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# Toleration: Analysis of the Concept

## Tolerance: koncepta analīze

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The essay attempts to place the concept of toleration within the traditional value system of Western morality. The term “toleration” as a distinctive tool of the socio-political discourse is of a comparatively recent origin; it stretches back to the period of political strife caused by the religious situation of the Reformation. The notion of toleration was first developed by John Locke in his *Two Treatises on Government* and his *Letters on toleration*. The originality of Lockean approach can best be seen as against the ideas of his predecessor T. Hobbes. For Hobbes religion was a socially dangerous phenomenon, requiring strict government control. Locke proposed a completely opposite approach that could be designated as a “hands-off-religion” stance. In order to provide a theoretically sustainable criterion for the demarcation of tolerable and intolerable elements in religiosity, Locke propounded to distinguish between inner matters of a religious group (articles of faith, forms of worship, etc.) and outside effects, that have to be evaluated from the point of view of the public interests at large.

In Locke’s case the principle of toleration was directed exclusively towards religious matters. During the further historical development, the idea of liberty begun to be extended to a wider range of social relations. The next significant step in this development is connected with J. S. Mill’s work “*On Liberty*”. Here Mill makes an outspoken attack on all sorts of restraints on individual freedom – not only institutional, but also such ones that he detects as stemming from “despotism of custom”. Such kind of shift of accent had a liberating effect, and has provided for the whole school of thought and corresponding practical implications of modern liberalism.

In the end, conclusions are drawn as to the possible evaluation of the concept of toleration within the context of traditional moral values. First of all toleration is not to be valued as being intrinsically good or good in itself. It should be ranked rather among the pragmatically justifiable virtues. In specific circumstances intolerance may become counter-productive, and toleration recommends itself as a strategy for survival. As against this, toleration may be and should be profitably fitted within the traditional value system. It chimes in with such virtues as individual freedom, personal uniqueness, equality, justice, fairness, spirit of cooperation, etc. By the same token, tolerance eschews oppression and violence of whatever sort (physical, emotional, verbal). Toleration is the hallmark of modern, democratic, multi-cultural set-up, and intolerance is part and parcel of repressive, vicious regimes.

**Key words:** toleration, religion, minority, ethics.

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Toleration is the mirror-image of intolerance. In the sense that both phenomena are interrelated as logical and historical oppositions. The course of history is marked by a fair amount of intolerance (to say the least). Strife, violence, crime, wars, etc. provide a telling example of it. At the same time, civilization has advanced on the bases of such moral values as understanding, compassion, cooperation, justice, forgiveness and love.

As to the term 'toleration' itself, its use in the capacity of a distinctive tool of the socio-ethical discourse is of a comparatively recent origin. It has been intensively used (or misused) only during the last half-a-century or so, and is associated with the surge of the modern liberal attitudes and the rise of the welfare society. Conceptual origins of this usage stretch back somewhat further; in a direct line of development these are to be traced to the very fertile period of Western history – the Renaissance and the Reformation, and to a particular thinker of that period John Locke.

John Locke's work *Two Treatises on Government* (1689) and his letters on toleration (*A Letter Concerning Toleration* (1689), *A Second Letter Concerning Toleration* (1690) and *A Third Letter for Toleration* (1692)) were written in response to the social upheavals and the religious strifes of the 17<sup>th</sup> century Europe. They provide the bases for the whole line of thought that has issued in the present-day toleration ideology. In much the same way as Lockean political theory has served as the blueprint for the socio-political fabric of the United States of America and what has come to be termed as the Free World. Freedom, toleration, justice, democracy form an interrelated cluster of concepts that are indispensable for the functioning of modern society. Since all, or most of them are genetically related to Lockean teaching, it is worth paying some attention to his contribution. The more so because with the help of such an analysis we may hope to better understand the paradoxical nature of the concept we are discussing today and to better evaluate the *pros* and *cons* of the same.

John Locke (1632-1704) is traditionally classified (for the purposes of philosophy teaching) as ranking with British empiricists (Hobbes, Hume, Berkley etc.) who are contrasted with Continental rationalists Descartes, Spinoza, Leibnitz and others. Actually, the question of Locke's relations with *ratio*, with rationality deserves closer scrutiny. It has to be mentioned that Locke is renowned also for having taken great interest in Christianity and, although he has had acrimonious exchange of opinions with the divines of his day and is linked with the appearance of deism, his personal stance is not anti-religious. At the end of his days he wanted to live "in perfect charity with all men and in sincere communion with the whole Church of Christ, by whatever names Christ's followers call themselves" (Jones, 1969, 239).

Be it as it may, coming back to Locke's rationalism, it has to be pointed out that he highly valued reason as God's given unique gift to be used properly for the betterment of human life. This called for proper investigation of the empirical facticity of life. Of course, the chief drawback of his empirical stand – and even more of that of his followers – grew out of his denial of innate ideas and narrowing down of human experience to perceptual, or "outer" experience. The analytical philosophy of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which is heir to Lockean ideas has long since remedied the situation (the so called sense-data debate) allowing for other kinds of experience – inner experience – illumination, intuition, revelation – to serve as legitimate sources of the knowledge-building enterprise.

Another set of Lockean ideas bringing us closer to the toleration theme is his understanding of the socio-political and ethical issues. Here his innovative genius is

remarkable. By developing and elaborating the social contract theory of his predecessor T. Hobbes, Locke augmented it with some vital notions such as the checks-and-balances idea of the State power (division between legislative, administrative and judicial offices), the particular stress on property rights etc. The sum total of these innovations led to the well-known libertarian stand to the effect that all men are born equal and that it is wrong for one man to subjugate another. Life, liberty and property are inalienable rights of every person and no one must interfere with the way each person disposes of these rights. This, of course, has become the formula for democratic management of the human affairs in any civilized society. But the problem has always been – in Locke's time, as throughout the subsequent centuries – of how to implement this lofty principle in a real-life situation where the interests of individuals collide, where the inalienable rights of one person are not compatible with the inalienable rights of another person. The examples are legion... (Among the 20<sup>th</sup> century thinkers who have wrestled with this problem I would single out Isaiah Berlin – a Riga-born British philosopher and historian of ideas, who has offered, in my view, one of the most tenable solutions of the toleration problematics).

The above-mentioned practical problem, with reference to the theme of toleration acquires the aspect of how to square the interests of a ruling majority with those of the recalcitrant minority, with groups or individuals who demand a full say in the affairs of the government without sharing of the views and practices of the rest of the community. In Locke's time this was a typical issue with regard to the religious situation. It was a problem provoked by the Reformation in Europe and by the specific character of Reformation on the British Isles. Without going into details that are known to every student of the history of European religion, I want to remind only that the political strife in the 17<sup>th</sup> century Britain was produced by the interplay of three forces: the Anglican form of the State Church, the remnants of the politically defeated Roman Catholics and a sizeable body of Continental-type Protestants variously called the dissenters, the puritans, the independents and the like. The Baptists, Congregationalists, the Presbyterians, the Quakers and other "sects" can be justly called – with hindsight – the recalcitrant minority, who vehemently demanded universal recognition and equal religious and political rights.

Throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> century the rights of the dissenting religious groups provided the topic of intensive theological discussions, involving the Anglican divines, poet John Milton, Quaker William Penn, and a whole host of other theoreticians (*see* Moorman, 1961, 266).

From the socio-philosophical angle this problem was dealt with by John Locke.

The notion of toleration has been used before in the history of European ideas (Constantine's Edict of Milan in 313), but John Locke was the first thinker to use it in a sustained terminological manner within the context of State – Church relationships.

The starting point of Locke's theory of toleration (as it could be termed) is the cognitive and the socio-ethical tenets discussed above. In particular – the assumptions concerning the human nature and human sociality – the so called 'State of Nature' doctrine borrowed from Hobbes. The remarkable novelty of his approach is to be seen by contrasting it with Hobbesian views. For Hobbes religion was a socially dangerous phenomenon requiring strict government control. John Lock proposed a completely opposite remedy. The cure of religious trouble – according to him – was not less, but – more toleration. Instead of persecution he recommended extension of equal rights to all religious groups with only minor (insignificant in his view) restrictions.

His advice to the magistrate was to “turn the tables”, and to embrace the recalcitrant minority with the same good-will and benevolence as the dominant majority.

“Let us therefore deal plainly. The magistrate is afraid of other Churches, but not of his own; because he is kind and favourable to the one, but severe and cruel to the other... Let him turn the tables: or let those dissenters enjoy but the same privileges in civils as his other subjects, and he will quickly find that these religious meetings will be no longer dangerous. For if men enter into seditious conspiracies, ‘tis not religion inspires them to it in their meetings, but their sufferings and oppressions that make them willing to ease themselves. Just and moderate governments are everywhere quiet, everywhere safe...” (Locke, Letter Concerning Toleration (1689)).

We see that this is a somewhat one-sided and a utopian point of view – the interrelation of social and religious factors is a much more complicated phenomenon than Lock envisaged in the premises of his argumentation. However, the general tenor of his stand was a viable and a necessary one in view of the social unrest stemming from oppression of religious minorities.

Another – a more cognitive type of assumption forming bases of Locke’s argumentation is connected with the epistemic character of religious belief or faith.

“It is absurd that things be enjoined by laws, which are not in men’s power to perform. And to believe this is that to be true does not depend on our will (..) The business of laws is not to provide for the truth of opinions, bet safety and security of the Commonwealth and of every particular man’s goods and person (..) For the truth certainly would do well enough, if she were once left to shift for herself (..) The case of each man’s salvation belongs only to himself (..) Anyone may employ as many exhortations and arguments as he pleases, towards the promotion of another man’s salvation. But all force and compulsion are to be forbidden (..) Every man, in that, has the supreme and absolute authority of judging for himself [...] Men cannot be forced to be saved whether they will or not. And therefore, when all is done, they must be left to their own consciences” (Ibidem).

This “hands-off-religion” policy proposed by Locke was a drastically novel turn in the State-Church relations. At the same time, it is obvious that it obtained of some rather utopian qualities and left many practical questions unanswered. In particular – how to tackle the cases when some kind of religious worship was not only unpalatable, but downright opprobrious or even dangerous to the society at large, or even to the participants themselves? How to draw a line between genuine religiosity and all sorts of quasi-religious activities? How to distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate religious activities, etc.? (Locke’s practical application of his principles resulted in the notorious proposal: to stop persecution and to extend toleration to all people, with the exception of atheists, for they do not believe in God at all, and of the Roman Catholics, because the latter represented arch enemies of English statehood.)

In order to provide a more theoretically sustainable criterion for demarcation between the “tolerable” and the “intolerable” elements in religiosity, Locke proposed to distinguish between the “inner matters” of a religious group (articles of faith, forms of worship etc.) and the “outside effects” which had to be evaluated from the point of view of the public interests of society at large. This division is admirable in principle, but suffers from the general deficiencies of covert and overt activity that is part and parcel of human cognition and sociality. It has remained a bone of contention for all subsequent attempts to smooth out the Church – State relations, but still – the Lockean principle of near-toleration has been indispensable for the finding of optimal solutions in Western democracies.

In Locke's case the principle of toleration was directed exclusively towards religious matters. In the course of further historical development during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the idea of toleration began to be extended to a wider range of social relations. The next significant stage in this development is connected with J. S. Mill's work.

John Stuart Mill is usually referred to as a co-founder (with J. Bentham) of the trend of philosophical stance known as utilitarianism – an opprobrious term by all accounts – the ethical version of which has been even evaluated as “the ethics of pigs”. Not going into the details of this designation and of modern utilitarian developments, I just want to emphasize that Mill's essay ‘On Liberty’ (1859) is considered as the classic defence of individual freedom and of elitist intellectualism, and that it has “burnt itself into the consciousness of each succeeding generation of liberalism” (Aunan, 1968, 40). Mill does not refer directly to J. Locke and does not use the term toleration in a specific technical sense, yet his work is permeated with the idea of what has been so far called the rights of individuals and of recalcitrant minorities.

This comes about through Mill's outspoken attack on all sorts of restraints put on individual freedom by the authorities and the customs of the time. He speaks out against the “despotism of custom”, against bigotry and mediocrity, and makes ardent pleas for eccentricity, diversity and individual liberty.

“As it is useful that while mankind are imperfect there should be different opinions, so it is that there should be different experiments of living; that free scope should be given to varieties of character, short of injury to others; and that the worth of different modes of life should be proved practically, when anyone thinks fit to try them. It is desirable, in short, that in things which do not primarily concern others individuality should assert itself. Where not the person's own character but the traditions or customs of other people are the rule of conduct, there is wanting one of the principal ingredients of human happiness, and quite the chief ingredient of individual and social progress” (Mill, *On Liberty* (1860)).

What are we to make of this stance taken by Mill? First of all we may note that Mill elevates the role of the individual in a rather specific fashion. His individual is the one who goes against the current, the idiosyncratic individual, the individual belonging to a minority, oppressed and subdued by the individuals belonging to the majority. Such kind of accent, no doubt, had in the 19<sup>th</sup> century a liberating effect, much in line with the effect of the *Aufklärung* of the German Romanticism and the Nietzschean idea of the *Übermensch*. It provided for the whole school of thought and the practical implications of positive discrimination that stems from modern toleration ideology.

On the other hand – Mill does not fail to notice, but fails to provide a viable solution – to the problem of the limits of toleration. In the above citation we meet the phrase “...short of injury to others...”; elsewhere he says:

“Acts, of whatever kind, which without justifiable cause do harm to others may be, and in the more important cases absolutely require to be, controlled by the unfavourable sentiments, and, when needful, by the active interference of mankind. The liberty of the individual must be thus far limited; he must not make himself a nuisance to other people. But if he refrains from molesting others in what concerns them, and merely acts according to his own inclination and judgement in things which concern himself, the same reasons which show that opinion should be free prove also that he should be allowed, without molestation, to carry his opinions in practice at his own cost.” (Ibidem)

What exactly constitutes “a nuisance to other people” and what are “the justifiable causes” that would permit the limitation of liberty was as unclear in Mill’s time as it is today. The distinction has been made, but each generation has to provide an answer within the precincts of this distinction anew, in an attempt to balance the rights of all individuals – those who represent the opinions of a minority and those individuals who belong to the so called majority. Majority and minority notions do change with the passage of time. But they cannot keep changing indefinitely. Because we are human beings and not – as Isaiah Berlin would say – tables and chairs or cats and dogs. Short of this – the range of possible changes is great enough to accommodate all sorts of potentialities relating to social recalcitrance and individual idiosyncrasies or foibles.

Some concluding considerations in line with the discussion of the paradoxical nature of the concept of toleration.

First of all we should note that toleration is not to be reckoned among those categories of ethics that obtain of an absolute character (whatever we mean by this highly ambiguous term). The notion of toleration has appeared comparatively late in the development of Western moral theory. Philosophically speaking we could say that toleration can hardly be considered to be intrinsically good, or good in itself. It could be more profitably viewed as a pragmatically justifiable category – we have to be tolerant because the human situation at a certain stage of development simply demands toleration, or else – we are faced with self-destruction and extinction. A situation arises when intolerance becomes counterproductive, and toleration remains the only strategy for survival. This idea has been bluntly advanced by Isaiah Berlin, and I could augment it with considerations to the effect that at times it seems that the toleration/intolerance dichotomy has something to do with sheer numbers: overpopulation and scarcity of resources make people – individuals as well as nations – to indulge in actions that can be characterized as extremism, aggression, intolerance, terrorism.

As against this we should not fail to note that the notion of toleration can be and should be fitted within the context of the traditional ethical value system. Toleration feels at home with freedom (liberty) of individuals, with recognition of personal uniqueness; with equality, justice, with fairness and the spirit of mutuality, etc. Toleration is indispensable for the development of multiculturally viable societal cohesion in a situation where people of different races, with different religious and cultural backgrounds and life-styles have to share densely populated urban environment.

Toleration has come to stand decisively in opposition to such vices as hatred, high-mindedness, disrespect and abuse. It eschews oppression, torture, killing and violence of any sort whatever. In short – toleration is the hallmark of modern democratic multicultural set-up, and intolerance is part and parcel of repressive, vicious regimes.

Placement of toleration within the scales of traditional Western values comes naturally enough to people who have been involved in sustained development of democratic institutions over a sufficiently long period of time – at least from John Locke’s day and earlier. We here in Latvia (and I dare say in the Baltic States in general) find ourselves in this respect in a middle-of-the-road situation. Especially during the 20<sup>th</sup> century the people of Latvia have borne an unfair share of subjugation and oppression, and this has not failed to leave an imprint on our social and moral thinking. At the same time – Latvians have witnessed a period of national and multicultural statehood and have a sufficient tradition of spiritual development under the civilizing influence of the Western European Christian culture.

For these reasons, I think we are in a position to attempt to engage in discussion as to the implementation of democratic behaviour of which toleration is an essential ingredient. Taking my cue from Isaiah Berlin I would propose as the first step of this implementation to develop what could be called “discussion toleration” – to learn to engage in meaningful discussion with persons and groups whose views we find – on the first impulse – to be intolerable and downright objectionable. Discussion is a two-way traffic; it consists not only of expounding one’s views at length and with gusto; to an even greater degree it means listening to the views of the partner, considering his/her arguments, suspending one’s own judgement, and the like.

Discussion is to be conducted on the bases of certain logical and psychological considerations. One such consideration is concerned with the semantically-logical status of the very concept of toleration.

To gain some semantic taste of the concept I propose to briefly examine situations which are usually described as requiring toleration.

First of all let us imagine toleration towards people who perform such actions that we approve of or even indulge in ourselves. A minute consideration will show us that the use of the term ‘toleration’ in such instances is a misnomer. To suffer (tolerate) something and to enjoy it at the same time is a contradiction of terms. And yet – this is a very widespread delusion in Latvia today. You will find many a politician or even intellectually respectable person, who sincerely believe themselves to be paragons of toleration for the simple reason that they approve of the actions of their kin. They have assumed that their own views and life-styles are “natural” and for this reason these are shared (or should be shared) by all the other members of the community. (An example of a police chief who during the recent corruption scandal defended the misdeeds of his subordinates as stemming from “natural human drives”).

Likewise, toleration is not to be confused with psychological state of inertness, sloth, passive obedience, detachment. A person who does not care, or cares in a minimal degree about his/her own existence or about the affairs of the community, can hardly be called tolerant. (Although such a position is in principle tenable, but in this case he or she would be eligible for the status of the recipient of toleration from other members of the community.) In any case toleration involves a sufficiently agile interest in the lives of other people, and active involvement in the running of public affairs. At the same time it involves exercising restraint on one’s egoistic drives and cultivation of such personal qualities as humbleness, meekness of spirit, long-suffering and compassion. For Christian it means: loving of our neighbour as ourselves.

Toleration is not to be seen as the prerogative of Christians alone. The pragmatic character of toleration I spoke of earlier, determines its usability, in fact – its inevitability for the modern world. But the potential of Christian ethics towards building of a tolerant, sustainable, multicultural society is undeniable.

“The Christian finds many kinds of actual practical toleration rather easier than the Enlightened” – says historian of ideas Crane Brinton (Brinton, 1900, 398).

The involvement of the Church in developing of the notion of toleration – as we saw above – was a controversial one. On the one hand – it was the intolerable social situation of the Reformation period in Europe that was instrumental in producing the pragmatic solutions propounded by John Locke and implemented by his secular and (mainly) Protestant heirs. It was a religion-precipitated situation that finally issued in the modern liberal ideology.

The paradoxicality of the concept of toleration does not permit us to resolutely determine some general (absolute, eternal) rules of toleration that are to be considered as binding for all times and places. The development of human history does not proceed along a straight line; it has its ups and downs, and alongside the central driving force there is a need for checks and balances. There is need for a conservative, traditional upkeep of the existing order of things; and there is need for new dynamic efforts for change and transformation. Or we may put it the other way round: There is need for new dynamic efforts for change and transformation and need for conservative upkeep of the existing order. There has to be mainstream, and there has to be marginality. And the lesson of history that we have at our disposal teaches us not to view these positions as mutually exclusive, but to learn to keep them in an uneasy, unstable balance. To partake in such a balancing act is, in my view, the very essence of toleration.

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## Tolerance: koncepta analīze

### Kopsavilkums

Tolerance ir neiecietības spoguļattēls. Tādā nozīmē, ka abas parādības saistāmas gan kā loģiski, gan arī kā vēsturiski veidojušies pretstati. Cilvēces vēsturē neiecietības bijis pārpārēm (maigi izsakoties). Nežēlība, cietsirdība, noziegumi, nemieri un kari tam ir vistiešākā liecība. Un tajā pašā laikā – līdzsvaram – civilizācijas attīstību nodrošinājušas tādas morālās vērtības kā sapratne, līdzietība, sadarbība, taisnīgums, piedošana, mīlestība...

Tas var šķist dīvaini, taču tolerance kā sociālētiska diskursa darbarīks parādījis samērā nesen. To sāk intensīvi lietot (vietā un nevietā) tikai pagājušā gadsimta vidusdaļā saistībā ar liberālisma nostādņu uzplūdiem un labklājības sabiedrības izveidošanos. Tolerances konceptuālā sākotne meklējama nedaudz senākā laikposmā – renesanses un reformācijas laikmetā un tās (gandrīz) vienpersonisks autors ir angļu filozofs Džons Loks (1632-1704). Džona Loka darbs *Divi traktāti par valdību* (1689) kā arī viņa trīs vēstules par toleranci (*Vēstule par toleranci* – 1689, *Otrā vēstule par toleranci* – 1690 un *Trešā vēstule tolerances sakarā* – 1692) sarakstīti laikmetā, kad Eiropu bija pārņēmuši reliģiski satricinājumi un sociālpolitiski nemieri. Loka izveidotās tolerances idejas kalpoja ne tikai viņa laikmetam, bet vistiešākā veidā iespaidojušas liberālisma izpratni mūsdienās. Tāpēc dažādu *par* un *pret* viedokļu aplūkošana Loka darbu analīzes sakarā varētu būt noderīga arī patlaban.

Attīstot T. Hobsa mācību par sociālo kontraktu, Loks to papildināja ar valsts pārvaldes dalīšanas principu (likumdevēja, pārvaldītāja un tiesu vara nošķīrums), kas savukārt noveda pie reprezentatīvās demokrātijas un pazīstamās liberālisma nostādnes par to, ka visi cilvēki dzimuši vienlīdzīgi un neviens nedrīkst tikt pakļauts otram. Dzīvība, brīvība un īpašums ir katras personas neatņemamas tiesības un neviens nedrīkst traucēt personai šīs tiesības realizēt. Šī formula kļuvusi par pamatu cilvēku attiecību izkārtojumam demokrātiskā, civilizētā sabiedrībā. Taču viena lieta ir šī principa formulējums, cita lieta – tā iedzīvināšana katrā konkrētā vēsturiskajā un sociālajā situācijā, jo dažādu indivīdu neatņemamās tiesības vienmēr nonāk konfliktā ar citu indivīdu tikpat neatņemamām tiesībām. Piemēru ir bezgala daudz. Starp 20. gadsimta lielajiem domātājiem, kuri centušies risināt šo problēmu, kā viens no pirmajiem minams Jesaja Berlins – ievērojamais Rīgā dzimušais filozofs un ideju vēsturnieks.

Mūsdienās viens no tolerances izpratnes aspektiem saistāms ar sabiedrības vairākuma un mazākuma attiecību izkārtojumu, jo laika gaitā ir kļuvis skaidrs, ka demokrātija nav tikai vairākuma diktatūra. Loka laikā tolerances problemātikas aktualitāte izrietēja no reliģiskās situācijas, kāda bija radusies reformācijas rezultātā. Kā tas zināms jebkuram reliģijas vēstures studentam, 17-18. gadsimtā Britānijas politiskās cīņas raksturu noteica trīs spēki – anglikānisms kā valdošā valsts baznīca, politiski sauktie Romas katoļi un kontinenta stila protestanti (presbiteriāņi, kongregacionālisti, baptisti, kvēkeri u.c.). Tieši šīs tā dēvētās *sektas* veidoja *mazākumu* (tolerances teorijas izpratnē) un uzstājīgi pieprasīja vienādas reliģiskās un pilsoniskās tiesības. Šo tiesību teorētiskā apjēgsme nodarbināja daudzu tā laika sabiedrisko darbinieku un domātāju prātus (Dž. Miltons, V. Penns u.c.) Attiecīgās problemātikas sociālfilozofiskie aspekti oriģināli risināti Dž. Loka darbos.

Loka tolerances izpratnes sākumpunkts meklējams tā saucamā *dabiskā stāvokļa* teorijā, kas pausta jau Hobsa darbos. Loka piedāvātā risinājuma oriģinalitāte jaušama tieši salīdzinājumā ar Hobsa doktrīnu. Hobsa pauda, ka reliģija kā sociālnozīmīga

(un arī bīstama) parādība pakļaujama stingrai valsts kontrolei. Savukārt Loks – gluži pretēji – ieteica reliģisko nesaskaņu novēršanai attiecināt toleranci uz visām reliģijas izpausmēm. Tiesa gan, ar zināmiem (viņa ieskatos – nenozīmīgiem, bet tolerances teorijas sakarā vērā ņemamiem) ierobežojumiem. Piemēram, viņš neuzskatīja par iespējamu toleranci attiecināt uz ateistiem, jo tie netic Dievam un uz Romas katoļiem, jo Romas baznīca tolaik balstīja Franciju un Spāniju, kas bija Britānijas nāvīgākie ienaidnieki. Taču attiecībā uz *sektām*, Loka viedoklis bija labvēlīgs un maksimāli iecietīgs. Viņš ieteica valdībai:

“Rīkosimies skaidri un gaiši. Valdīšana baidās no citām baznīcām, bet nebaidās pati no savējās, jo tā izturas laipnīgi un vēlīgi pret otro, bet cietsirdīgi un stingri pret pirmo... Taču lai tā pavēršas pretējā virzienā: lai nepieķāpīgie iegūst gluži tādas pašas privilēģijas pilsoniskajā ziņā, kādas ir pārējiem pavalstniekiem, un pavisam drīz kļūs skaidrs, ka viņu reliģiskās sanāksšanas vairs nebūs bīstamas... Jo cilvēki iesaistās noziedzīgās sazvērestībās ne jau reliģijas dēļ, bet gan tāpēc, ka viņu ciešanas un apspiestība tos mudina uz atbrīvošanos.”

Loka piedāvātā neitralitātes politika bija jauns pavērsiens gadsimtiem garajā valsts un baznīcas savstarpējo attiecību izkārtojumā. Taču redzams, ka šim piedāvājumam bija vairākas utopiskas iezīmes un, kā zināms, tā praktiskā realizēšana allaž saskārusies ar grūtībām. Tomēr kopumā Loka *iespējami lielākās tolerances* princips iegūlis Rietumu demokrātijas sociālo attiecību pamatos ne tikai saistībā ar dažādu reliģisko organizāciju statusa noteikšanu, bet arī plašākā – majoritātes un minoritātes attiecību optimizēšanas ziņā.

Nākamais nozīmīgais solis šajā domas kustībā saistīts ar Džona Stjuarta Mila (1806-1873) darbību. Mils, kopā ar Dž. Bentamu iegājis filozofijas vēsturē ne tikai kā utilitārisma iedibinātājs, bet arī kā modernās liberālās brīvības izpratnes aizsācējs. Viņa darbā *Par brīvību* tolerances jēdziens netiek lietots tā specifiskajā nozīmē, taču to caurstrāvo ideja par katra indivīda īpašo lomu sabiedrības attīstībā un viņa neatņemamajām tiesībām. Mila argumentācijas patoss vērsts pret jebkādu indivīda brīvības apspiešanu – ne tikai institucionālu (kā, piemēram, valsts un reliģisko organizāciju attiecību gadījumā), bet arī tādu, ko Mils dēvē par *paradumu despotismu*, proti, pret sabiedrības uzspiestajām normām indivīda patībai. Tieši šāds akcents, kas, cita starpā, sasauca ar 19. gadsimta vācu romantisma individualitātes eksaltāciju, veidoja pamatu mūsdienu liberālisma tā saucamās *pozitīvās diskriminācijas* un tolerances plašajai izplatībai.

Tomēr arī Mila darbā (līdzīgi kā tas bija Loka gadījumā) atklājas zināma nekonsekvenca, kuras kopīgam apzīmējumam lietojams *tolerances paradoksa* nojēgums, proti – katra indivīda neierobežotas brīvības izpausmes allaž atduras pret citu tikpat nozīmīgu indivīdu brīvības realizāciju. Tāpēc arī Mils runā par to, ka brīvība ierobežojama tur, kur tā kļūst par *traucēkli citiem cilvēkiem*, tādos gadījumos kad tās ierobežošanai ir *pamatoti iemesli* u.tml.

Taču, neskatoties uz tolerances paradoksa neatrisināmo iedabu, (tāpēc jau tas ir paradokss!) Loka un Mila uzstādījums ir bijis būtisks eiropēiskās civilizācijas tālākā attīstībā līdz pat mūsu dienām konkrētu sociālu problēmu risināšanā.

Daži vispārēji apsvērumi.

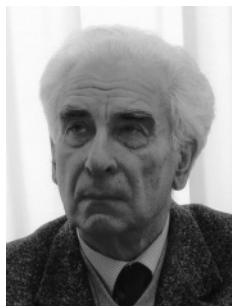
Pirmkārt, tolerances jēdziens nav ierindojams to ētikas kategoriju sadaļā, kurām varētu piedēvēt *absolūtas* vērtības (lai ko tas arī nozīmētu) statusu. Filozofiski izsakoties, tolerance nav *savā būtībā laba* vai *laba pati par sevi*. Tolerances jēdziens kā

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tāds parādījies Rietumu morāles teorijā samērā nesen un uzlūkojams par pragmatiski nepieciešamu nojēgumu. Būt tolerantam ir labi, jo dažādās vēsturiskās situācijās neiecietība var izrādīties kontrproduktīva – tā var tuvināt cilvēkus, sabiedrību pašiznīcināšanās iespējai. Kā trāpīgi un tieši sacījis Jesaja Berlins – tolerance ir izdzīvošanas stratēģija.

Tajā pašā laikā tolerancei ir nozīmīga vieta tradicionālajā vērtību sistēmā. Tolerance sadzīvo ar tādām personības vērtībām kā individuālā vienreizība, patība, līdztiesība, savstarpējība, labvēlība, mīlestība. Tolerance radikāli pretnostādāma tādiem ļaunumiem kā personības brīvības apspiešana, manipulēšana, jebkāda veida (fiziskā, verbālā, emocionālā) vardarbība u.tml. Tolerance ir demokrātiskas, tiesiskas, multikulturālas sabiedrības nozīmīgs rādītājs; tā nav savienojama ar jebkādu despotiska totalitāra režīma esamību.

Lai arī tolerances nojēguma sākotne saistāma ar reformācijas un renesanses reliģisko situāciju, un lai arī baznīcas loma šajā sakarā nepavisam nav viennozīmīga, tolerance kā mūsdienīga vērtība nebūtu uzskatāma tikai par kristiešu ieguvumu. Tajā pašā laikā tieši kristīgās ētikas lēnprātības, taisnīguma, sava tuvākā mīlestības un citas nostādnes paver plašas iespējas jebkuras praktiskas sociālas problēmas risinājuma meklējumiem multikulturālās globalizācijas apstākļos. Morāles vēstures apcerētāja Kreina Braitona vārdiem: “Pieņemot dažādus praktiskās tolerances tikumus kristietim ir vieglāk nekā apgaismības laikmeta kategorijās domājošam cilvēkam”.



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