

Explanation and Comparison of Rumi and Ibn Arabi's Concepts on the Relationship between Truth and Tolerance

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ABSTRACT

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Rumani and Ibn Arabi are authors of works that transcend borders. The pluralism inherent in their works is closely related to the requirements of their time and geography. The present study focuses on the concept of truth and its relationship with tolerance in the works of these two thinkers using a descriptive-analytical method and library resources, and concludes that tolerance among mystics has different foundations, sometimes it is their view of the concept of truth that causes their peace-seeking, which in some positions is an epistemological concept. According to Ibn Arabi's theology, truth is a plural concept and has various instances. According to his views in *Fusûs-ul-Hikm*, God is essentially one, but He is universal and plural in name. This plurality causes Ibn Arabi to be tolerant towards other ideas. Truth in Rumi's view has been explored with regard to five headings: attention to a personal truth, acceptance of the bandits of truth, attention to the plurality of religions, emphasis on the truth on the way, and finally emphasis on the perspective of truth. Rumi and Ibn Arabi are two different thinkers who value plural conceptions of the single truth. The relationship between truth and tolerance has similarities and differences in their views. Truth, in their view, has a two-way relationship with tolerance and total peace in various instances. In addition to explaining this relationship, an attempt has been made to establish a comparison between the views of these two great thinkers.

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Introduction

Tolerance has long been recognized as a fundamental pillar of Sufi thought, yet scholarly attention has often focused on its ethical manifestation rather than its epistemological and ontological foundations. This study explores the premise that the profound tolerance exhibited by great Sufi masters, specifically Jalal al-Din Rumi and Ibn Arabi, is rooted in their distinct understandings of the nature of “Truth” (*Haqiqat*). Both thinkers lived in historically significant, culturally diverse environments—melting pots of intellectual exchange—which fostered their pluralistic worldviews. The central problem of this research is to delineate the relationship between their conceptions of Truth and their advocacy for tolerance, subsequently comparing their approaches to determine how these two masters, despite their differing philosophical temperaments, arrived at similar conclusions regarding the necessity of a tolerant outlook toward existence.

Method

The study utilizes a descriptive-analytical methodology based on library research. It examines the primary texts of both thinkers—focusing on *Fusus al-Hikam* for Ibn Arabi and the *Masnawi* and *Fihi Ma Fihi* for Rumi—to extract their conceptual frameworks regarding the nature of Truth. By analyzing the epistemological and ontological arguments inherent in their works, the researchers categorize their justifications for tolerance and systematically compare their methodological, stylistic, and practical approaches.

Results

The research identifies that while both thinkers view Truth as multifaceted, their paths to this conclusion differ significantly in execution and focus:

- **Ibn Arabi’s Ontological Pluralism:** Ibn Arabi’s concept of Truth is deeply tied to his theology of *Wahdat al-Wujud* (Unity of Existence). He posits that God is One in Essence but Many in His Names and Attributes. This inherent ontological multiplicity

necessitates a tolerant engagement with the world. Furthermore, Ibn Arabi bridges the gap between God and creation through the concept of the “Perfect Man” (*al-Insan al-Kamil*). He argues that self-knowledge is the prerequisite for knowing God, and since creation acts as a mirror to divine attributes, recognizing the diverse manifestations of the Divine leads naturally to a tolerant worldview.

- **Rumi’s Experiential Pluralism:** Rumi’s approach to Truth is articulated through five key concepts:
 ١. **Personal Truth:** Truth functions as an existential, subjective reality tailored to the individual’s spiritual growth.
 ٢. **Truth-Bandits:** Rumi acknowledges that the “World” and “Language” are inevitable barriers that distort the purity of Truth, yet they are necessary stages in the human experience.
 ٣. **Religious Pluralism:** Rumi maintains that all paths lead to the same “Sultan,” and the differences in religions are products of perspective rather than essence.
 ٤. **Truth in Process:** Truth is not a static destination but a “Truth-in-the-making” that progresses as the seeker evolves.
 ٥. **Perspective-based Truth:** Using the analogy of the elephant in the dark, Rumi argues that human perceptions of Truth are limited by their viewpoint, encouraging humility and tolerance toward the perspectives of others.
- **Comparison:** A significant methodological divide is observed. Ibn Arabi’s discourse is scholastic, theoretical, complex, and grounded in technical *Kalam* terminology. Conversely, Rumi’s discourse is practical, accessible, metaphorical, and deeply embedded in the everyday life and language of his contemporaries.

Conclusion

The study concludes that both Rumi and Ibn Arabi are essential figures in the development of Islamic pluralism and tolerance. However, their methods reflect a binary of “Theory vs. Practice.” Ibn Arabi provides a rigorous, speculative, and metaphysical framework for tolerance, firmly rooted in the Unity of Existence. Rumi offers a populist, application-oriented framework, utilizing metaphors that transform abstract tolerance

into a lived experience. This research fills a gap in existing literature by demonstrating that while their intellectual starting points differ—one scholastic and one experiential—they effectively converge on the necessity of seeing the “Truth” through a lens of inclusivity, confirming that tolerance is not merely an ethical preference but an epistemological imperative for the mature mystic.