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TOLERANCE: SCIENTIFIC AND THEORETICAL DISCUSSIONS

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Abstract

Each society faces a complicated problem of tolerance, which includes different spheres of social life. Manifestations of intolerant relations in behavior can be connected with social differentiation, social, economic and political conditions in the country, as well as with ethical, moral and cultural wealth in society.

Analysis of a tolerance's concept and matter is represented in this article. It is known that demonstration of tolerance is determined by a social and cultural situation and therefore it is acceptable to distinguish some types of tolerance. Considering types of tolerance, the author suggests the basic principle of public conduct, which is based on acceptance of various opinions.

An attempt to determine limits of tolerance is made; they allow understanding what has the right to exist and what must be prohibited in society. The author comes to a conclusion that there is no true tolerance in the modern world because it is supposed to admit different opinions and viewpoints.

Objective of research:

1. To analyse and synthesize the definition and interpretation of tolerance.
2. To determine types of tolerance and its limits.
3. To consider the factors, influencing tolerance behavior.

Used methods: analysis, synthesis, comparison, generalization.

Research results have shown the problems of tolerance in the modern society and confirmed the necessity for design and implementation of programs, aimed at forming tolerant consciousness and prevention of intolerance between people in multicultural states.

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Keywords: Conflicts, tolerance, society, situation, limits.



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1. Introduction

There are many social and ethnic conflicts in the modern world and they indicate that tolerance is not a generally accepted principle in our society. It is often presented in ways, such as indifference and passivism. Sometimes tolerance is considered as ability to adapt to another viewpoint and find compromise, avoiding some conflict situations.

Nowadays many definitions of tolerance have been suggested by modern scientists. Their analysis shows that there is no general conception, concerning this problem.

2. Problem Statement

Scientific theorizing of the tolerance problem began in the XX century, but this phenomenon was studied by ancient philosophers such as Confucius, Epicurean, Plato, Aristotle and others (Confucius, 2002; Thinkers of Greece, 1998).

Erasmus of Rotterdam was the first who demonstrated the principle of tolerance (Erasmus of Rotterdam, 1995)

Then ideas of tolerance were reflected in the works of M. Monten (Monten, 2009), F. Bakon (Bakon, 1998).

A. Guseynov, I. Ilin, V. Lektoskiy, V. Solovev, M. Khomyakov (Guseynov, 2008; Ilin, 1993; Lektoskiy, 1997; Solovev, 1996; Khomyakov, 2003) have made a great contribution to development of scientific knowledge in the field of tolerance. They have determined the essence of this phenomenon, its content level and limits. It is immediately apparent from the foregoing that nowadays there is a lot of scientific researches, concerning various aspects of tolerance. Thus, the choice of the research was arisen by its actuality and because of insufficient study of tolerance based on various theories.

3. Research Questions

- 3.1. In what way could tolerance be analyzed?
- 3.2. What are the types of tolerance?
- 3.3. Does tolerance have its limits?
- 3.4. What are the factors, influencing tolerant behaviour?]

4. Purpose of the Study

- 1.1. To analyse and synthesise the definition and interpretation of tolerance.
- 1.2. To determine types of tolerance and its limits
- 1.3. To consider the factors, influencing tolerant behaviour.

5. Research Methods

Analysis, synthesis, comparison, generalization.

6. Findings

Different viewpoints are represented in various dictionaries.

There is no definition “tolerance” in the Explanatory Dictionary of the Russian Language. But one could read there the adjective “tolerant” that means to be tolerant towards other viewpoints, opinions and behaviour (Ozhegov, 2004, p. 795).

The Psychological Dictionary defines tolerance as “deficiency or weakening of reaction to some factors as a result of sensory decrement to its action” (*Psychological Dictionary*, 2003, p. 517).

In the Modern Philosophical Dictionary, tolerance is determined as “a refusal to use force to prevent differences in opinions, beliefs, behaviour of a person or a group of people” (*Modern philosophical dictionary*, 2004, p.726).

Tolerance was in the highlight of researches in all historic periods. Ancient philosophic discourses contained reflections on this problem. So, for example Chinese philosopher Confucius wrote “I don’t want to do those things for others that I don’t want to be done by others for me” (Confucius, 2002, p. 37).

For the first time the definition of tolerance appeared in the XVI- XVII centuries resulting from cruel, religious wars in Europe. Erasmus of Rotterdam was the first who had made a very compelling argument, concerning the principle of tolerance (Erasmus of Rotterdam, 1995). Later Michel Monten was developing ideas of Erasmus of Rotterdam (Monten, 2009).

Then F. Bacon wrote about tolerance: “if each person is given his merits, then the person must be patient in regard to other people” (Bacon, 1998, p. 143).

It is known that tolerance is a part of a general culture. It could be considered both at the level of an individual and at the level of society. The well-known philosopher, Henry Bergson, has formulated a conception of an open and closed society (Bergson, 1994).

According to this, the closed society is a society where the members are near allied; they are indifferent to other worlds, they are always ready for aggression or defence; in one word, they must be on full combat readiness (Bergson, 1994, p. 268).

He writes that a human is created for the closed society like an ant for its anthill. Foundation for a closed society is a religion and responsibility consisting of force.

Bergson supposes that the open society is a society that covers all humankind. Elected souls are taken with the idea of it. A deep transformation of a human allows overcoming difficulties that had been overcome before (Bergson, 1994, p. 289).

H. Bergson confirms that it is impossible to pass from a closed society into an open society because they are essentially various. The matter is that there is a great distance between a nation and humanity that separates the final from the endless, the closed from the opened (Bergson, 1994, p.32).

From what has been said a hypothesis could be made that the principles of tolerance are in the open society. Unfortunately, it is important to recognize that the open society represents a certain ideal type to seek because understanding and acceptance of individual differences exist only there.

The problem of tolerance was an object of regard of Russian philosophers. Tolerance was mentioned in philosophical and religious works of I. Ilin, N. Berdyaev, V. Solovyov and others.

Thinking about tolerance, scientists were underlining equality of all nations, their right to bear and admit their religion voluntary (Ilin, 1993, p. 127).

A particular attention to the problem of tolerance was given by V. Solovyov. Describing a human condition, the philosopher pointed out five virtues; tolerance was among them. He wrote that tolerance as a virtue is a suffering part of the state of mind that in its active displaying could be called as magnanimity or spiritual courage.

In his opinion, tolerance is a sort of patience, so-called admission of liberty. Both this characteristic and this attitude are neither virtue nor vice, but they might be both. All depends on a subject, on intrinsic motives such as magnanimity and cowardice, respect for other's rights and disregard for their benefit, deep diffidence in victorious force of high truth to treat the truth with indifference (Solovyov, 1996, p. 133).

As is seen from the above-mentioned, the fifth virtue pointed out by V. Solovyov has a negative and positive meaning because it may be considered as a virtue or vice, depending on given situations.

Modern scientists continue the traditions of Russian philosophers. They are completing and expanding the theoretical conception of tolerance.

According to V. Lektoskiy, four conceptions of tolerance were suggested.

Firstly, he supposed that tolerance is indifference. This definition was related with the classical liberal tradition. Thereafter this conception, existence of different viewpoints and opinions were not important in the face of the main problems, with which our society has to deal.

Secondly, tolerance could be considered as impossibility of better understanding.

Thirdly, tolerance meant indulgence for others, combining contempt for people.

Fourthly, the most fruitful meaning of tolerance in modern conditions, in his opinion, was understanding tolerance as the expanding of first-hand experience and a critical dialogue (Lektorskiy, 1997, p.15).

The summary statement of this conception lies in this assertion written by V. Lektorskiy that every culture is a value-based and cognitive system. If it enters a dialogue with another culture it will expand its lines of experience because the most interesting ideas have arisen in society when various conceptions and paradigms were colliding with each other. Tolerance is a result of a critical dialogue and it serves as respect for another person's opinion. V. Lektoskiy believed that it would be difficult to translate the conception of tolerance into action because sometimes it is impossible to accept another viewpoint.

Demonstration of tolerance is determined by a social and cultural situation. In connection with this statement, some types of tolerance are distinguished. S. Bondereva and D. Kolesov have offered the following types of tolerance. The first type is natural tolerance. It appears when there is no reason for backlash and a person is positively appreciated. The natural tolerance is considered as tolerance of identity. It arises in cases when people do not see particular differences between each other.

The second type of tolerance is problematic tolerance. It is manifested in situation when there is a basis for backlash, but a person makes an effort to restrain his temper for various reasons. Problematic tolerance can be divided into some other types. For example, constructive tolerance usually originates in case an attitude exists for cooperation. The next type is an adaption in a situation if a person gets used to his tight place. Condescending tolerance is tolerance that can be negatively appreciated by a man, it does not affect him deeply and it is not important for him. The following type is constrained tolerance that

includes tolerance of subordination. The other type of tolerance is tolerance of profit which is connected with the constructive tolerance - a tolerance of mannerliness. It represents one way to assertiveness.

S. Gershkovich believes that these types of tolerance are related to each other and they can occur as a whole (Gershkovich, 2006, p. 214).

Assuming that tolerance may be both virtue and vice, it is necessary to solve the problem of its limits. To be sure, only tolerance's limits allow understanding what the right has for existence and what is prohibited in society. It is beyond argument that it is impossible to tolerate people with deviant behaviour and be indifferent to the suffering of others. One cannot look with favour on descent of morality and ethics in the modern world.

Some scientists are of opinion that the limits of tolerance depend on society. For this reason, efforts to find truly, suitable tolerance for "reasonable being" are doomed to fail (Khomyakov 2003, p.102).

It raises the following question. Is it possible to make all individuals be tolerant? The author of this paper considers that tolerance depends on the personal internal culture, on the educational level. It is worth pointing out that it is physically impossible to force people to be tolerant. In the opinion of V. Samohvalova, forcible tolerance can be dangerous because it will lead to tolerance for vice.

Pushing the idea of tolerance, a hole will be made in traditional culture, shifting the emphasis and mixing moral compasses. It often happens that release of moral takes place under the mask of tolerance (Samokhvalova, 2008, p. 35).

Having studied the problem of tolerance, the author of this paper has come to the following conclusion. It is very difficult to find a consistent approach to the definition of tolerance because general methodological procedures are not available. That is why it is difficult to study tolerance as a special social phenomenon. Tolerance may be considered as a virtue and a vice, depending on situations and conditions. There is no true tolerance in society because various viewpoints must be considered and accepted. The author supports and shares the opinion of a member of the Academy of Sciences of A. Gusejnov. One should go from a positive conception of tolerance (to be tolerant towards beliefs) to its negative statement – not to cram down the throat. Within the framework of this interpretation, the issue, concerning the limits of tolerance, will head for back. Due to this fact, it allows one to accept tolerance as an ultimate principle of social behaviour (Gusejnov, 2008, p.40).

7. Conclusion

Tolerance is a complex, polysemous definition that has various characteristics and can be considered from all viewpoints. At the present time, a set of definitions is in existence. Scientists of each epoch were proposing the ways of solution of current rifts. They used their own understanding of tolerance. This statement could be accepted as the main principle of public behaviour - not to cram down throat.]

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