to the sky, and through left arm turned down, in the way distributing to Man what they receive from God [7-9].

*The value of a purse is the GOLD it contains, likewise the value of the body comes from the soul it possess and the value of the soul comes from the light of GOD shining on it (Masnawi)*

Mevlana Rumi describe about his life with philosophical thoughts, he summarized it into three phrases, and said *I was raw, I got cooked, I burned*" [10].

The opponent of tolerance is intolerance which increases in society due to poverty, injustice, unequal distribution of rights, gender, sectarian or religious bias, economic crises, social deprivations etc. This intolerance propagates eventually extremism which ultimately leads towards polarization and radicalization. An extremist mind always lives with superiority complex to enforce his idea or thought over the others by resorting the brutal acts and violence. These feelings of dominancy exists when we forget to accept the existing difference b/w various religions, cultures, values, languages etc. Therefore, a meaningful dialogue always provides a ground to invite the people's attention to share each other's point of view. In this regard dialogue provides an important platform to communicate, identify the truth and resists falsehood; it is a way of negotiation, mutual advice and

cooperation towards righteousness. It is a sharing tool of awareness due to which opinions are formed, questions are raised and solutions are made by mutual respect and agreement for the ultimate benefit of society and the world (Figure 2). Therefore we can say dialogue with pragmatic approach is always fruitful, everyone is rewarded with sincerity and with good intentions, as the Prophet Muhammad SAW says “*Deeds are judge by intentions*” [11].

The intension of believer is more important than the act itself, therefore one must first be sincere in one's intentions and seek the approval of GOD, and thus one should not ill-judge or misrepresents the ties which exists b/w various groups on the name of love, dialogue and tolerance. In this respect we should always welcome to dialogue of any kind such as inter-faith, intra-faith, inter-cultural *etc* with the believe that “Peace is better” (Surah Al-Nisa: 4:128).

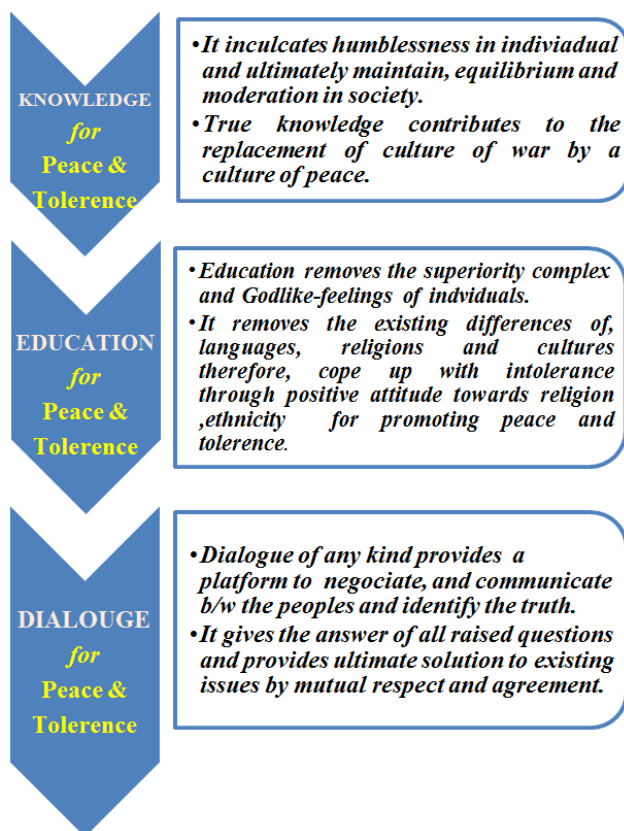


Figure 2. Illustrating the three important pillars, knowledge, proper education and dialogue for promoting peace and tolerance globally.

## 2. Methods

### EXPLANATION:

#### 2.1. Influencing Factors on Social Tolerance and Peace

The antagonist of tolerance is intolerance which is the ultimate symptom of a social life-threatening illness and violence. It relates to a plethora of social diseases like, arrogance, Godlike-feelings, brutal acts, biases etc and the preventive medicine is available in the form of proper education. The most effective remedies are Peace, giving the

human rights and democracy. Educators, policy-makers, indeed all citizens, need to be able to recognize the symptoms or indicators of intolerance and take appropriate action for cure and prevention. Some indicators of social intolerance are language-bias; stereotypes, expulsion, segregation, exclusion and social destruction, however there are six most important factors which directly relates to create intolerance in society are as follows [12], [Figure 3].

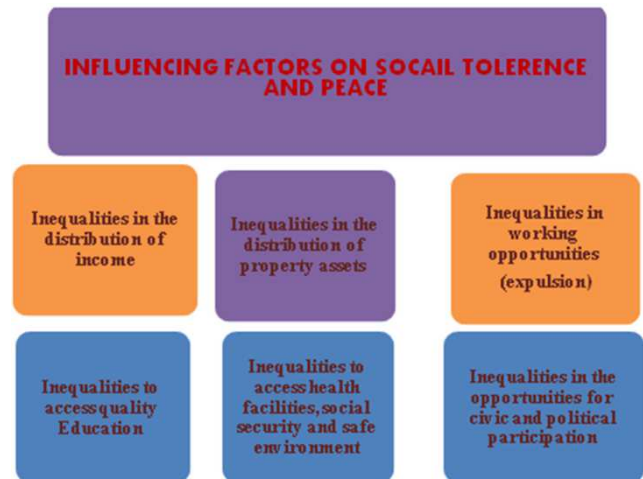


Figure 3. Illustrating the six important influencing factors for building up peace and tolerance.

#### 2.2. Inequalities in the Distribution of Income (Poverty)

The unequal distribution of income among individuals at the local or national level, is considered to be the most important way to measure the degree of equality or inequality existing in a society, to overcome this existing bias a proper distribution of income is required to start small and large projects to capture the economic opportunities, this ultimately decrease the unemployment rate, and creates civil tolerance for peoples to live together [12-13].

#### 2.3. Inequalities in the Distribution of Property Assets

The distribution of income and assets are quite correlated, It is the legal right of everyone to own property separately as well as in association with others”, and no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property [12].

#### 2.4. Inequalities in Working Opportunities (Expulsion)

The availability of working and employment opportunities are the major determinant indicator of income distribution and a key to economic and social justice. The inequalities in opportunities, or official forceful expelling of workers or denying providing the rights of people are major factors to propagate polarization in society [12].

#### 2.5. Inequalities to Access Quality Education

Education is the basic right of every individual; it is the important and strong determinant indicator of social status with a source of self-esteem. School, colleges and universities

are the important knowledge hubs, the availability of equal academic opportunities along with new learning modes and tools such as the internet, access to various digital libraries and other technologies are also very important to compete and maintain the education standards. The inequalities to access quality education are not only developing the deprivation in students but also deteriorate the education standards [12].

### **2.6. Inequalities to Access Health Facilities, Social Security and the Provision of a Safe Environment**

Traditional indicators of social well-being such as healthy food, availability of health facilities, provision of healthy living environment and social security for a common man is equally important for all citizens without any religious or political bias. The inequality for providing these basic facilities not only creates trouble for the people but also provoke social deprivation, class differences and health sufferings [12].

### **2.7. Inequalities in the Opportunities for Civic and Political Participation**

This form of inequality is rarely discussed at international platform, perhaps because of its complexity and sensitivity; it is the people's democratic right to elect the respective candidates through a proper electoral process. The way of political power is organized and distributed among society's various institutions in this manner the political processes which is carried out has a great impact on citizen's life [13].

It is the ultimate fact that the concept of dialogue either inter-faith (b/w different religions) or intra-faith (between different sects and dogmas) for building peace and tolerance in the society is growing and considered to be an important way to deeper understanding of our own faith, tradition for communicating globally. These important issues should be addressed at international platform, and countries have to be mutually agreed to promote education of the different religions, cultures and languages to increase understanding of existing differences and overcome the intolerance through positive attitude towards other religions, ethnicity and cultures, therefore ultimately it promotes to focus on similarities by integrating inter-faith and inter-cultural activities which prevent from religious and sectarian bias. Islam also encourages tolerance by social dialogue, but care must be taken to establish balance in one's tolerance. Being merciful to a cobra means injustice to the people cobra has bitten, claiming that humanism is more merciful than divine mercy is discourteous to mercy and violates the rights of others, and Quran and Sunnah always advocate tolerance. The shielding covering of tolerance extends not only to the people of the book but in a sense to all people of the world [14-15].

## **3. Social Impacts of Successful Dialogue**

- 1) Successful dialogue is the global solution to stop polarization, extremism and radicalization; therefore it ultimately promotes global tolerance and peace

- 2) Dialogue opens the doors of new opportunities b/w the countries, with the expansion of science and technology the world has converted into a global village.
- 3) Successful dialogue b/w the countries are always good for promoting education, science and technology can drastically improve the global literacy rate.
- 4) Successful dialogue b/w the countries increase collaboration and cooperation which ultimately promotes to open the new doors of opportunities and increase the trading rate.
- 5) Successful dialogue b/w the countries promote socio-cultural activities.
- 6) Successful dialogue b/w the countries promote socio-economical activities.
- 7) Successful dialogue b/w the countries promote socio-political activities.

## **4. Conclusion**

Today as we advance into this new millennium, our society facing new challenges so, there is an ultimate need of tolerance; therefore we have to learn how to reconcile with new existing challenges, confliotions, contradictions and oppositions. This can be achieved through knowledge, proper education and network of constructive dialogue, which is the only way to bring peace and peaceful co-existence between the peoples at societal and global scale.

Rumi stressed through his sufi teachings that, true knowledge, proper education and dialogue are the best ways to combat with new socio-economic and political challenges to promote tolerance for bringing peace and harmony at the societal as well as global scale. Rumi's all thoughts and work reflects the message of individual and social peace, Rumi says that the inner spiritual peace of individual is responsible for the collective social peace. Therefore, he forced to search, knowing, and recognition of your own self can give you the eternal and ultimate societal peace.

## **Conflict of Interest**

The authors declared that they have no competing interest.

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## **Appendix**

1. Rumi says!

*Listen with the ears of Tolerance*

*See through the eyes of Compassion*

*Speak with the language of Love*

*He says when we die don't seek us our graves under the ground, you can find us in the hearts that love (Masnavi), and "when you feel a peaceful joy that's when you are near the truth" In a nut shell, the article enlightens over the role of*

*Mevlana Rumi's work, through his spiritual teachings and masnawi parables to promote love and forbearance, for building peace and harmony in the society.*

2. Rumi says!

*Listen to Rumi*

*Listen to the Ney*

*It is not of the voices you know*

*Understand where you come from*

*Where are you going? and know the meaning of being human*

*Listen to the Ney, so that those sounds that comes from the heart*

*Will tell you like the Holy Spirit. Rumi*

3. Rumi follower's says!

*"If the work of Rumi would be translate into all languages of the world there will be no war and hatred remain, only peace, peace and peace will be around"*

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