THE SENSE OF JUSTICE AND ITS MORAL SIGNIFICANCE IN MAWLANA JALAL AL-DIN MUHAMMAD RUMI'S THOUGHT

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Abstract

This article analyses the moral significance of the sense of justice in the thought of Mawlana Jalal al-Din Rumi (d. 1273). Through a systematic close reading and hermeneutical analysis of Rumi's principal works, Mathnawī and Fīhi Mā Fīh, it explores the individual, social, and metaphysical dimensions of justice within his moral philosophy. Rumi does not perceive justice merely as a legal or social principle but as a divine moral faculty inherent in human nature. The findings reveal that the sense of justice plays a pivotal role in grasping moral principles, cultivating ethical character, maintaining social harmony, and achieving spiritual proximity to the Divine. Employing metaphors such as the "scale" (mīzān) and the "mirror of the heart (gönül),"[3] *Rumi suggests that purifying the soul (nafs) from desires and passions activates this innate moral sense. Ultimately, Rumi presents justice as a divine mechanism that reflects moral balance, wisdom, and virtuous action. By highlighting the sense of justice as an internalized metaphysical virtue that*

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[3] As a thinker who lived in Anatolia and wrote in Persian, Mawlānā's use of language was reshaped by the profound meaning-world of the culture in which he lived. The term "دل" (dil), which he used in his works to denote the metaphysical center of the human soul, came to be understood and interpreted within the Anatolian context as *gönül*—a concept with a more original and profound semantic depth in the local cultural landscape.

transcends legal norms, this study offers a novel contribution to contemporary Islamic moral philosophy.

Keywords: Islamic Philosophy, Philosophy of Emotion, Rumi, *Mathnawī*, Morality, Justice, Sense of Justice.

1. Theoretical Foundations

Justice, the central concept of our study, is a fundamental notion that encompasses all dimensions of human existence. Generally known as a value, a virtue, a sense and a legal concept that humanity continuously pursues, justice refers to the transformation of that which is disorderly, excessive, evil, imbalanced, incompatible, and/or lacking, into a state of balance, completeness, correctness, goodness, harmony, and moderation.[4] As one of the core concepts in philosophical and religious thought, justice has been comprehensively examined throughout history from a diverse range of perspectives – legal, moral, and political. As a philosophical concept, justice is understood as an abstract and intellectual idea, while in law it is realized through legislation, while in ethics it manifests as moderation. Its constitutive concepts can be identified as balance, harmony, and order, whereas its practical aspects pertain to the distribution of rights, equal treatment, and the establishment of social order.[5]

The first systematic classification of justice can be attributed to Aristotle (d. 322 BCE), though it is not possible to consider him independently from Plato (d. 347 BCE) and earlier Pre-Socratic philosophers. After an extensive inquiry, Plato defines justice—whether in the structure of the soul or the state—as *each part being in its most appropriate position and performing its most suitable function*. However, unlike Aristotle, Plato does not provide a clear taxonomy of the types of justice. It is difficult to find a detailed and concrete categorization of justice in his thought.[6]

[4] Anil Cecen, *Adalet Kavramı* (Istanbul: Gundogan Publishing, 1993), 186.
[5] Yuksel Sengul, *Platon ve Fârâbî'de Adalet Kavramı* (Ankara: Iksad Publishing, 2022), 3-4.
[6] See Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. David Ross (Oxford: Oxford

Islamic thought, on the other hand, offers a broader perspective on the nature and manifestations of justice, through the disciplines of ethics, philosophy, *kalām*, *taṣawwuf*[7], *fiqh*, and *hadith* studies. In the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth literature, justice signifies balance, equality, order, piety, judgement in accordance with truth, proportionality, impartiality, and truthfulness.[8] Justice can only be realized through adherence to *haqq*, an objective concept and a fixed principle of law.[9] The fact that the Qur'ān mentions justice prior to goodness[10] is significant, as it indicates that no act of goodness devoid of justice can acquire true moral value. Moreover, references to the physiological and aesthetic harmony of the human body;[11] the balance and harmony of the spiritual self;[12] and the spiritual equilibrium and ethical perfection attained through obedience to moral laws,[13] as well as the notion of a "middle nation",[14] all reflect the concept of justice.[15]

In Islamic thought, justice is conceived as the projection of harmony and balance between existence, knowledge, and value. It is understood, in its broadest sense, as a person's knowledge of their position within the universe and their connection with the Creator in accordance with truth, and their action in line with this knowledge.[16] Thus, a human being, regarded as a metaphysical/theological as well as a historical/social being, is seen as a balanced being who actualizes justice through action and embodies it in the external

University Press, 2009); Plato, *The Republic*, trans. G. M. A. Grube, rev. C. D. C. Reeve (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1997).

[7] Often translated into English as 'purification of the heart.'

[8] Mustafa Cagrici, "Adâlet," in *Islamic Encyclopedia*, vol. 1 (Ankara: Turkish Religious Foundation, 1988), 341–343.

[9] Qur'ān, *al-A'rāf* 7:159, 181.

[10] Qur'ān, *al-Naḥl* 16:90.

[11] Qur'ān, *al-Infiṭār* 82: 7–8.

[12] Qur'ān, *al-Tīn* 95: 4; *al-Shams* 91: 7.

[13] Qur'ān, *al-Shūrā* 42: 15.

[14] Qur'ān, *al-Baqarah* 2: 143.

[15] Cagrici, "Adâlet," 341343.

[16] Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam: An Exposition of the Fundamental Elements of the Worldview of Islam* (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1995), 36–58.

world.[17] Within Islamic philosophy specifically, the concept of justice appears as a comprehensive value in the ethical thought of Ibn Miskawayh (d. 932), while in the works of al-Farabi (d. 950) and Ibn Sina (d. 1037), it is meaningful in terms of its role in preserving cosmic balance and social harmony.[18] In the field of *kalām*, Kadi Abd al-Jabbar (d. 1025), a major Muʿtazilī theologian, defines justice as God's obligation to act according to reason and moral order, and considers human beings responsible moral agents precisely because they are endowed with reason and volition.[19]

In modern Western thought, justice has been addressed predominantly through political philosophy, social contract theory, and liberal ethics. Philosophers like Immanuel Kant (d. 1804) defined justice through the lens of rational autonomy and universal law (Kant, 1996). John Stuart Mill (d. 1873) framed justice in terms of utility and social well-being, linking it to collective happiness.[20] In the 20th century, John Rawls (d. 2002) developed a theory of justice based on fairness, proposing the "original position" and "veil of ignorance" as foundational constructs for evaluating just principles.[21] Meanwhile, Robert Nozick (d. 2002)'s libertarian critique emphasized individual rights and minimal state interference.[22] These approaches, although influential, often remain within the bounds of legalism, rational contract, and distributive ethics.

However, beyond these normative and institutional frameworks, recent scholarship has increasingly turned to a more internalized and experiential dimension of justice: the sense of

[17] Muhammet Caner Ilgaroglu, *Ahlak Felsefesi Açısından Duygu-Değer İlişkisi* (Istanbul: HiperBook, 2020), 39–57.

[18] See al-Farabi, *On the Perfect State: Abū Naṣr al-Farabi's Mabādiʾ ārāʾ ahl al-madīna al-fāḍila*, trans. and ed. Richard Walzer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985); Ibn Miskawayh, *Tahzîb el-Ahlâk*, ed. Hasan Temim (Beirut, 1398 AH); Ibn Sīnā, *The Book of Healing (Kitāb al-Shifāʾ)*, trans. Michael E. Marmura (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2001).

[19] See Kadi Abd al-Jabbar, *Sharḥ al-Uṣūl al-Khamsa* (Cairo: Maktabat Wahba, 1965).

[20] See John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism* (London: Parker, Son, and Bourn, 1863).

[21] See John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971).

[22] See Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (New York: Basic Books, 1974).

justice. For instance, Dubber treats the sense of justice as a cognitive and emotional faculty at the individual and societal levels, arguing that this faculty plays a central role particularly in judicial decision-making processes.[23] However, this work overlooks the role of the sense of justice in inner transformation, the formation of conscience, and moral decision-making. Similarly, Folger analyses the sense of justice based on the belief that people should receive what they deserve and deserve what they receive, yet neglects its moral dimension.[24] This approach reduces the sense of justice to a reward-punishment mechanism and unfortunately, disregards its deeper ethical meaning.

Among these works, the one most closely aligned with ours is Cline's article. Cline defines the sense of justice as the capacity to perceive and feel justice, and offers a comparative analysis between Rawls's theory of justice and Confucian thought.[25] However, his study too does not delve into the metaphysical and ethical dimensions of the sense of justice, instead focusing on the normative differences between theoretical frameworks. John Rawls's seminal article "The Sense of Justice" defines the sense of justice as a moral faculty enabling social cooperation, emphasizing the individual's voluntary commitment to just principles.[26] However, Rawls's approach considers the sense of justice merely as an internal motivation aligned with the principles of the "social contract", excluding its transcendental, cosmic, or spiritual dimensions. Dennis Krebs's study, "The Evolution of a Sense of Justice", attempts to explain the sense of justice within the context of evolutionary biology and social psychology, discussing how this capacity may have developed as an evolutionary advantage.[27] Yet this approach too disregards the

[23] See Markus Dirk Dubber, *The Sense of Justice: Empathy in Law and Punishment* (New York: New York University Press, 2006).
[24] See Robert G. Folger, *The Sense of Injustice: Social Psychological Perspectives* (New York: Springer, 1983).
[25] See Erin M. Cline, *Confucius, Rawls, and the Sense of Justice* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013).
[26] John Rawls, "The Sense of Justice," in *Readings in Social and Political Philosophy*, ed. Alvin I. Goldman (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1975), 199–224.
[27] Dennis L. Krebs, "The Evolution of a Sense of Justice," in *The Handbook of*

ethical, metaphysical, and spiritual foundations of the sense of justice, framing it solely as a product of biological and pragmatic processes.

While these contemporary approaches offer valuable insights, they fall short in addressing the deeper ethical and metaphysical layers of justice. It is precisely in this regard that Rumi's philosophy offers a profound alternative.

Indeed, the metaphysical dimensions of justice—particularly its status as an intrinsic value enabling the perception of moral truths and the formation of conscience, its function as an internal guide shaping one's inner world, and its role in directing individuals towards moral perfection—are addressed in the most original, systematic, and profound manner by one of the towering figures of Islamic thought: Mawlana Jalal al-Din Muhammad Rumi (d. 1273). Contrary to classical juridical approaches, Rumi does not regard justice merely as a social or institutional mechanism for regulating rights and relationships; rather, he considers it an expression of divine order and a moral faculty that governs both individual transformation and the structure of the cosmos. His metaphors, such as the "scales" (*mīzān*) and the "mirror of the heart" (*qalb*/*gönül*), illustrate that purifying the human *nafs* from desires and passions is a prerequisite for the true manifestation of justice.[28] In this regard, Rumi's concept of justice shares notable affinities and contrasts with other prominent Islamic scholars.

Al-Farabi views justice primarily as a principle of cosmic and social harmony, essential to maintaining the hierarchical order of the virtuous city; yet his emphasis is more on structural rationality than on inner emotional intuition.[29] In contrast, al-Ghazali (d. 1111) emphasizes the purification of the soul (*tazkiyat al-nafs*) and the

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Evolutionary Psychology, ed. David M. Buss (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2005), 405–446.

[28] Reynold A. Nicholson, *The Mathnawī of Jalāluddīn Rūmī: Edited from the Oldest Manuscripts Available, with Critical Notes, Translation & Commentary*, vol. I (London: Messrs. Luzac & Co., 1925–1940), 3580. All citations from the *Mathnawī* are derived from Reynold A. Nicholson's critical edition and translation, *The Mathnawī of Jalāluddīn Rumi: Edited from the Oldest Manuscripts Available, with Critical Notes, Translation & Commentary*, London: Messrs. Luzac & Co., 1925-1940, vol. I-VI.

[29] See al-Farabi, *On the Perfect State*.

cleansing of the heart as prerequisites for perceiving truth and moral insight—ideas which resonate deeply with Rumi's poetic expressions. However, al-Ghazali's tone remains more theological and didactic.[30]

Ibn Miskawayh, in his ethical treatise *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq*, conceptualizes justice as the balanced harmony of the soul's faculties, achieved through reason and moderation—much like Rumi, but with a greater reliance on Hellenistic rational ethics.[31] On the other hand, Ibn Arabi (d. 1240) approaches justice ontologically, identifying it with the divine name *al-ʿAdl* and interpreting it as the proper manifestation of each being according to its *haqq* (truth/right). It is of interest to note that the metaphysical alignment between *haqq* and justice is profoundly echoed in Rumi's own integration of cosmic order, moral perception, and divine love.[32]

While these scholars offer distinct lenses—ranging from rational-political to mystical-metaphysical—Rumi's integrative synthesis uniquely bridges spiritual insight with moral reasoning.

Building on these comparative insights, the following section outlines the objectives and questions guiding this study.

This study aims to fill a significant gap in the literature by focusing on Rumi's thought through textual analyses and philosophical interpretation, arguing that justice transcends legal frameworks and manifests as an intrinsic sense of value. This sense emerges as a reflection of divine order within human nature. The paper seeks to answer the following key questions:

I. How does Rumi define justice?
II. How does he position justice within the relationship between human beings, the universe, and God?
III. What role does he attribute to the sense of justice in the process of understanding, attaining, and actualizing moral values?

By addressing these questions, this research explores how

[30] See al-Ghazali, *Iḥyāʾ ʿUlūm al-Dīn* (Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifah, 2004).
[31] See Ibn Miskawayh, *Tahzīb al-Akhlāq*, ed. Hasan Temim (Beirut, 1398 AH).
[32] See Ibn Arabi, *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam (The Bezels of Wisdom)*, ed. Afifi Abd al-Rahman (Cairo: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, 1980).

Rumi's conception of justice integrates with moral values and ethical conduct, situating it within a broader philosophical and theological discourse. In doing so, we intend to contribute to a deeper understanding of Rumi's ethical thought, as well as to provide significant insights into contemporary discussions on the universality of (the sense of) justice as a moral principle.

2. Human Nature and Justice

The human being is a complete entity, possessing capacities for reasoning, sensing, and feeling. These inseparable qualities enable the human being to be a self-conscious entity. Thus, the human being becomes a multidimensional unity—body, mind, and emotions. Moral philosophy and, more recently, the philosophy of emotions, highlight this multidimensionality, defining the human being as a social entity that, through reason and emotion, transcends nature, feels, knows, acts, and produces values.[33]

For the human being, emotions are not merely reflexive mechanisms; rather, they are functional and cognitive attributes through which one understands oneself, the universe, nature, matter, individuals, societies, and the concepts of good and evil—distinguishing what is valuable from what is not. Emotions help humans engage with phenomena and events while navigating practical life. They play a critical role in decision-making processes, intentions, orientations, and choices. They are dynamic, subjective sensations and impressions, intrinsic to these processes.[34] Furthermore, emotions serve as motivating forces that inspire action, shape evaluations of the past, present, and future, and drive human agency.[35]

The human being exists within two intertwined realms: the material and natural world, and the spiritual-intellectual world of values. One attains spiritual-intellectual existence by constructing a world of values encompassing philosophy, science, religion, art, law,

[33] Paul Tillich, *Morality and Beyond* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 18-19.
[34] Peter Goldie, *The Emotions: A Philosophical Exploration* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 12.
[35] Robert M. Gordon, *The Structure of Emotions* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 11.

and ethics. The human being forms judgements—good and evil, beauty and ugliness, truth and falsehood, justice and injustice, balance and imbalance—through emotions and affective states at every stage of the thought process. Even in directly cognitive activities, such as sensation, perception, and thinking, the human being engages with epistemic emotions such as curiosity, wonder, and admiration.[36] Thus, the human being possesses an intellectual methodology that progresses through the unity of reason and emotion, which are essential attributes of its existential structure, within a historical existence that evolves and transforms in this methodological cycle.

One of the most distinctive characteristics of the human being is its inherent incompleteness—a needy entity constantly seeking self- completion. As such, and under the influence of aspirations, desires, and emotions, one endeavors towards self-realization.[37] From this perspective, the human being is, by nature, a seeker of what is lacking within oneself—constantly searching for balance, completion, harmony, order, and wholeness. This quest extends beyond one's own existence and body, leading to the pursuit of meaning and the formation of metaphysical constructs. Since the sense of completeness, harmony, and order that humans desire is not attainable within their own nature, they seek to fulfil it in the objects and entities toward which they turn.

Thus, the human being attempts to *compensate for this existential deficiency through the idea of justice*. One seeks justice in every event, phenomenon, and object. In this regard, justice—as an aspiration, an ideal, and value judgement—fundamentally relies on an internally ingrained sense of value and manifests in social interactions. The sense of justice, innate in every human being, develops over time and is a uniquely human trait. At times, it appears

[36] Paul Ekman, "All Emotions are Basic," in *The Nature of Emotion: Fundamental Questions*, ed. Paul Ekman and Richard J. Davidson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 16.
[37] Hilmi Ziya Ulken, *Aşk Ahlakı (The Ethics of Love)* (Istanbul: Türkiye Is Bankasi Publishing, 2012).

as resistance to injustice, at others, as a rebellion against devaluation.[38]

Moreover, the balance in what is just—its completeness, being neither excessive nor deficient—provides the human being a sense of fulfilment, both spiritually and physically, compensating for existential deficiencies. For these reasons, the human being, in seeking truth, order, harmony, and balance, arrives at moral values that motivate actions through their most fundamental innate emotion—the sense of justice. Through reactive emotions, particularly love, the human being engages with these values, transforming them into intentions, attitudes, and contingent actions.[39]

Considering inner peace as one of the fundamental outcomes of human morality, it becomes evident that the human being cannot attain inner harmony in any phenomenon where justice is absent. The sense of justice, much like a spirit level used by a mason, serves as an indispensable instrument through which the human being constructs their moral framework. Justice is an unavoidable measure—one cannot refrain from using it as a guiding principle. This suggests that the sense of justice is an inherent sense of value instilled in humans. As nothing can be deemed "good" or "valuable" unless justice is ensured, we can assert that this intrinsic sense of value is, in essence, the sense of justice itself.[40]

With this power, the human being ascends to the boundaries of love through affection, devotion, and attachment, ultimately achieving union with God. Indeed, those who succeed in uniting with God are the ones who have attained the secret of humanity.[41]

By nature, humans attribute both goodness and beauty to what is just. The goodness in justice stems from its balance and the preservation of rights, while its beauty lies in its harmony and unifying qualities. Together, these attributes form the sense of justice.

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[38] Amartya Sen, *The Idea of Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 4-5.

[39] John Deigh, *From Psychology to Morality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 57.

[40] Ilgaroglu, *Ahlak Felsefesi Açısından Duygu-Değer İlişkisi*, 48.

[41] Nurettin Topcu, *İslam ve İnsan: Mevlânâ ve Tasavvuf* (Istanbul: Dergah Publishing, 2002), 117.

Through the perception of justice, the human being generates emotional responses rooted in conscience, such as moral acceptance, moral disgust, and hatred. This alone demonstrates that justice, as one of the most fundamental concepts of morality, cannot merely remain theoretical; rather, there exists an inherent 'tugging' within humans that recognizes it.

Deep within every person's conscience lies a sense of justice. This emotion, which can also be referred to as the sense of *haqq* (the sense of right), is an intrinsic sense that demands balance, fairness, harmony, appropriateness, and righteousness. It perceives these qualities in its object intuitively and directly. When confronted with a given situation in life, a person reacts based on the value judgement shaped by this sense of justice. This mode of judgement is particularly emphasized in the ethical perspectives of Aristotle and the Islamic philosophers who followed in his tradition. The sense of justice, with its demand for moderation, fosters temperance in emotional states, laying the groundwork for the virtue of prudence (*phronesis/ta 'aqqul*). From this perspective, justice can be understood as an active process aimed at correcting what causes injustice or preventing such a sense from arising.[42]

The sense of justice is an innate faculty that refers to moral balance. It is the fundamental sense of value that enables a person to intuitively perceive the golden ratio of moral conduct. Just like nature, the human being is a creation of balance and harmony. Accordingly, one perceives as valuable and approves intentions, attitudes, and actions that align with one's inner harmony. Just as the human body maintains health through a delicate equilibrium, a stable temperature, and the harmonious functioning of organs, the human's social self also seeks a balanced and harmonious relationship with

[42] See John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971); Al-Farabi, *On the Perfect State: Abū Naṣr al-Farabi's Mabādiʾ ārāʾ ahl al-madīna al-fāḍila*, trans. and ed. Richard Walzer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985); Paul Ricoeur, *The Just*, trans. David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000); Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *The Heart of Islam: Enduring Values for Humanity* (New York: HarperOne, 2002); Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. David Ross (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

society, both for one's own existence and for the requirements of the community.

In this context, Rumi, in particular, speaks of the journey of self-awareness and self-discovery that a human being must undertake, guided by philosophical inquiry. He emphasizes that one should begin this journey by contemplating fundamental philosophical questions, such as: Who am I? What elements exist within me? What am I doing, and what is my purpose? When I die and stand before God, how will I account for my actions?

Throughout this process, an individual should adopt a universal understanding of love, which, as Rumi asserts, is guided by the principle of tolerance rooted in the sense of justice, embracing all people equally.[43] Rumi contends that tolerance entails an acceptance that perceives goodness in all things, consents without complaint, and remains content with what is. Through such tolerance, his teachings reflect equality in love, rejecting distinctions based on class, religion, or language. The inclination to embrace all beings created by God with His divine greatness forms the central axis of his thought. As the eminent sage declares:

> To complain about creation is to complain about the Creator[44]

Where love is present, injustice, imbalance, and partiality are absent; everything in the universe deserves equal attention, imbued with a sincere and harmonious presence. This universal tolerance, grounded in love for God, is unconditional and selfless, embodying respect, compassion, and care for others. Rumi argues that individuals must reflect the inherent love within themselves onto every aspect of the

[43] Hussaini, Sayed Hassan. "Akhlaq." In "Religious Wisdom and Perennial Philosophy: East and West." *Philosophy, Culture, and Traditions* 8 (2012): 170–172. https://doi.org/10.5840/pct2012814; Sertdemir, Ilknur. "Sevgi Anlayışında Düşünsel Ayrımlar: Mevlânâ ile Konfuçyüs Öğretilerinde İnsanlık ve Ahlak İlişkisi." *FLSF (Journal of Philosophy and Social Sciences)* 31 (Spring 2021): 369; Affan, Moh. Husnul. "Tolerance Based on Love in Maulana Jalāl al-Dīn Rumi's Thought." *Sunan Kalijaga: International Journal of Islamic Civilization* 7, no. 1 (2024): 112–114. https://doi.org/10.14421/skijic.v7i1.2905.

[44] Jalal al-Din Rumi, *Mektûbât (The Letters)*, trans. Abdulbaki Gölpınarlı (Istanbul: Inkılap and Aka Bookstores, 1963), 136.

world–recognizing it as a manifestation of divine wisdom. He further insists that moral actions should be guided by respect, avoiding breaking hearts, harboring resentment, or holding grudges.

Having clarified the moral role of love, Rumi then turns to the structural symbolism of the heart and divine justice. Rumi further underscores the importance and function of emotions through the concept of love, implicitly asserting that the sense of justice—the ability to distinguish good from evil, beauty from ugliness, and truth from falsehood—is an intrinsic value within human nature:

> By love, bitter things become sweet; by love, pieces of copper become golden. By love, dregs become clear; by love, wounds become healing. By love, the dead is made living; by love, the king is made a slave. This love, moreover, is the result of knowledge: Who (ever) sat in foolishness on such a throne?[45]

At the core of Rumi's thought lies his conception of the human being, shaped by the principle of *wahdat al-wujūd.*[46] According to Ahmad Murad Merican, who is based at the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC-IIUM) Kuala Lumpur, the ocean referred to by Rumi symbolizes *Tawhīd* (Divine Unity), while the drop of water represents the human soul, which is inevitably drawn back to its Source.[47] Rumi asserts that the human being is the heart of the universe and the very reason for the existence of all beings. In his view, without human existence, neither truth, nor love, nor existence itself would be possible. Within his philosophy, the human being stands as the ultimate entity that encompasses all of creation and imparts meaning to it.[48] This teleological argument is one that differs from European Existentialists who argue that

[45] Nicholson, *The Mathnawī of Jalāluddīn Rūmī*, vol. II, 1525-1530.
[46] William Chittick, "Rumi and *Waḥdat al-Wujūd,*" in *Poetry and Mysticism in Islam: The Heritage of Rumi*, ed. Amin Banani, Richard Hovannisian, and Georges Sabagh (Harvard University: Divinity School, 1994), 92.
[47] Ahmad Murad Merican, "Reproducing the Humanities: Mevlana Rumi's Corpus in Restructuring the Study of Man and Society," *Al-Shajarah* 25, no. 1 (2020): 41, https://doi.org/10.31436/shajarah.v25i1.1031.
[48] Bilal Kuspinar, "Mawlana Rumi's Treatment of Human Nature," *Jurnal Qalbu* 4, no. 2 (December 2017): 36.

existence precedes essence.[49] Contrary to the philosophical notion that the human is the microcosm (*al-ʻālam al-asghar*) and the universe is the macrocosm, Rumi asserts that, in reality, the human is the macrocosm (*al-ʻālam al-akbar*). He argues that the human being integrates all forms of creation, knowledge, and value within itself.[50] According to Rumi, the universe exists for the perfection of the human soul. No matter how vast the physical universe may be, it remains finite and transient. Rumi states that the human soul is the only eternal and boundless essence within this fleeting world.[51]

As Rumi states, when we examine the existential structure of the human being, we can see that it unites and integrates all different elements within itself. As a being in which opposites harmoniously come together, the human is arguably the perfect manifestation of *Tawḥīd*.[52] Therefore, when one deeply reflects, the human being emerges as a key to understanding both the universe and divine reality. Thus, understanding the universe as an 'entity' composed of various forms or an aggregation of countless shapes—where each form inherently reflects its own meaning and its connection with God—is dependent on one's true comprehension of what it means to be a human being. In this context, the duty of human being *is not to be deceived by appearances*. One must realize that form does not exist independently but rather manifests as an expression of a deeper, transcendent meaning.[53]

According to Rumi, humans possess two opposing poles, making them inherently dual in nature. In other words, humans are dualistic beings. They have both a material (animalistic) nature and a spiritual (rational) essence, which are in opposition to one another. However, the spiritual aspect is considered the primary one.[54] This duality and polarity are unique to humans and are not observed in any

[49] See Arief Subhan, "Memento Mori: Existential and Religious Perspectives on Death," *Al-Shajarah: Journal of the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilisation (ISTAC)* 28, no. 1 (2023): 163–174, https://doi.org/10.31436/shajarah.v28i1.1597

[50] Nicholson, *The Mathnawī of Jalāluddīn Rūmī*, vol. IV, 520.

[51] Ibid., vol. VI, 1005.

[52] Chittick, "Rumi and *Waḥdat al-Wujūd*," 92.

[53] Merican, "Reproducing the Humanities," 47.

[54] Nicholson, *The Mathnawī of Jalāluddīn Rūmī*, vol. I, 2435.

other beings. In this regard, humans are moral entities capable of inclining toward both good and evil. What distinguishes humans and elevates them above other creatures is their morality. Rumi highlights self-awareness, overcoming one's ego, and thereby demonstrating the will to cultivate virtuous character as the hallmarks of human success.[55]

Rumi includes the following couplets in the *Mathnawī*, expressing that humans are beings of emotion and value:

> If a human being were a man in virtue of form, Ahmad (Mohammed) and Bú Jahl would be just the same?[56]
>
> The painting on the wall is like Adam: see from the (pictured) form what thing in it is wanting. The spirit is wanting in that resplendent form: go, seek that jewel rarely found![57]

Rumi persistently emphasizes that what makes a human truly human and distinguishes them from other beings is not their physical form, body, shape, or material existence. Instead, he asserts that the essence of being human lies in one's spiritual existence, which encompasses beliefs, emotions, intellect, and thoughts. Highlighting the importance of transcending outward appearances to focus on inner virtues—moving beyond transient, superficial forms to attain enduring, essential truths—Rumi criticizes those who, despite possessing so many valuable qualities that elevate humanity, become fixated on external appearances and live according to trivial, material pleasures. He warns against the error of failing to distinguish between appearance and reality, or form and meaning, through illustrative examples:

> Thou art not a single "thou," O good comrade; nay, thou art the sky and the deep sea. Thy mighty Thou, which is nine hundredfold, is the ocean and the drowning-place

[55] Rasoul Rahbari Ghazani and Saliha Uysal, "Rumi's Asceticism Explored: A Comparative Glimpse into Meister Eckhart's Thought," *Religions* 14, 1254 (2023): 4, https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14101254.
[56] Nicholson, *The Mathnawī of Jalāluddīn Rūmī*, vol. I, 1015.
[57] Ibid., vol. I, 1020.

> of a hundred "thou's".[58]
>
> Take heed, do not become a worshipper of form and do not say this. Do not seek (to discover) the secret of congeniality in the (outward) form. Form resembles the mineral and the stone: an inorganic thing has no knowledge of congeniality.[59]

The sense of justice, in turn, is the fundamental sense of value that enables one to perceive what is morally valuable. Justice must precede goodness because an act that lacks justice, balance, and proportion *ceases to be good and may even turn into oppression*. In this respect, the precedence of justice over goodness is affirmed in the following verse:

> God commands justice, doing good… He forbids what is shameful, blameworthy, and oppressive.[60]

Thus, in Rumi's view, the reason for the creation of the universe is humanity, and *the reason for the creation of humanity is to unite with the will of God*. In this regard, referring to *ayāh*[61] of the Qur'ān, he emphasizes that the divine duty entrusted to humans is to protect and cultivate the universe. For Rumi, the continuity of existence signifies the orderly functioning of the universe; therefore, failing to adhere to the existing order equates to disregarding God's power. From this perspective, the responsibility assigned to humans is, above all, to establish a standard of living in accordance with God's will.[62]

Thus, it becomes evident that at the center of Rumi's thought lies the human being as an entity of emotion, morality, and value. He believes that the ego is prone to potential evils and is that 'very thing' which distances humans from goodness. Rumi suggests that, by purifying the ego of its evils, a person's inner world can become

[58] Ibid., vol. III, 1300.
[59] Nicholson, *The Mathnawī of Jalāluddīn Rūmī*, vol. VI, 2950.
[60] Qur'ān, *al-Naḥl* 16:90.
[61] "We offered the Trust to the heavens, the earth, and the mountains—yet they refused to undertake it and were afraid of it; mankind undertook it—they have always been inept and foolish" Qur'ān, *al-Aḥzāb* 33:72.
[62] Sertdemir, "Sevgi Anlayışında Düşünsel Ayrımlar," 363.

capable of genuinely perceiving truth and goodness.[63] Rumi considers the inspirational ability within humans to be a kind of value emotion, one that discerns beauty that is balanced, orderly, and aligned with God's pleasure. This value emotion, which we identify as the sense of justice, reveals truth, goodness, and what is inherently valuable to humans.

When asked, what is justice? Rumi responds through his magnum opus, the *Mathnawī,* with this concise expression, linking justice to moral values:

> Justice is giving water to trees. Injustice to give water to thorns.[64]

He also defines justice as placing blessings in their proper place and states that watering every root that absorbs water is not justice.[65] In this context, Rumi states that *ẓulm* is placing something in an improper place, which inevitably leads to calamity.[66] He further emphasizes this point in his most celebrated compilation:

> (If) you behave unjustly, you are damned: the Pen has dried (on that). If you show justice, you eat the fruit (of blessedness): the Pen has dried (on that).[67]

> If you give a babe bread instead of milk, take it (for granted) that the poor babe will die of the bread; (Yet) afterwards, when it grows teeth, that babe will of its own accord ask for bread. When an unfledged bird begins to fly, it becomes a mouthful for any rapacious cat; (But) when it grows wings, it will fly of itself without trouble and without whistling (prompting), good or bad.[68]

As can be understood from these passages, according to Rumi, there is no place for randomness or disorder in the creation of the universe. That is, from God bringing the heavens into existence from nothing,

[63] A. J. Arberry, *Discourses of Rumi (Fīhi Mā Fīhi)* (London: Routledge, 1995), 429.
[64] Nicholson, *The Mathnawī of Jalāluddīn Rūmī*, vol. V, 1085.
[65] Ibid., vol. V, 1090.
[66] Ibid., vol. V, 1090.
[67] Ibid., vol. V, 3130.
[68] Ibid., vol. I, 580.

to spreading the earth like a carpet, and making the stars sources of light, both visible and hidden structures have come into being in accordance with the immutable principle of justice. As long as humanity preserves this order and refrains from disrupting it, existence will continue in harmony.

In the *Mathnawī*, Caliph Umar, a symbol of justice, is described through his simple way of life. Rumi maintains that justice can only flourish on the foundation of a simple life. A simple life, in turn, is associated with resisting greed for worldly possessions. Indeed, it is evident that the love of status and wealth cannot serve as a foundation for the virtue of justice.

In the presence of justice, humans experience trust, fear, and love. Justice, by representing order and balance, evokes a sense of trust. Its punishment of the unjust inspires fear, while its reward for goodness generates love. In this context, in the *Mathnawī*, Rumi describes a Roman envoy who encounters Caliph Umar as experiencing both fear and love, portraying this as a unique emotional state. This state of the Roman envoy reflects the human response to justice, as reflected in his soul. The portrayal of Caliph Umar in the *Mathnawī* shows that his greatness and authority do not stem from a throne, wealth, or any worldly possession but rather from the *majestic character radiated by his sense of justice, which permeates every aspect of his being*. The Roman envoy's admiration for Umar exemplifies this. In the same passage, Rumi explains that while fear and love are opposites, when they coexist within a person, they create a sense of awe and admiration. Through the Roman envoy's experience, this emotional state also reminds us of the concept of *khashyah* (reverential fear).[69]

In another passage, Rumi, through his unique interpretation, conveys the concept of divine justice through the words of Caliph Umar in the incident where and when a thief is brought before him. The thief claims that this was his first crime, to which Umar responds by stating that God does not punish or unleash His wrath for the first crime but instead *covers and forgives sins multiple times*. Here, it is evident that Umar reminds the thief of God's forbearance (*ḥilm*),

[69] Nicholson, *The Mathnawī of Jalāluddīn Rūmī*, vol. I, 1390-1480.

highlighting that God does not rush to punishment. This presents a contrast between a human understanding of justice, which often punishes the first offense, and the divine, merciful approach, which delays punishment until the very end.[70] It is also evident here that *punishment ought to be reformative and not punitive its own sake*.

As Rumi informs us, divine justice operates through love rather than wrath, transforming human perception of justice from one of retribution to one of unity and moral balance. Islamic philosophers have argued that when rational justice is fully understood in its ideal form, it aligns with divine justice, and in reality, all justice originates from divine justice. In this context, Rumi's understanding of justice can also be seen as a reflection of divine justice.[71] In reality (*haqīqah*) all justice originates from one source, that is Divine Justice. With this in mind, Rumi's conception of justice can also be appreciated as a reflection of divine justice.

As can be observed, Rumi generally explains justice through the concepts of moderation and appropriateness, and he describes being just as acting in accordance with truth and goodness. Rumi establishes a heart-centered system of thought that incorporates the sense of justice to understand how truth and goodness, as manifestations of human actions, can be actualized.

Rumi describes the sense of justice as a "divine mirror", reflecting the moral balance, harmony, and wisdom embedded within the human being. This innate sense is nourished by divine love, which illuminates the heart and enables a person to perceive truth beyond superficial appearances. Just as a physical mirror reflects reality as it is, a heart purified by divine love reveals the true value of all beings through the sense of justice. Through this inner enlightenment, an individual gains the ability to distinguish between good and evil, as well as right and wrong.

This spiritual mechanism operates like a "scale of justice", guiding individuals in aligning their thoughts, intentions, and actions with righteousness. A person who loses inner balance may fall prey to their ego, worldly desires, or external influences, leading to moral corruption and social disorder. However, when divine love

[70] Nicholson, *The Mathnawī of Jalāluddīn Rūmī*, vol. IV, 160-180.
[71] Alexander Knysh, *Islamic Mysticism: A Short History* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 101.

establishes justice in the conscience, the heart naturally inclines toward justice and strives to uphold equity in human relationships. Therefore, in Rumi's thought, justice is not merely a social or legal principle; it is an intrinsic, sacred force that preserves the harmony of both the human soul and the universe. Through this divine sense of justice, a person attains inner peace, constructs moral order, and participates in the universal equilibrium that sustains all existence through virtuous action:

> Their hearts are like a stainless, unblemished mirror free of hatred. Their hearts have become like an open sky, where the king has come to dwell.[72]
>
> Inclination toward desires and whims is a lock that chains our hearts; you must become the key, the teeth of the key become the teeth of the key.[73]
>
> Yet, pure gold and counterfeit coins resemble one another; they can only be distinguished through the light of God.[74]

In Rumi's thought, the concept of the heart (*gönül*) holds a distinct place and significance. In his *Mathnawī*, "*gönül*" is undoubtedly one of the most frequently used terms.[75] Rumi identifies the *gönül* as the essential attribute of a human being. According to him, the *gönül* is the guiding principle of *haqq*, where emotions, thoughts, beliefs, and intentions are harmoniously aligned. The term *gönül*, a Turkish word, refers to the faculty through *which one perceives what cannot be grasped through the senses or intellect*. While the intellect is limited in its ability to recognize the nature of things, the heart, or the spirit, is the one that perceives, uncovers, and accepts the truth as it is near to God.[76] Rumi uses the metaphor of a mirror for the *gönül* and that

[72] Jalal al-Din Rumi, *Divān-i Kabīr*, trans. Abdulbaki Golpinarli (Ankara: Remzi Bookstore, 1957), 1690.
[73] Rumi, *Divān-i Kabīr*, 161.
[74] Rumi, *Divān-i Kabīr*, 250.
[75] Yilmaz, Hasan Kamil. "Eğitimde Gönül Faktörü: Mevlânâ Örneği." In *Yetişkinlik Dönemi Eğitim ve Problemleri*, 159–178. Istanbul: Ensar Publishing, 2006, 159.
[76] Yilmaz, "Eğitimde Gönül Faktörü," 161.

of a scale for justice. The mirror represents the inner world of the human heart. According to this view, the more a person purifies themselves from the desires of the self, the less they seek worldly possessions, eventually leading to a simple lifestyle. For Rumi, simplicity is almost a prerequisite for justice. Living with minimal needs requires an individual to be measured and orderly, while on a societal level, it necessitates careful attention to the rights of others, thereby promoting justice. In this context, Rumi's concept of justice appears to have two aspects. The first is the sense of justice that refers to the purification of one's inner world, allowing the heart to become a clear mirror that can perceive truth. The second is the divine justice, which encompasses the broader plan of destiny. The first resides within the heart and is symbolized by the mirror, while the second is represented by God's promise and is symbolized by the scale.

> Thy mirror has shot out of the case: how shall mirror and balance speak falsehood? How shall mirror and balance stop their breath (suppress the truth) for fear of hurting and shaming anyone? Mirror and balance are noble touchstones: if thou do service (sue) to them for two hundred years, Saying, 'Conceal the truth for my sake, display the surplus and do not display the deficiency,' They will say to thee, 'Do not laugh at thy beard and moustache: mirror and balance, and then deceit and trickery! Since God has raised us up in order that by means of us it may be possible to know the truth, if this do not happen (if we fail to display the truth), what worth have we, O young man? How shall we become a standard for the face of the fair?' But (said the Prophet) slip the mirror (back) into the cloth, if (Divine) illumination has made thy breast a Sinai." He (Zayd) said, "Why, shall the Sun of the Truth and the Sun of Eternity be contained any wise under the armpit? It bursts asunder both armpit (baghal) and imposture (daghal); in its presence neither madness nor (soundness of) understanding remains." He (the Prophet) said, "When thou layest one finger on an eye, thou seest the

> world empty of the sun. One finger-tip becomes a veil over the moon—and this is a symbol of God's covering—So that the (whole) world may be covered (hidden from view) by a single point, and the sun.[77]

In the overall framework of Rumi's thought, it becomes apparent that he engages in a profound struggle against human's inclination toward base and superficial choices. He persistently urges individuals to transcend their attachment to fleeting pleasures, material possessions, and external appearances, advocating instead for the pursuit of inner depth, wisdom, and spiritual satisfaction. According to the student (one may say–spiritual disciple) of Shams-i Tabrizi, those who remain ensnared by mundane desires and bodily gratifications fail to recognize the true essence of existence. He warns that such attachments lead to spiritual stagnation, preventing individuals from reaching their higher potential. Through his poetry and teachings, Rumi challenges people to rise above their lower inclinations and strive toward self-purification, enlightenment, and unity with the divine.

Rumi states that *gönüls* become tainted by negative emotions and impulses such as desire, insatiable greed, lust, ambition, and arrogance, all of which stem from *hawa* (base inclinations). According to him, a person who allows their *gönül* to be swept away by the whirlpool of the ego succumbs to an incurable disease and turns their back on the truth. In order for the *gönül* to distinguish right from wrong and good from evil, it must distance itself from *hawa* and become as pure, polished, and radiant as a mirror. This purification can only be achieved through worship, obedience to divine commands, and the cleansing of the self (*tazkiyah al-nafs*). Only by maintaining the sense of justice that arises in the *gönül* through these means can true moral clarity and righteousness be preserved. Below are treasures from the *Mathnawī* which relate to *tazkiyah al-nafs:*

> Justice is the guardian of pleasures; not men who beat

[77] Nicholson, *The Mathnawī of Jalāluddīn Rūmī*, vol. I, 3545-3555.

> their rattles on the roofs at night.[78]
>
> Keep a careful watch over your own behavior: observe that the honey is (contained) in justice and that after injustice comes the sting.[79]
>
> To seek (one's own) desire is to flee (from God) and shed the blood of piety in the presence of His justice. This world is a trap, and desire is its bait: flee from the traps, quickly turn your face (towards God). When you have gone this way, you have enjoyed a hundred (spiritual) blessings; when you have gone the opposite way, you have fared ill.[80]
>
> Vision of the end is the sign of your (having the) light; the lust of the moment is in truth your (dark) grave.[81]
>
> The mirror of the heart must be clear, in order that you may know therein the ugly form from the beautiful.[82]
>
> I am selective, discerning. Like a sieve that allows no straw to pass through, I separate flour from bran, showing what is essence and what is husk. I am God's scale on earth. I separate the light from the heavy and thereby reveal the distinction between the two.[83]

Rumi asserts that the sense of justice is an innate feeling, one that is inherently placed in human hearts by God Himself:

> God hath scattered that light over (all) spirits, (but only) the fortunate have held up their skirts (to receive it); And he (that is fortunate), having gained that strown largesse of light, has turned his face away from all except God. Whosoever has lacked (such) a skirt of love

[78] Nicholson, *The Mathnawī of Jalāluddīn Rūmī*, vol. IV, 730.
[79] Ibid., vol. VI, 4530.
[80] Ibid., vol. VI, 375.
[81] Ibid., vol. II, 1975.
[82] Ibid., vol. II, 2060.
[83] Ibid., vol. II, 2075-2080.

> is left without share in that strown largesse of light.[84]

Rumi emphasizes that seeing with the eye of the *gönül* is synonymous with perceiving through the light of faith. He highlights that discerning the truth behind appearances is only possible through this divine illumination. According to him, the insight (*firasah*) of a believer becomes attainable when the sense of justice shining within the *gönül* is kept alive and constantly active.[85]

> If the true believer was not seeing by the Light of God, how did things unseen appear naked (plainly revealed) to the true believer? Inasmuch as you were seeing by the Fire of God, you did not discern the difference between good and evil.[86]

> Open thy (inward) vision with the pure light of the King. Beware of fancying, like one who is short-sighted.[87]

> O brother, how wilt thou behold his palace, when hair has grown in the eye of thy heart? Purge thy heart's eye of hair and defect, and then hope to behold his palace. Whoever hath a spirit purged of (sensual) desires will at once behold the Presence and the Holy Porch.[88]

Rumi proposes various methods to keep the eye of the *gönül* open and the sense of justice alive and active. These methods aim to eliminate excesses related to both the body and the *nafs*, thereby achieving the balance that justice demands within the inner world of the *gönül*:

> Assuredly abstinence is the first principle of medicine: abstain and behold the strength of the spirit.[89]

> All mankind are children except him that is intoxicated

[84] Ibid., vol. I, 760.
[85] Adnane Mokrani, "The Cross in Rumi's *Matnawī*," *Religions* 13 (2022): 6, https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13070611.
[86] Nicholson, *The Mathnawī of Jalāluddīn Rūmī*, vol. I, 1330.
[87] Ibid., vol. I, 2005.
[88] Ibid., vol. I, 1390-1395.
[89] Ibid., vol. I, 2910.

> with God; none is grownup except him that is freed from sensual desire. He (God) said, "This world is a play and pastime, and ye are children"; and God speaks truth. If you have not gone forth from (taken leave of) play, you are a child: without purity of spirit how will you be fully intelligent (like an adult)? When knowledge strikes on the heart (is acquired through mystical experience), it becomes a helper (yárí); when knowledge strikes on the body (is acquired through the senses), it becomes a burden.[90]

Rumi emphasizes that negative emotions such as doubt, envy, fear, hatred, and resentment are veils that obscure the mirror of the *gönül*, making it essential to purify oneself from them. Otherwise, the sense of justice becomes dulled, rendering one incapable of distinguishing good from evil.

> Anger and lust make a man squint-eyed; they change the spirit (so that it departs) from rectitude. When self-interest appears, virtue becomes hidden: a hundred veils rise from the heart to the eye. When the cadi lets bribery gain hold of his heart, how should he know the wronger from the wretched victim of wrong?[91]

The Balkh-born mystic asserts that the sense of justice is intrinsically connected to divine justice, making it a spiritual and moral sentiment. He *emphasizes* that preserving this sense depends on the servant's propriety (*adab*) and their relationship with the Creator.

> Let us implore God to help us to self-control: one who lacks self-control is deprived of the grace of the Lord.[92]

3. Ethical Implications and Contemporary Relevance

Rumi's understanding of justice, as explored in this study, transcends legal and social frameworks, grounding itself in a spiritual principle

[90] Ibid., vol. I, 3430-3445.
[91] Ibid., vol. I, 330-335.
[92] Ibid., vol. I, 75.

inherent in human nature. Unlike conventional legal interpretations, Rumi conceptualizes the sense of justice as an innate moral faculty, one that reflects divine wisdom, moral balance, and the individual's ethical responsibility. Through the metaphors of the scale and the mirror of the heart (*gönül*), he emphasizes that justice is not merely an external regulation, but an inner virtue cultivated through the purification of the *nafs* and moral refinement.

Rumi's ethical conception of justice operates on two interconnected levels: divine justice and human justice. Divine justice is based on God's forbearance (*ḥilm)* and His measured intervention in human actions, while human justice depends on individuals' moral integrity and their alignment with the divine order. According to Rumi, true justice cannot be achieved solely through the enforcement of external laws but rather through the development of an individual's inner moral consciousness. This approach demonstrates that justice is the foundation of social harmony and spiritual fulfilment.

Rumi's philosophical account of justice exhibits notable affinities with classical philosophical traditions, particularly Aristotle's account of temperance in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, where unchecked desires are viewed as impediments to rational judgment and ethical discernment. Yet, Rumi both deepens and transcends this framework by grounding moral clarity not solely in reason, but in the illuminating power of divine love. In his thought, justice is no longer confined to a principle of balance defined by rational moderation; rather, it is reconstituted as an inner value realized through spiritual purification, the refinement of the heart, and the intuitive perception of truth. By presenting justice as a mystical intuition, a metaphysical reality, and a means of participating in divine order, Rumi offers a transformative contribution to Islamic moral philosophy.

In addition to building on the classical Islamic moral and political tradition, Rumi reinterprets and deepens it by infusing a mystical and affective dimension into the concept of justice. The structural rationalism of al-Farabi's virtuous city, al-Ghazali's doctrine of the purification of the soul, Ibn Miskawayh's reason-based ethical theory, and Ibn Arabi's ontological interpretation of divine justice are all rearticulated in Rumi's thought through a focus

on inner experience, intuitive insight, and spiritual refinement. For Rumi, justice is not merely a principle of social order or rational moderation; it is the manifestation of divine truth reflected in the purified heart. By positioning justice as both the foundation of spiritual transformation and the essence of cosmic harmony, Rumi forges a unique bridge across theological, philosophical, and mystical traditions. His contribution thus offers a profound reconfiguration of Islamic moral thought at metaphysical, psychological, and poetic levels.

Moreover, Rumi's concept of justice has significant implications for contemporary ethical debates. Particularly in the fields of moral psychology, social justice, and the relationship between law and spirituality, Rumi's vision challenges positivist and procedural justice theories. He argues that justice can only be realized when it is internalized as a lived moral experience. This perspective aligns with modern discussions on virtue ethics, moral cognition, and affective justice, positioning Rumi as an ethical scholar whose insights extend beyond his historical and cultural context.

Rumi's conception of sense of justice, though rooted in an Islamic metaphysical framework, reveals striking affinities with the Western moral sense tradition, particularly with philosophers like Shaftesbury (d. 1713), Hutcheson (d. 1746), and Adam Smith (d. 1790). These philosophers held that humans possess an innate moral faculty that allows them to distinguish right from wrong, akin to a "moral sense." For instance, Hutcheson, in his *An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (1725), describes this sense as an immediate perception of virtue. Adam Smith, in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), speaks of the "impartial spectator" as an inner faculty for moral judgment. Similarly, Rumi identifies the human heart (*gönül*) as a divine mirror and internal scale (*mīzān*), capable of perceiving moral truth when purified from base desires. Both perspectives emphasize the emotional and intuitive dimensions of moral awareness, suggesting that moral cognition is not merely rational but deeply affective. By placing the sense of justice at the heart of moral experience, Rumi offers a complementary vision to these Enlightenment-era theories, but with a

distinctive spiritual depth grounded in divine love and metaphysical harmony.

In conclusion, this study contributes meaningfully to ongoing discussions in both Islamic moral philosophy and epistemology by offering a systematic analysis of Rumi's conception of justice through its epistemological, ethical, philosophical, and theological dimensions. Admittedly, this exploration has relied heavily on direct translations from the *Mathnawī,* but we believe that there is a need to engage with Rumi's magnum opus as it is. It is hoped that the couplets brought forward will facilitate further study on both Rumi and his ideas on the purification of the soul.

To reiterate, Mawlana Jalal al-Din Rumi reinterprets justice not merely as a legal principle but as an innate moral sense embedded in human nature. He identifies spiritual purification, ethical responsibility, and divine love as the essential foundations for cultivating both the virtuous individual and the just society. This integrative perspective—bridging legal, epistemological, and mystical traditions—offers a valuable framework for understanding both classical and contemporary debates concerning justice, morality, knowledge, and human perfection. Peace and harmony in society can only come forth if there is peace and harmony within the hearts of its people.