

Original Research Paper

Universelle Botschaften des Friedens: Das bleibende Vermächtnis von Jalal ad-Din Muhammad Balkhi (bekannt als Rumi oder Mawlana) und Hakim Abul-Qasim Ferdowsi im globalen Diskurs

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Zusammenfassung:

Dieser Artikel untersucht die universellen Friedensbotschaften, die in den Werken zweier bedeutender persischer Dichter, Jalal ad-Din Muhammad Balkhi (allgemein bekannt als Mawlana oder Rumi) und Hakim Abul-Qasim Ferdowsi, zum Ausdruck kommen. Dabei werden ihre wesentlichen Beiträge zum globalen Diskurs über Frieden hervorgehoben. Durch eine thematische Analyse werden Rumis Fokus auf inneren Frieden und Selbstbewusstsein mit Ferdowsis Betonung von sozialer Gerechtigkeit und den moralischen Verpflichtungen der Führung verglichen. Rumis mystische Poesie plädiert für persönliche Versöhnung als Voraussetzung für Harmonie mit dem Universum und hebt Liebe und Verständnis als wesentliche Wege zum Frieden hervor. Im Gegensatz dazu präsentiert Ferdowsis Epos, das Shahnameh, Frieden im Kontext kollektiver Identität, wobei gerechte Regierungsführung und moralische Integrität als entscheidend für die gesellschaftliche Harmonie gelten. Die Botschaften beider Dichter wirken kulturübergreifend und betonen Einheit, Empathie und die anhaltende Relevanz ihrer Lehren in aktuellen Bemühungen zur Konfliktlösung. Diese Forschung zeigt, wie die Reflexionen von Rumi und Ferdowsi über Frieden wichtige Einblicke für die Förderung von Dialog, Toleranz und Koexistenz in einer zunehmend durch Spaltungen geprägten Welt bieten. Darüber hinaus dienen ihre Werke als historische Perspektiven, um menschliche Erfahrungen während ihrer jeweiligen Epochen zu verstehen – Rumi in der Zeit der Mongoleneinfälle im 13. Jahrhundert und Ferdowsi während der arabischen Eroberung im 11. Jahrhundert. Schließlich positioniert diese Studie Rumi und Ferdowsi als entscheidende Quellen zur Gestaltung des globalen historischen Images Irans und hebt ihre anhaltende "Soft Power" innerhalb der iranischen Kultursphäre und darüber hinaus hervor. Durch eine kritische Untersuchung ihrer Beiträge im weiteren Rahmen der persischen Welt können wir ihren nachhaltigen Einfluss auf regionale Identitäten und globale kulturelle Dialoge würdigen.

Schlüsselwörter: Mawlana/Rumi, Ferdowsi, iranischer kultureller Diskurs, Empathie, persische Welt, universelle Themen

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مولانا جلال‌الدین محمد بلخی (رومی) و حکیم ابوالقاسم فردوسی در گفتمان جهانی صلح

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چکیده:

این مقاله به بررسی پیام‌های جهانی صلح در آثار دو شاعر برجسته فارسی یعنی مولانا جلال‌الدین محمد بلخی (رومی) و حکیم ابوالقاسم فردوسی می‌پردازد و سهم آن‌ها را در گفتمان جهانی صلح مورد تأکید قرار می‌دهد. این مطالعه، تمرکز مولانا جلال‌الدین محمد بلخی (رومی) بر صلح درونی و خودآگاهی را با تأکید فردوسی بر عدالت اجتماعی و مسئولیت‌های اخلاقی رهبری مقایسه می‌کند. شعر عرفانی رومی، آشتی فردی را به عنوان پیش‌نیاز دستیابی به هماهنگی با جهان و صلح مورد تأکید قرار داده و عشق و مدارا با خویشان را به عنوان راه‌های اساسی برای رسیدن به صلح مورد توجه قرار می‌دهد. در مقابل، فردوسی در اثر ارزشمند خود شاهنامه، تحقق صلح را در بستر هویت جمعی ممکن می‌داند و بر این نظر است که حکومت عادلانه و یکپارچگی اخلاقی برای هماهنگی اجتماعی و صلح حیاتی است. پیام‌های هر دو شاعر در فرهنگ‌های دیگر نیز طنین‌انداز شده است، زیرا بر وحدت، همدلی و تلاش برای حل تعارض که آموزه‌های معاصر بین‌المللی هستند تأکید می‌کنند. این پژوهش نشان می‌دهد که چگونه تأملات رومی و فردوسی درباره صلح، آموزه‌هایی حیاتی برای تقویت گفت‌وگو، تحمل و همزیستی در جهانی که به طور فزاینده‌ای با واگرایی مواجه است، ارائه می‌دهد. علاوه بر این، آثار آن‌ها همچون لنزهای تاریخی عمل می‌کنند که از طریق آن‌ها می‌توان تجربیات انسانی را در زمانه مربوط به خودشان—رومی در دوران آشفتگی حملات مغول در قرن سیزدهم و فردوسی در میان فتح عرب در قرن یازدهم—درک کرد. یافته‌های این مقاله نشان می‌دهد که چگونه تفسیرهای آن‌ها از صلح، پیام‌هایی با اثرگذاری جهانی را ارائه می‌کند که همچنان در بحث‌های معاصر درباره حل تعارض و همزیستی باقی مانده و به آنها توجه می‌شود. در نهایت، این مطالعه، رومی و فردوسی را به عنوان منابع مؤثر در شکل‌دهی به تصویر تاریخی جهانی ایران معرفی کرده و قدرت نرم ماندگار آن‌ها را در حوزه ایران فرهنگی و فراتر از آن مورد توجه قرار می‌دهد. بنابراین با بررسی سهم این دو شاعر بزرگ در چارچوب وسیع‌تر کشورهای فارسی‌زبان و حوزه تمدنی ایران، می‌توان تأثیر ماندگار آن‌ها را بر هویت‌های منطقه‌ای و گفت‌وگوهای فرهنگی جهانی مشاهده کرد.

واژگان کلیدی: مولانا/رومی، فردوسی، گفتمان فرهنگی ایرانی، همدلی، جهان فارسی‌زبان، مضامین جهانی، صلح

Original Research Paper

Universal Messages of Peace: The Enduring Legacy of Jalal ad-Din Muhammad Balkhi (widely known as Rumi or Mawlana) and Hakim Abul-Qasim Ferdowsi in Global Discourse

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Abstract

This article explores the universal messages of peace articulated in the works of two seminal Persian poets, Jalal ad-Din Muhammad Balkhi (commonly known as Mawlana or Rumi) and Hakim Abul-Qasim Ferdowsi, highlighting their significant contributions to global discourse on peace. Through a thematic analysis, the study contrasts Rumi's focus on inner peace and self-awareness with Ferdowsi's emphasis on social justice and the moral responsibilities of leadership. Rumi's mystical poetry advocates for personal reconciliation as a prerequisite for achieving harmony with the universe, emphasizing love and understanding as essential pathways to peace. Conversely, Ferdowsi's epic, the Shahnameh, presents peace within the context of collective identity, where just governance and moral integrity are vital for societal harmony. Both poets' messages resonate across cultures, emphasizing unity, empathy, and the enduring relevance of their teachings in contemporary conflict resolution efforts. This research underscores how Rumi and Ferdowsi's reflections on peace offer vital insights for fostering dialogue, tolerance, and coexistence in a world increasingly marked by divisions. Additionally, their works serve as historical lenses through which we can understand human experiences during their respective periods – Rumi during the turmoil of the Mongol invasions in the 13th century and Ferdowsi amidst the Arab conquest in the 11th century. The findings of this analysis will elucidate how their interpretations of peace convey universal messages that remain relevant in contemporary discussions on conflict resolution and coexistence. Ultimately, this study positions Rumi and Ferdowsi as instrumental sources in shaping Iran's global historical image while underscoring their enduring soft power within the Iranian cultural sphere and beyond. By critically examining their contributions within a broader Persianate framework, we can appreciate their lasting impact on both regional identities and global cultural dialogues.

Keywords: Mawlana/Rumi, Ferdowsi, Iranian cultural discourse, empathy, Persianate World, universal themes.

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Introduction

In his study of the Buddhist kingdom of Thailand, Southeast Asian scholar Raymond Scupin (1980: 66-67) examines the significance of medieval translations of the Persian epic *Shahnameh* (i.e., the *Book of Kings*), authored by the 11th-century poet Abolqasem Ferdowsi, and their impact on the Thai-Siamese royal house and literary traditions. These translations played a crucial role in shaping the Thai royal ideology, notably evident in sources like the 1752 CE royal text *Rajadhamma* or *Nithan Sibsawng Liam*. This incorporation of Ferdowsi's work is particularly noteworthy considering Thailand's historical positioning as a proud Buddhist nation, which has traditionally fallen outside of the Persian cultural sphere. It suggests that the Persian royal system's methodologies of statecraft and protocol significantly influenced the Thai political framework, including its practices related to peace and conflict resolution.

Peace, as a multifaceted concept, is interpreted through various intellectual traditions, encompassing philosophy, political thought, international relations, ethics, and psychology. Across cultures and civilizations, peace has inspired diverse interpretations, often regarded as a fundamental concern in global politics, economic development, and international relations. This article explores the significance of peace in the poetry of Jalal ad-Din Muhammad Balkhi (better known outside the Persian speaking world as Mawlana/Maulana or Rumi) (1207-1273 CE) and Abolqasem Ferdowsi (940-1020 CE). These two eminent figures have produced works that resonate not only within the Iranian cultural sphere but also extend their influence across the broader Persianate world, Islamic civilization, and beyond.

The contributions of Rumi and Ferdowsi to the discourse on peace are globally significant. According to the *Financial Tribune*, Rumi's translated works have recently become bestsellers worldwide, particularly in the United States, underscoring his universal appeal and the resonance of his themes of love and spirituality (*Financial Tribune*, 2015). Similarly, the *Shahnameh*, the longest poem ever written by a single author, extends beyond mere length; Ferdowsi's role in shaping the Persian language and literary culture is comparable to that of Goethe for the Germans, Pushkin for the Russians, or Shakespeare for the English-speaking world

(Shahnameh Project, 2015). Ferdowsi's ideals—such as just rulership, statecraft, kingship, chivalry, forgiveness, and harmony—have imparted profound influences on traditional political systems in the Islamic world and beyond, impacting the Indian subcontinent, the Malay-Indonesian world, and regions influenced by the Chinese and Thai royal families (Marrison, 1955: 52-69; Lambton, 1962: 91-119; Brewster, 1972: 115-122; Milner, 1981: 46-70; Chambert-Loir, 2005: 135, 139-141; Thant Myint-U, 2006: 74-75).

To address the central question—what significance does peace hold in the works of these two iconic poets, and how do they interpret it?—this study will employ qualitative research methods through thematic analysis. As part of a larger project, it will focus on the immediate perspectives of these influential scholars and poets while briefly discussing their broader geographic contexts and the impacts on ruling elites and indigenous systems.

The first section will review relevant research background on this topic. Subsequently, the conceptual framework will address notions of Cultural Iran and the Iranian civilizational area, examining regions influenced by these ideas in a broader context. The third section will be the core of the article, analyzing the role of peace in the poetry of Rumi and Ferdowsi. Their works serve as vital historical lenses through which we can understand human experiences during their respective periods: Rumi's reflections emerged amidst the turmoil of the Mongol invasions in the 13th century, while Ferdowsi's epic narratives sought to preserve and reaffirm Iranian identity during the Arab conquest in the 11th century. The findings of this analysis will elucidate how their interpretations of peace convey universal messages that remain relevant in contemporary discussions on conflict resolution and coexistence. Ultimately, this study positions Rumi and Ferdowsi as instrumental sources in shaping Iran's global historical image and underscores their enduring soft power within the Iranian cultural sphere and the broader Persianate world.

Research Background

Iranian scholars have long emphasized the effectiveness of Persian cultural legacies as a form of soft power in both historical and contemporary contexts. They contend that Persian literary sources have

traditionally played a significant role in expanding cultural influence, particularly in regions closely connected to Iran that share similar socio-cultural traits, such as the celebration of the Persian New Year, or Nawruz. Richard N. Fry, the late Harvard University Persian scholar, articulated this idea in his book *The Heritage of Iran* (1962: 344), stating, "New Persian has become, along with Arabic, the language of Islam, and Islam itself has far outgrown its Arabic basis, turning into a multi-ethnic and multilingual culture and religion. Iran has played a leading role in this metamorphosis. We can assume that Islam had to change even before its adoption by the Persians, but the Iranian civilization played the same role in the development of Muslim culture as the Greek civilization in the formation of Christianity and its culture."

Significant contributions to the discourse on Persian literature and its implications for peace from the perspectives of Rumi and Ferdowsi in the Farsi-Persian language can be found in various scholarly works. Notable among these is Ali Tamizal's *Peace and Friendship from the Perspective of Rumi* (1399 [2020]), which explores Rumi's philosophical insights into interpersonal relationships and the foundations of peaceful coexistence. Faranak Soleimani's *Manifestations of Peace and Humanity in the Poems of Rumi, Hafez, and Saadi* (1388 [2009]) further enriches this discourse by examining how these poets collectively articulate themes of compassion and humanity in their works. Additionally, Simiari et al.'s *A Dissection of the Elements of Peace in Rumi's Thought Based on the Masnavi* (1400 [2021]) provides a detailed analysis of Rumi's seminal text, elucidating the intricate elements that contribute to his vision of peace. In relation to Ferdowsi, Akram Gholami Zareh Zadeh's *Aspects of Peace and Reconciliation in the Poems of Ferdowsi* (1399 [2020]) highlights the poet's emphasis on moral virtues and just leadership as essential components for achieving societal harmony. Farhad Darvishi's *Peace in Ferdowsi's Thought* (1398 [2019]) complements this by examining how Ferdowsi's narratives advocate for reconciliation and ethical governance within the context of his epic work, the *Shahnameh*. These studies collectively underscore the importance of both Rumi and Ferdowsi in shaping a discourse on peace that transcends cultural boundaries. Their reflections not only contribute to Persian literature but also resonate with universal themes relevant to contemporary discussions on conflict resolution and coexistence. By

analyzing their works, we gain valuable insights into how their poetic legacies continue to inspire efforts toward fostering understanding and harmony in an increasingly fragmented world.

The exploration of peace and amicable conflict resolution in the works of Rumi and Ferdowsi is thus essential for understanding their cultural legacies and the global implications of their messages in contemporary society. However, existing research has not comprehensively examined the concept of peace as articulated by both poets within the Iranian civilizational context or its potential influence on broader regions. This study aims to bridge that gap by investigating how Rumi's mystical poetry emphasizes themes of inner peace and love, while Ferdowsi's epic narratives celebrate national identity and moral virtues. Despite their differing styles—Rumi's lyrical approach juxtaposed with Ferdowsi's grand narrative—both poets converge on themes of unity and empathy that reflect a shared cultural ethos transcending their individual contexts. Their works contribute not only to Iranian literature but also resonate with universal themes that address human experiences across cultures. Moreover, the importance of this research extends beyond Iran; it highlights how the messages of Rumi and Ferdowsi can inform global discussions on peace, tolerance, and coexistence. By critically examining their contributions within a broader Persianate framework, we can appreciate their lasting impact on both regional identities and global cultural dialogues. This analysis will underscore how their poetic legacies continue to inspire contemporary efforts toward reconciliation in an increasingly fragmented world.

Conceptual Framework of the Research: The Concept of 'Cultural Iran'¹

The concept of 'Cultural Iran' has gained significant recognition as a vital cultural and civilizational domain within the global geographic identity, attracting scholarly attention from researchers, including prominent Iranian scholars such as Hakem Ghasemi, Ali Ashraf Nazari, and T. Atabaki. This indigenous perspective emphasizes the enduring influence of Iranian culture across various regions, demonstrating resilience amid historical transformations and fluctuations. The increasing richness of

¹ ایران فرهنگی

academic discourse surrounding Cultural Iran underscores its relevance in contemporary international relations and geopolitical contexts.

Cultural Iran encompasses a collection of nations sharing a common cultural heritage. While political differences and borders exist, these nations are interconnected through a largely unified lifestyle and value system. This cultural commonality fosters a collective spirit, cultivating a shared identity among the peoples of the region and distinctly separating them from others. Such an identity serves as a foundation for unity, reinforcing the notion that cultural heritage transcends contemporary political boundaries.

Conceptually, Cultural Iran reflects the identity and civilizational exchanges of Iranians across neighboring countries, interwoven with their cultural and civilizational legacies. The shared framework that emerges from common linguistic, cultural, and social elements stems from profound historical experiences, yielding what can be termed "civilizational self-awareness." Geographically, Cultural Iran refers to the regions where Iranian culture and civilization thrive. While some literature defines this geography as the domain of Iranian civilization—encompassing territories where Persian is predominantly spoken, such as Iran, Afghanistan, and Tajikistan—it also includes areas influenced by the vast Persian Empire throughout history. This broader definition encompasses the Iranian plateau in Western Asia, Central Asia, the Caucasus region, Mesopotamia, parts of the Persian Gulf, and significant portions of the Indian subcontinent (Ghasemi, 1390 [2011]: 48).

The domain of Cultural Iran acts as a mirror reflecting "merging horizons" within a shared cultural-identity space. Numerous points of consensus exist across various fields, where an authentic shared identity can be delineated. The cultural geography of Iran extends beyond current boundaries and has historically influenced large sections of Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, India, and Central Asia. The potential for Iranian civilizational influence remains significant across vast regions of the world.

Historically, powerful Iranian governments expanded their geographic borders through military campaigns, which facilitated cultural dominance in conquered regions. The effects of this expansion are observable in

language, history, literature, rituals, and festivals among the peoples in these areas (Nazari, 1390 [2011]: 28). It can thus be asserted that the scope of Cultural Iran extends from Central Asia to the Caucasus in the north; to Pakistan, Afghanistan, and China in the east; to Iraq, Turkey, and Syria in the west; and to the Persian Gulf region and the Indian subcontinent in the south.

Cultural Iran comprises diverse countries with varying political systems exhibiting conflicting orientations—from strictly religious to secular, or pro-Western to pro-Eastern. Economically, while there exists broad market potential among these nations, underdevelopment often characterizes regional economies, leading to dependency on external support. The region is marked by ethnic diversity, with various groups coexisting alongside multiple religious communities, including both Muslims and Christians, as well as Shia and Sunni Muslims living in proximity to one another. This diversity can certainly lead to tensions; following independence movements in Central Asia and the Caucasus, ethnic and religious factors have contributed to violence both within and between these states (Nazari, 1390 [2011]: 28). Despite these challenges, shared cultural elements continue to bind these peoples together.

The existence of cultural commonalities within the civilizational domain of Cultural Iran—coupled with an increasing recognition of culture's pivotal role in international interactions—can create opportunities for cultural convergence. In today's global society shaped by globalization, actors with cultural power can envision broader roles on the world stage while engaging in cultural competition as a new domain for generating influence in international relations (Goudarzi, 1387 [2008]).

Understanding Iran's cultural identity requires consideration of realms that extend beyond contemporary national boundaries. This ancient identity predates modern political divisions and spans vast regions over millennia. For Iranians, "Iran" embodies a cultural meaning that transcends mere political or social constructs. Grazia Tucci, an Italian architect and academic, articulates this duality: "Iran as thought" conveys greatness and authenticity dispersed throughout the Iranian plateau; whereas "Iran as a political concept" has evolved through multiple borders over three millennia (cited at length in Khan Mohammadi, 1388

[2009]: 7). The elements constituting Iran's cultural identity have evolved over generations, fostering a mindset that emphasizes love and empathy rather than division or hatred.

The prominence of identity and civilizational aspects within Cultural Iran enhances its permanence and influence. Intellectual investment in these areas can facilitate reconstruction and revitalization efforts. The possession of diverse capacities within Cultural Iran creates substantial foundations for cooperation, enriched by shared language, religion, history, cross-border figures, customs, and varying levels of development. The historical depth associated with Cultural Iran fosters self-confidence among its peoples, enabling the envisioning of a powerful cultural identity capable of engaging effectively with other identities. Furthermore, the extension of cultural and geographical borders facilitates ongoing integration among countries within this domain, as a sense of geographical antiquity diminishes feelings of alienation and fosters a sense of belonging to a shared cultural geography.

The implications of Cultural Iran extend far beyond its immediate geographical confines, reverberating across many regions historically influenced by Iranian culture. Esteemed scholars such as Sheldon Pollock (2009), Richard Eaton (2013), Nile Green (2019), Owen Cornwall (2015), and Jennifer Nourse (2013) have elucidated the expansive cultural framework known as the Persianate Cosmopolis. This concept transcends geographical boundaries, encompassing areas from East Asia to South Asia, Southeast Asia, Africa, and even Europe.

Pollock and Eaton argue that the Persian Cosmopolis played a crucial role in partially supplanting the Sanskrit Cosmopolis while establishing dominance across regions stretching from present-day Afghanistan to Champa (central and southern Vietnam) and Indian-influenced kingdoms within the Indonesian archipelago (Tomas 2016). However, they also contend that Iranian influence has often been marginalized within broader narratives of Arabo-Islamic civilization. Petru Tomas (2016) emphasizes the need for a reevaluation of Iranian cultural influence's significance across various regions. He advocates for deeper analyses regarding the mechanisms of cultural transmission between Iran and these areas, as well as the socio-political dynamics shaping these interactions.

Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh*, composed in the early 11th century, thus serves as a foundational text that has profoundly shaped ideas of statecraft, political systems, and kingship across diverse cultures. Its enduring narratives have influenced governance and royal ideologies not only in Iran but also in regions such as South Asia and beyond (Milner 1981). The epic's themes resonate with concepts of leadership and legitimacy that have found relevance in various political contexts. Similarly, Rumi's works have had a profound impact on Sufi, mystical, and gnostic literature worldwide. His poetry transcends cultural boundaries, reaching diverse audiences through numerous translations. Notably, the esteemed 17th -century Malay-Indonesian mystic Hamzah Pansuri (or Fansuri) is reported to have been acquainted with Rumi's work, even citing his poetry within his own compositions (al-Attas, 1970: 14). This connection highlights the organic interweaving of Iranian culture with other societies, as evidenced by the discovery of Ferdowsi's poetry inscribed on a 14th -century grave in Sumatra, Indonesia (Mozaffari Falarti, 2012: 48-49; Daneshgar et al., 2023). Such findings reinforce the notion that these regions were not isolated peripheries but integral parts of broader historical narratives shaped by Iranian literary traditions. It also emphasizes that Rumi's influence extends beyond mere literary appreciation; it serves as a testament to the enduring dialogue between cultures and spiritual traditions. His exploration of universal themes such as love, unity, and the quest for truth resonates across various spiritual movements, illustrating how his works act as conduits for deeper understanding and connection among diverse peoples.

By exploring Iranian influences, scholars can gain valuable insights into the historical connections that have contributed to the dynamics within the Persianate Cosmopolis framework, thereby allowing for a deeper appreciation of regional heritage alongside substantive contributions made by Iran to development within that heritage. Understanding these nuances enriches the collective comprehension of diverse regional heritage, affirming Iran's role as a form of soft power in its socio-political interactions with nations worldwide.

Peace in the Poetry of the Poets of the Iranian Cultural Sphere

In exploring the significance of peace within the poetic works of Jalal ad-Din Muhammad Rumi (Mawlana) (1207–1273 CE) and Abolqasem Ferdowsi (940–1020 CE), it becomes evident that their contributions extend beyond the Iranian cultural sphere to resonate globally. Both poets employ reflections on peace to illuminate profound insights into human experiences and morality that transcend time and geographical boundaries.

In his *Masnavi-ye Ma'navi* and *Divan-e Shams*, Rumi addresses mystical peace and reconciliation, placing a strong emphasis on inner peace as the foundation for self-awareness and spiritual growth (Soleimani, 1388 [2009]: 54). Rumi's exploration of peace culminates in the notion that understanding oneself leads to a deeper comprehension of divine love. He articulates this concept through the verse:

"Do not say that everyone is at war; what do I care for peace?
You are not one; you are a thousand; illuminate your own lamp."

Rumi's mystical thought suggests that achieving self-awareness reveals love as the underlying philosophy of human existence. He encourages individuals to approach God and the world with a lover's gaze, appreciating the truth contained within every religion. Rumi asserts that each faith contains a fragment of truth and is therefore deserving of respect. By recognizing that every individual is part of a greater whole, he emphasizes that every beauty in the world reflects God's beauty.

Rumi's worldview is inclusive and expansive; he posits that no one can claim absolute ownership of God's truth. This collective understanding necessitates that individuals engage with others through reconciliation and peace, employing knowledge and wisdom as instruments for understanding. While Rumi respects all religions, he holds that the highest form of faith is based on love:

"The religion of the lover is distinct from other religions;
For lovers, the nation and religion are God."

Thus, Rumi warns that adopting intolerance towards others' beliefs amounts to a denial of truth, which in turn fosters conflict. Engaging in

bigotry without awareness ultimately detracts from understanding and compassion.

Within Rumi's mystical framework, achieving *Wahdat Erfani*² (i.e. unity of mystical experience) or *Fana fil Allah wa baqa b'allah*³ (i.e. annihilation in God and subsistence through God) – the ultimate stages of mysticism – requires the elimination of differences, grudges, and conflicts. This philosophy is illustrated in Rumi's narrative of Solomon in the *Masnavi*, where Solomon exemplifies coexistence and tolerance:

"O Solomon, amidst the crow and the falcon,
Be patient with all the birds; coexist."

Rumi's message suggests that lack of tolerance, especially towards those with ill temper, leads to enmity and conflict. He identifies the root causes of human disputes as stemming from shortsightedness and superficial understanding:

"From your perspective, O essence of existence,
The conflict between believers and heathens is evident."

Moreover, Rumi regards Islam as a pivotal reference for overcoming conflicts. He recounts the historical enmity between the tribes of Aws and Khazraj, who were mired in warfare before Islam. With the advent of the faith, their animosities transformed into friendship and unity:

"Two tribes were named Aws and Khazraj,
They bore one another's throats like bloodthirsty beasts.
Their ancient resentments dissolved in the light of Islam and purity,
They shattered their divisions and became a single body,
As if they pressed a single grape, they became one."

Following Quranic principles, Rumi denounces racism, linguistic elitism, and tribalism as byproducts of ignorance and emotional biases. He attributes these sentiments to a superficial attachment to appearances, asserting that true connection stems from knowledge and understanding:

² وحدت عرفانی

³ فنا فی الله و بقا بالله

"Differences among people disappeared from the name,
When they moved toward meaning, tranquility dawned."

Rumi emphasizes the importance of empathy over mere linguistic kinship, viewing it as a bridge to unity among diverse peoples. He suggests that Turks, Persians, Hindus, and Arabs hold no inherent superiority over one another, and shared language does not guarantee understanding:

"O many Hindus and Turks who share a tongue,
O many pairs of Turks behaving like strangers.
Thus, the language is merely a confidant;
Empathy is better than mere linguistic kinship."

He urges that prejudice is a sign of immaturity and that true emotional growth requires overcoming these biases:

"Strictness and prejudice are signs of immaturity,
Until gestation is completed, it is a bloody endeavor."

Rumi underscores the importance of disarming conflict to foster peace, positing that peace cannot exist where weaponry prevails:

"Withdraw the weapon from the hand of the insane,
So that justice and righteousness may be satisfied by you.
As long as he has a weapon and lacks reason,
Bind his hand, otherwise he will bring a hundred harms."

He likens human conflicts to the games of children, devoid of substance, suggesting that many of life's wars are ultimately meaningless:

"The wars of people are like the wars of children,
All meaningless and devoid of substance and purpose.
All fight with wooden swords,
None advancing towards any beneficial goal."

Rumi's teachings guide individuals toward a profound love for Truth and Creation, nurturing a society where peace, progress, and comfort hold significance.

In Rumi's view, humanity's primary enemy lies within the self. To escape this foe, one must listen to others' pains, reflecting Rumi's belief that true peace begins within (Molavi, 1387 [2008]: 1139, Verse 3):

“In you, there is an enemy that is hidden;
Besides cruelty, there is no way to dispel that dog of yours.”

Rumi asserts outer conflicts are insignificant compared to the internal struggles one faces. In his allegorical tale about Pharaoh, he illustrates how individuals can misunderstand their true enemy:

“The human devised a cunning plan, and his cunning was a snare;
He who thought his soul was a bloodsucker.
He closed the door while the enemy was inside the house;
The scheme of Pharaoh was derived from this tale.”

In Ghazal No. 495 of *Divan-e Shams*, Rumi conveys the importance of peace:

“If you have no desire for peace,
Then I, O my soul, have no desire for war with you.
You come to war, I will go to peace;
The Lord of the world does not find the world constrained.
There is a world of war and a world of peace;
The world of meanings is not measured by distance.”

In summary, Rumi's thought emphasizes that understanding humanity and the dimensions of existence is fundamental to achieving lasting peace and tranquility, with love serving as the central point. He advocates for the cessation of conflict in all its forms, asserting that wars arise from ignorance and superficiality. Rumi's mission is to foster reconciliation both within the individual and in relation to the universe, transforming hostilities and dualities into peace, harmony, and unity. Achieving peace within oneself is a prerequisite for cultivating outer peace, intertwining the individual's relationship with God, others, and nature (Simiyari et al., 1400 [2021]: 33).

Ferdowsi significantly contributes to the discourse on peace in his epic work, the *Shahnameh*. This monumental text transcends a mere narrative

of historical events and heroic deeds; it embeds a philosophy that advocates for peace over violence. Central to Ferdowsi's portrayal of heroism is the emphasis on defense and justice rather than conquest. The valor of Iranian warriors emerges predominantly in response to treachery and aggression, rather than as instigators of conflict.

One illustrative example is the story of Iraj, who embodies a profound desire for peace. When he approaches his brothers seeking reconciliation, he offers to renounce his claim to the throne in hopes of ending their rivalry. However, he is met with betrayal and violence, which highlights Ferdowsi's belief in the interconnectedness of humanity – asserting that, regardless of actions, all people share a common heritage. As Ferdowsi poignantly writes:

"When they come for peace, and your heart is firm,
Do you yield your noble head, and let them strike?"

This narrative serves as a condemnation of the ambition and tyranny of rulers that precipitate conflict and suffering. Ferdowsi's portrayal of kings' reveals that the true enemy often lies within – the self-serving desires of those in power. His emphasis on the consequences of unchecked ambition and bloodshed reflects a call for just wars that defend the homeland and protect the innocent rather than seek unjust conquest. He implores leaders to pursue resolutions through understanding and wisdom instead of violence:

"Whoever takes to the shedding of blood,
His enemies' hearts are filled with thought of him."

Ferdowsi articulates that the tyranny, self-will, and despotism of kings throughout the *Shahnameh* are principal causes of the harm inflicted upon the land of Iran. Even when characters such as Rostam engage in battles – such as his invasion of the land of the demons – their motivations often extend beyond mere allegiance to a monarch. They are driven by a broader objective, seeking justice and preserving the dignity of the nation. This is highlighted in the narrative where Rostam's actions are ultimately framed in the context of defending Iran against the follies of its rulers. The poet's steadfast stance throughout the work places significant moral weight on condemning evil, aggression, and unbridled ambition, regardless of the actor's pedigree (Rustam Pour, 1394 [2015]).

Ferdowsi advocates for just wars—those waged in defense of the homeland and the people from foreign attacks. He accepts the necessity of war only when it serves to eradicate evil or deliver justice. Nevertheless, he remains generally opposed to war and underscores the futility of bloodshed. This perspective is articulated through the words of the Turk prince Parmood, who reflects on the futility of conflict as he prepares to avenge his father, King Saweh:

“Whoever takes to the shedding of blood,
His enemies' hearts are filled with thought of him.
His blood will flow as a sign of the same
That he shed the blood of the heads of the rebellious.
If from the land of Turks you bring ruin,
That vengeance will also demand the end of affairs.”

Moreover, he places a premium on preserving innocent life, advising rulers against unnecessary bloodshed. The Chinese king's sentiments in the text resonate with this ethos:

“Bloodshed is not my way,
Nor is harming others in accordance with my faith.”

Ferdowsi calls for restraint even in the face of overwhelming circumstances, emphasizing that true nobility lies in protecting the innocent:

“When you are victorious, do not shed the blood of the innocent;
Do not engage in fierce war with the celestial sphere.”

The moral lessons extend to the consequences of violence on society as a whole, particularly on the youth, as he laments the decline of moral values in the wake of frequent wars:

“Due to so much war and bloodshed in the world,
The youth do not understand the value of the noble.”

Ferdowsi's commitment to peace is further echoed in his counsel to avoid hasty and reckless engagements in war. In a letter, Kaikhosrow admonishes Fariborz against the impulsive lead-up to conflict:

“Do not rush into war at all;
Stay far from drink and do not pursue sleep.

Do not seek the tumult of battle from the beginning;
Be patient until what you desire is accomplished”

(Mullah Ahmad, 1382 [2003]: 59-61).

In summation, Ferdowsi's narratives echo a profound understanding that emphasizes the maintenance of peace over the glorification of battle. His insistence on empathy, moral integrity, and human connection reflects a vision of unity and harmony that aligns closely with Rumi's teachings. Both poets advocate for tolerance and reconciliation, enriching our understanding of peace within their respective cultural contexts. Their works maintain universal relevance in contemporary discussions on conflict resolution, inspiring individuals to strive for harmony and understanding in a divinely tumultuous world.

Conclusion

This article has endeavored to illuminate the contrasting yet complementary perspectives of two pivotal figures in the Iranian cultural sphere—Jalal ad-Din Muhammad Rumi (Mawlana) and Abolqasem Ferdowsi—regarding the multifaceted concept of peace. Through a close comparative analysis of their works, we find that both poets grapple with the theme of peace but from distinct vantage points shaped by their unique historical contexts, literary styles, and philosophical frameworks.

Rumi's vision of peace is fundamentally introspective, emphasizing the necessity of reconciliation within the self as a prerequisite for achieving harmony with the broader cosmos. His mystical poetry, particularly in the *Masnavi-ye Ma'navi* and *Divan-e Shams*, advocates for an inner transformation that allows individuals to transcend dualities and conflicts inherent in the human condition. Rumi articulates a philosophy wherein self-awareness, love, and understanding of the divine enable one to experience a state of tranquility and friendship that pervades all existence. His assertion that “peace with oneself is a prerequisite for achieving external peace” underscores this intrinsic link between the internal and the external, suggesting that only through self-knowledge can one foster genuine connections with others and with the world.

In stark contrast, Ferdowsi's approach, exemplified in his epic work *Shahnameh*, contextualizes peace within the social fabric of society. He

examines the interplay of war and peace through the lens of collective identity, national pride, and the moral complexities of kingship. Ferdowsi presents a world where battles are fought not only for conquest but also in defense of the homeland and the principles of justice. His narratives highlight the profound consequences of tyranny and ambition, portraying peace as something that can only be achieved through just governance and the moral integrity of leaders. For Ferdowsi, the triumph of good often involves external struggles against oppression and violence, advocating for a noble and empathetic leadership that seeks to protect the innocent and maintain social harmony.

Despite their differing focuses – Rumi’s emphasis on the inner self and Ferdowsi’s on collective heroism – their works converge on the essential outcome: the establishment of peace as a foundational principle for human existence. Both poets advocate for empathy and understanding as the cornerstones of reconciliatory efforts, affirming the universal relevance of their messages in contemporary discourses on conflict resolution.

Rumi and Ferdowsi’s contributions to the discourse on peace serve as vital lenses for understanding not only Iranian cultural history but also broader human experiences that transcend temporal and geographical boundaries. In a world increasingly marked by fragmentation and division, the teachings of these poets offer a profound reminder of the enduring power of literature in shaping cultural values and fostering global dialogues centered on peace and coexistence.

Rumi’s poetic philosophy, emphasizing love as the ultimate force for reconciliation, resonates with contemporary movements aspiring for peace in diverse sociopolitical contexts. His teachings on empathy and understanding transcend specific religious or cultural affiliations, suggesting that the quest for inner peace is a universal endeavor. In an age characterized by polarization, Rumi’s insights encourage individuals to seek common ground and foster compassionate relationships, reinforcing the notion that true peace emanates from within.

On the other hand, Ferdowsi’s historical narratives provide critical lessons on the implications of leadership, justice, and the moral responsibilities of those in power. His portrayal of the consequences of tyranny serves as a cautionary tale for contemporary leaders, urging them to prioritize the

welfare of their constituents over personal ambitions. Ferdowsi's work underlines the importance of a just society where peace is maintained through ethical governance, resonating with modern discussions surrounding good governance and human rights.

The distinctions and parallels drawn between Rumi and Ferdowsi elucidate significant implications for ongoing efforts in peacebuilding and conflict resolution. Their works collectively call for a dual approach that encompasses both individual inner transformation and the necessity of moral integrity in leadership. This duality aligns with contemporary peacebuilding frameworks that advocate for both micro-level (individual) and macro-level (societal) interventions in addressing conflicts.

In practical terms, integrating Rumi's emphasis on inner peace into community-based peace initiatives can empower individuals to engage more constructively in conflict resolution. Programs fostering emotional intelligence, forgiveness, and self-awareness can help counteract cycles of violence and revenge, promoting a culture of peace. Similarly, Ferdowsi's insights into the importance of just leadership can inform political structures aimed at fostering inclusivity and accountability. By advocating for equitable systems that prioritize social justice, contemporary movements can work towards a more harmonious society that reflects Ferdowsi's call for empathy and moral duty in governance.

Ultimately, the enduring legacy of Rumi and Ferdowsi lies in their shared vision of a peaceful and harmonious existence. Their poetry not only captures the complexities of human emotions but also serves as a reservoir of wisdom applicable to contemporary challenges. In their respective forms – Rumi's lyrical mysticism and Ferdowsi's grand narratives – both poets encapsulate the human yearning for peace, understanding, and reconciliation.

As the world grapples with increasing cultural and ideological divides, the teachings of Rumi and Ferdowsi offer timeless insights that inspire individuals to transcend their differences. Their works remind us that peace is not merely an absence of conflict but a dynamic state of being that encompasses love, understanding, and the affirmation of our shared humanity. In revisiting their contributions, we are encouraged to foster a holistic approach to peace – a synthesis of both internal reflection and the

pursuit of justice—thereby enriching our collective journey toward a more peaceful and compassionate world.

In conclusion, this study reaffirms the relevance of Rumi and Ferdowsi's insights within the broader discourse on peace, underscoring the vital role literature plays in shaping our understanding of human relationships and the quest for coexistence. Their poetic legacies not only enrich Iranian heritage but also offer valuable lessons for fostering understanding among diverse cultures globally. As we continue to navigate the complexities of our time, the wisdom embedded in their verses serves as a guiding light, reinforcing the critical imperative of cultivating peace within ourselves and the societies we inhabit.

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