

The Idea of Toleration Rethinking Theoretical and Historical Principles

Rawaa Mahmoud Hussain

Asst. Prof. Dr. Islamic Philosophy, Rochester Muslim Community Center (RMCC), NY, USA

Abstract- Toleration is a universal human value, by which organisms can live side by side, and without it this co-existence becomes impossible. It is very important in all areas of life, especially in religious, political and social fields. In this article, I aim to re-discover theoretical basis of toleration, especially in philosophical field, and re-examine its geo-historical European development.

Index Terms- Toleration, religion, Europe, philosophy and history

I. INTRODUCTION

Toleration, according to Voltaire, is "a necessary consequence of our being human. We are all products of frailty: fallible, and prone to error. So let us mutually pardon each other's follies. This is the first principle of the law of nature, the first principle of all human rights."¹

It is a universal human value, by which organisms can live side by side, and without it this co-existence becomes impossible. It means make way for other to live so he will leave me to live in contrast. It is very important in all areas of life, especially in religious, political and social fields.

In this article, I aim to re-discover theoretical basis, which the idea of toleration was founded in the light of them, especially in philosophical field, and re-examine its geo-historical European development in religious issue.

II. PRIORI CONCEPTIONS OF TOLERATION

Issue of toleration and tolerance are surely high important subject for thinking about politics and history today. The essential question is what causes people tolerate or persecute each other? What are the benefits and drawbacks of each other? How have they changed over time? What makes them change?²

The first thing that can be observed about toleration is that there are different conceptions when using the word toleration.

¹Karl Popper, "Toleration and Intellectual Responsibility," in: *On Toleration*, eds. Susan Mendus and David Edwards (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 18.

² John Christian Laursen, ed. *Religious Toleration: The Variety of Rites from Cyrus to Defoe* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), p. 1.

The word can mean very distinct things, while on the other hand the term has many synonyms and overlapping concepts can be used to refer to the same thing. It is properly that there is no way to completely avoid the variety of meanings of toleration. The best way is to perceive it and related concepts as descriptive of family resemblances in the matters that they denote. Nevertheless, it can be created by distinguishing toleration from related concepts and restrict its use.³

The multiplicity of concepts, ideas, limitations, definitions and terms about toleration returns to the different on religions, minds and ideas. Any idea about it is produced within a preceding background of principles and assets. On this basis, any providing of a comprehensive, holistic and unified definition for toleration is an incomplete attempt. But what should be referring to is to provide the general concepts of toleration that could assist in clarifying the concept.

Toleration can be seen through human fallibility, which means that we are all may err, and that we must not rely on what appears true according to our personal overview. This implies that there is something true, and there are other things that might be observed morally right, or very nearly so. Fallibilism certainly implies that truth and goodness are often hard to come by, and that we should be prepared always to find that we have made a

³ Ibid, p. 1; for further discussions on the different conceptions of toleration, see: Jean Mondot, Catherine Iarrère, directeurs de la publication, *Lumières*, Numéro 9: *Échecs et réussites du josphisme*, (France: Centre interdisciplinaire bordelais d'étude des Lumières, Université Michel de Montaigne – Bordeaux 3, 2007), pp. 29-39; Rainer Forst (Hg.), *Toleranz: Philosophische Grundlagen und gesellschaftliche Praxis einer umstrittenen Tugend* (Frankfurt/Main: Campus Verlag GmbH, 2000), p. 22; Attilio Speciani, *Guarire le intolleranze: Rieducare le patologie allergiche e infiammatorie con tecniche alimentari* (Milano: Tecniche Nuove, 2004), pp. 16-18; Ricard Zapata-Barrero, *Ciudadanía, democracia y pluralismo cultural: hacia un nuevo contrato social* (Barcelona: Anthropos Editorial, Rubi, 200), p. 197.

mistake. It also refers that it is possible to get nearer to the truth, or to a good society.⁴

In fact, the assumption that human is near to error in nature, i.e. according to the nature of his humanity, requires consideration of it by a bunch of philosophical ideas, such as: uncertainty and probability. They would lead us to important results on the concept of human toleration; when it comes to deconstructing the reason dogma, which is corresponding of intolerance.

Uncertainty is a subjective problem, relating to the subjects' place, their scientific and theoretical constructs, and to their behavioral and decision-making procedures. It perceived by people in everyday life, and it possesses a realness which supersedes the individual consciousness.⁵ It is also a capacious term, which used to encompass a multiplicity of concepts. It may arise because of incomplete information, or because disagreement between information sources. It may refer to variability, or may be relate with quantity, or the structure of a model, or simplifications and approximations introduced to making analyzing the information cognitively. Uncertainty may be linked with what is being preferred, and the decision of how it is possible to do about it. The variety of types and sources of uncertainty, along with the lack of agreed terminology, can generate considerable confusion. While, probability is often used as the measure to comprehend uncertain belief, and the conceptual confusions are often compounded by the controversy about the nature of it.⁶

We can observe that uncertainty is a phenomena relating to everyday living. The uncertain activity presupposes making difference, perhaps vital difference and setting purposes. It is bothersome, often worrying and sometimes actually distressing to have to choose actions when insuring what will be helpful or harmful. The mental preparation is a vital defense against being disabled and overwhelmed by the grief of losing the future in which so many plans had been invested. Uncertainty arises from not knowing enough to predict what will happen; therefore searching for more information or deeper understanding is one of the most powerful ways. Questions may turn into questions about the authority that certifies facts; therefore choosing can lead to questions about the motives for making a choice. It could be said

also that uncertainty may be relating to natural world, human behavior, feeling and intentions, which interact with each other.⁷

Human nature that related to error reveals other side of the priori principles of toleration, which is the principle of probability. The questions of probability arise when thinking real or conceptual experiments and their outcomes.⁸ We all use probability and related ideas all the time. One use is by ignoring trivial verbal variations, such as the use of likely for probable. Another and the more important way is by classifying probabilities into three basic kinds: physical, epistemic, subjective.⁹

Indeed, it does not lie only in the level of human thinking in its pure theoretical formations, but it goes beyond to mathematical research¹⁰, statistics¹¹, the logic of science¹², etc.

Toleration may be understood to convey the negation of intolerance. It is always conceptualized from three different perspectives. First, it may involve the weakening or destruction of the negative judgment or assessment of intolerance. Second, it may involve the weakening or the abandonment of the negative act which escorts intolerance. Third, it may involve the

⁷ Peter Marris, *The Politics of Uncertainty: Attachment in Private and Public Life* (London: Routledge, 1996), p.8.

⁸Samuel Goldberg, *Probability: An Introduction* (US: Dover Publication, Inc.1996), p. 45. For further discussion on uncertainty, see: Jean-Louis Cayatte, *Introduction à l'économie de l'incertitude* (Bruxelles: Édition De Boeck Université, 2004); Fritz Böhle and Margit Wehrich (Hrsg.), *Handeln unter Unsicherheit* (Netherlands: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, GWV Fachverlag GmbH, 2009).

⁹ D. H. Mellor, *Probability: A Philosophical Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2005), P. 7.

¹⁰ Charles M. Grinstead & J. Laurie Snell, *Introduction to Probability* (US: American Mathematical Society, 1998), p.VII.

¹¹ Jim Pitman, *Probability* (US: Springer, 1993).

¹² E.T. Jaynes, *Probability Theory: The Logic of Science* (UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003). For further discussions on probability, see: Philippe Barbe et Michel Ledoux, *Probabilité* (France: EDP, 2007); Götz Rohwer & Ulrich Pötter, *Wahrscheinlichkeit: Begriff und Rhetorik in der Sozialforschung* (Germany: Juventa Verlag, 2002); Liliana Blanco Castañeda, *Probabilidad* (Colombia: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2004).

⁴ Ibid, p. 25.

⁵Luigi Bonatti, *Uncertainty: Studies in Philosophy, Economics and Socio-Political Theory* (Amsterdam: Verlag B.R. Grüner, 1984), p. 1.

⁶ Granger Morgan and Max Henrion, with a chapter by Mitchell Small, *Uncertainty: A Guide to Dealing with Uncertainty in Quantitative Risk and Policy Analysis* (UK: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 47.

elimination of both.¹³ The promotion of toleration requires a scale which runs from mere tolerant indulgence, to the proclamation of fully equal rights.¹⁴

The idea of toleration has a gradual process of compression between the demand of absolutism and the requirement to accept the legitimacy of the morally different (pluralism). This means that it must be clearly distinguished from pragmatic compromise with the intolerable and from moral indifference. Then, the toleration concept must be narrowed down in its philosophical use so as to refer strictly to cases in which restraint in the response to another's belief is based on some specifically moral grounds.¹⁵

Toleration is a perceptual virtue, because it involves a shift of attention rather than an overall judgment. It overcomes the interference in the life of other person not because believing that the reasons for restraint are weightier than disapproval, but because the shifting of attention from the object of disapproval to the moral standing of the subject before them. It is a feat of abstraction analogous to the opposite abstraction of ideas from human minds behind them. It consists of the ignore capacity, or rather suspend or a set of considerations, which do not thereby lose any of their original element.¹⁶

It involves refraining from preventing what is properly being prevented. It may sometimes be proper not to prevent that which may properly be prevented. It requires insisting that moral disapproval does not imply the propriety of prevention; or external justification of toleration, which may be seen in other view point, is not good after all. The first alternative is commonly associated with scepticism. The latter is simply one way (amongst others) of denying the propriety of the move from moral disapproval to prevention or suppression of the opinion or act disapproved of. The second alternative is commonly associated with the doctrine of respect for persons.¹⁷

There are some difficulties that arise in the context of the tolerant social interference. One of these difficulties is that where members of two different cultural traditions coexist. Action X may be at fault, or immorally wrong by the conceptualized standards of tradition or culture A; yet those same elements may enjoin members of A not to oppose the enactment of X in tradition B, and to accept the legitimacy of overreaching institutions that protect B and those who enact X therein. Therefore; toleration, according to this interchangeable

conception, is a key ordering device in the many kinds of society characterized by diversity or complexity.¹⁸

Then, "toleration is the social virtue and the political principle that allows for the peaceful coexistence of individuals and groups who hold different views and practice different ways of life within the same society." This definition means that the conditions under which toleration is required are situations in which social diversity exists which do not naturally coexist harmoniously. Potential conflict is required for toleration to be necessary in order to bring about peace and social order. However, toleration is considered as a problematic aspect, if it is precondition is the presence of conflicting social variation, and this indicates that the bearers of such dissimilarities do not interfere with what they know as being incompatible with their opinions and ways of life.¹⁹

Furthermore, toleration is considered the fundamental and constitutive virtue of liberalism and its characteristic playground is the political. The major obstacle in the philosophical analysis of the concept is characterizing what is not. There are two major methodological approaches comprehending them: the broad view, which attempts to do justice to the large variety of linguistic and contexts uses with which the concept is and has been associated, and the narrow view, which delineates the contours of the concept in the light of its theoretically distinguishing features. The first method is naturally sociological or historical. The philosophical view is more restrictive, examining those phenomena that do not satisfy certain theoretical circumstances even if they are in many respects compatible with toleration. The historical view is liberal enough to include under the subject of toleration social and phenomena political that were either not called by that name in the past or are no longer treated as issues of toleration.²⁰

The political philosophy in modern democratic societies is characterized by reasonable pluralism and political toleration. It means that the people can live together harmoniously despite the persistence of reasonable disagreement about the highest good or the best choice of life. The injustice of imposition is often held to follow from the reasonableness of pluralism; but the conclusion that it is unjust, or illegitimate, to impose a conception of the good on those who do not hold it cannot be drawn simply from the reasonableness of pluralism itself. The judgment operates

¹³ Preston King, *Toleration* (Great Britain: Frank Cass Publishers, 1998), p. 117.

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 199.

¹⁵ David Heyd, *Toleration Virtue: An Elusive* (US: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. 4

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 12.

¹⁷ Susan Mendus, ed., *Justifying Toleration: Conceptual and Historical Perspectives* (Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 4.

¹⁸Barry Barnes "Tolerance as a Primary Virtue," in: *Toleration, Neutrality and Democracy*, eds. Dario Castiglione and Catriona McKinnon (Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2003), p. 11.

¹⁹ Anna Elisabetta Galeotti, *Toleration as Recognition* (UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 20.

²⁰ David Heyd, "Is Toleration A Political Virtue", in: *Toleration and Its Limits*, eds. Melissa S. Williams & Jeremy Waldron (US: New York University Press, 2008), pp. 171-172.

under burdens, and reason is indeterminate in issue of the good, therefore; it does not tell us what we ought to do or not.²¹

It must be noted that pinpointing what is issue between perfectionist and constructive political justifications is to assay prepositions about the character of pluralism (and toleration as well). These prepositions relate to the interpersonal opinions of people facing same problems of justice issue in pluralism conditions. In this context, toleration is personal attitude or political principle. Tolerated Person is a person who differs from us in terms of beliefs, values, dispositions, tastes, forms of community and association, and preferences. Toleration marks an essential shift of attitude or principle; each one should be thought of as transcending the previous stage. If we conceived toleration as a political principle; then it could be said that political response, historically, to dislike people has been attempt to crush, repress or derive them out. Principles of repression are sometimes accompanied by a denial that the disapproved or dislike of persons differs, deep down from the repressor. Repressive states can admit the coexistence with disapproved or dislike people by asserting the superiority of a world in which these people ceases to differ from their repressors, and the accessibility of the use of state coercion to bring about this state of affairs.²²

The unavoidable social fact is that the citizenry of a modern state is heterogeneous along number of intersecting dimensions, like: religions, races and cultures. Such diversity raises the possibility of potentially and deep irresolvable conflicts. When conflict do emerge; then all citizen should have equal influence and standing in any deliberation about their resolutions. In the case of wide pluralism, i.e. the multi-dimensional pluralism, toleration might seem to be both part of the ideal and public reason and an important virtue for citizens to exercise in their deliberative institutions. Deliberation also demands more of citizens than silent toleration regarding the reasons if those with whom they disagree. Deliberative tolerance is exercised in resolving conflict that is motivated by differences in belief. It requires that citizens adopt some neutral or impartial stance and avoid directly confronting each other on the most issues.²³

²¹ Matt Matravers and Susan Mendus, "The Reasonableness of Pluralism," in: *The Culture of Toleration in Diverse Societies: Reasonable Tolerance*, eds. Catriona McKinnon and Dario Castiglione (New York: Manchester University Press, 2003), p. 39.

²² Catriona McKinnon, "Toleration and the Character of Pluralism," in: McKinnon and Castiglione, pp. 55-56.

²³ James Bohman, "Reflexive Toleration in a Deliberative Democracy," in: *The Culture of Toleration in Diverse Societies: Reasonable Tolerance*, eds. Catriona McKinnon and Dario

It is important here to distinguish between toleration as an individual virtue and the nature of a tolerant society. It is clear that toleration requires an overcoming. Tolerant society is one that has certain dynamics. On the basis of outcome neutrality, the essence of whether a society is tolerant depends on the consequences of its laws and practices of people's ability to live according to their own conceptions of the good. The test will be, according to justification neutrality, whether or not assumptions about the relative inferiority or superiority of one conception of the good, or a range conception, explicitly or implicitly enter into the justification of a society's laws and practices.²⁴

By the philosophical and critical continuity with the preconceived ideas, we can say that toleration is a human virtue, this virtue that without it human beings will be courtyard and commodified, i.e., making them goods in one system, contrary to what is in natural order. The system of nature is based on several elements, such as: diversity, contrast, different in human and natural assets. And without toleration; diversity would be destroyed and moving people to be engaged in one box, a locked cage or a dark prison. Toleration means to keep self and other; it is to keep the other by giving him the right to exist first, then the consequence of this freedom of choice guaranteed by the right to exist. I exist; therefore I am free. Toleration also keeps other, because he will do the same role toward self on the basis of action and re-action, and although it is a natural base, but, at the same time, a role of human relations.

Toleration is a part of general natural order; i.e. it is the origin and basis of natural existence and human acquaintance, but intolerance is a perversion and exception of the natural role of human relationships. It is also the first degree of freedom, which is primarily necessary. There is no freedom without toleration, and no toleration if freedom was absent from society. The availability of toleration and freedom makes society starts to grow and evolve, and from which, it begins to climb the ladder of social evolution and rise through giving each individual his freedom to think and act. In case of intolerance, freedom is absence, which is one of the main conditions for the development of society. Toleration alleviates the conflict among humanitarian groups, which begins when society loses the value of tolerance.

Toleration has many qualities to become a basic social value; it is an act, which provides law the cover and protection to be applied. It is justice, because by it humanitarian groups become equal in terms of purely humanitarian standard, everyone is honored under his humanity, and belongs to human race, and this is justice, in its general human form. Toleration finally is freedom, and the basic and strategic premise for the comprehensive system of freedom.

1. Religious Toleration- A Brief Geo-historical Survey:

"Our main object was, to show that it was not only reasonable to suppose that a Protestant king, on granting a

Castiglione (New York: Manchester University Press, 2003), pp. 111-112.

²⁴ Jonathan Wolff, "Social Ethos and the Dynamics of Toleration," in: McKinnon and Castiglione, pp. 147-148.

province to a Roman Catholic, would be careful to guard the rights of his Protestant subjects who might settle there, and not to cloth the guarantee with power to persecute them, should he be so disposed; and that such, indeed, was the fact in respect of the case in question. But Mr. Bancroft seems disposed to give all the credit for those salutary provisions to the Roman Catholic grantee, rather than the Protestant grantor- on the supposition, it would also seem, that the grantee could have obtained anything he saw fit to demand, to the extent even power to oppress, burn, and destroy all of the King's Protestant subjects who might dare to venture within the limits of the character. If this is not to be inferred, we confess our inability to discover the object of such high encomiums as are bestowed upon the grantee for the just and tolerant provisions of that instrument." ²⁵

We want, through this opening text, to say that the theme of religious toleration has passed through a long and difficult road, and is still as well. Tension still exists; it is difficult to completely being canceled, as there are no looming signs of full cancellation; i.e. cancellation of any blameworthy fanaticism, this one that bases on the fully cancellation the other and remove him existentially. What the world is witnessing, at this time, of religious intolerance, testifies our thesis here that religious toleration would pass a long way to be done. It needs to submit different and global theories from multiple philosophical visions, trends and approaches, which open the road for advancing a dynamic, opened religious toleration, exceed the dogmatic reason, and open choices for human freedom and self-responsibility in selection.

If we take the European brief history of toleration, as a model, in order to extract philosophical results, we could notice that concepts of religious toleration were developed in Europe in response to the wars of religion that were sparked by the Protestant Reformation. European Christianity was no longer dominated by one holy, catholic and apostolic church, but by several laying claim of different religions, which were sometimes violently, to the little of true religion. This period was also the period of state formation, which witnessed various forms of social amalgamation, princely estates, fiefdoms, and commonweals, gradually became as a nation state, as we know today. This shifts in social configuration from the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries made modern nation states, were themselves often violent. ²⁶

Most conventional histories of the Reformation and its aftermath know the wars of religion to have been resolved through the development of religious toleration. But it was quite limited, not just in narrow boundaries, but the social hierarchy it

²⁵ Josiah F. Polk, *The Claim of the Church of Rome to the Exercises of Religious Toleration during the Proprietary Government of Maryland* (Washington: James N. Davis, 1846), p. 3.

²⁶ Janet R. Jacobson and Ann Pellegrini, *Love the Sin: Sexual Regulation and the Limits of Religious Tolerance* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2003), p. 46.

established and reaffirmed. The histories Justin Champion points out: the Toleration act did not break the link between religious identity and civic liberties. So, for example, while Quakers were no longer in danger of eradication by persecution (as long as they considered as non-conformists), they were still exempt from holding local, civic or national offices which were still protected by statutory tests of conscience. The civic peace that religious tolerance was supposed to achieve institutes a hierarchy, and being allowed to live in peace, and being free and equal member of society. ²⁷

To begin narrating the history of toleration in Europe with the Latin Middle Ages may seem a highly contentious one. Several scholars notice that observing increasing efforts during the course of the Middle Ages to impose and extend control on Europeans both as political subjects and as faithful Christians. But this is not to say that such efforts were uniformly successful. The evidence suggests that persecution did not halt dissent and in some instances may have only hardened the resolve of dissidents. It is true that all levels of medieval society, philosophers and theologians did not forgo reading Aristotle because Church proscribed many of his teachings, peasant Catha heretics did not surrender their beliefs even when a crusade was preached against them; kings and princes did not lay down their claims to political autonomy in secular matters simply because the pope anathematized them. In some parts of Europe, such as Spain, these realities would generate centuries of peaceful coexistence among divergent religions. ²⁸

There are several philosophers in the early modern period defended policies of religious suppression. The liberalism of contemporary political philosophy has its basis in the philosophies of religious toleration. John Lock with other thinkers of toleration argued that religious practice is a legitimate matter of governmental concern only when it is disruptive of public order. He argued that practice should no more concern the government than should any other private pursuit. ²⁹

John Lock opened his "A Letter Concerning Toleration" by confirming that toleration is the chief characteristic sign of the true church, (we can say now that toleration is the basic principle

²⁷ Ibid, pp. 46-47.

²⁸ Cary J. Nederman, "Introduction: Discourse and Contexts of Tolerance in Medieval Europe," in: *Beyond the Perspective Society: Religious Toleration before Enlightenment*, eds. John Christian Laursen & Cary J. Nederman (US: University Of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), pp. 13-14.

²⁹ Charles Taliaferro, Paul Draper, and Philip L. Quinn, eds., *A Companion to Philosophy of Religion*, (US: Blackwell, 2010), p. 599. For more discussions on religious toleration in Britain, see: Paul Gabriel Boucé, *Évolution et révolution(s) dans la Grande-Bretagne, du XVIII^e. Siècle* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1993), p. 54.

of the true religion, mosque, sect, ideology and revolution). He added that for whatever some people boast of the antiquity of names and places; others, of the reformation of their discipline, all, of the orthodoxy of their faith; (for everyone is orthodox to himself :) these things, and all others of this nature, are much rather marks of men striving for power, empire and wealth over one another, than of the church of Christ, and the meaning of the true religion. Let anyone have never so true a claim to all these things, yet if he be destitute of meekness, charity, and good-will in general towards all mankind, even to those that are not Christians, he is certainly yet short of being a true Christian himself.³⁰

In this opening phrase, Lock opened the lesson of toleration in modern philosophy, which still continues today, and making his philosophical letter of toleration as an original source to philosophical debates on the same subject, despite the passage of four centuries of the book publishing. Lock asserted that the principle of toleration is the basic principle in the field of religious practice at level of official church, and in the field of individual and social relations as well. True church, which owns the truth is tolerant church, and generalizes tolerant values among those who belong to it, and among those who belong to other churches. Each individual is orthodox toward his faith, because he considered it the truthful faith or the right doctrine; the same doctrine shared by the components of his social environment. But he differs, and his social environment with other persons shaping other social and religious environment, which differs with the first one. And here, the important of toleration comes as an individual and social background. It terminates the violent and radical clash of individual and social relations, to be replaced by other model, which works to enhance the structure of general social security.

Lock submitted his critique to the political system in his time, by indicating that the government has not only been partial in issues of religion; but those also who have suffered under that partiality, and have therefore endeavoured by their ideas to vindicate their own liberties and rights, have for the most part done it upon narrow principles, suited only to the interests of their own sects. This narrowness of spirit on all sides has undoubtedly been the principle occasion of miseries and confusions. But whatever have been the occasion, it is now high time to seek for a throw Cure and a true church. There is an assure need for more generous remedies that what have yet been made use of in distemper. It is neither declarations of indulgence, nor acts of comprehension, such as have yet been practiced or projected amongst the people, that can do the work. The first will but palliate, the second encrease our evil.³¹

Therefore, Lock concluded from this critique to the existing political system in his time to the following result absolute liberty, just and true liberty. Impartial and equal liberty is the thing that human kind stands in need of. Indeed, this has been

³⁰John Lock, *A Letter Concerning Toleration* (1796: J. Brooks), p. 5.

³¹John Lock, *A Letter Concerning Toleration*, ed. James H. Hully (US: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1983), p. 21.

much talked of, and he doubt it has not been much understood; and he was sure not at all practiced, either by their governors towards the people in general, or by and dissenting parties of the people towards one another.³²

We could also see that members of Britain's House of Commons in 1800 could confidently refer, with dismay or approval to a spirit of toleration. It could be viewed as a series of legislatives enactments extending from the act of toleration in 1689 to (and beyond) the repeal of the test and corporation acts and Catholic emancipation in 1828 and 1829. There were, briefly put, legal measures that made it possible for adherents of different religious beliefs to worship freely, to participate in military, political and educational institutions, and to assume a wide range of offices in civil government. Indeed, nothing less than the very survival of Britain's social body seemed to be at stake. Those who so vigorously opposed toleration could very effectively argue that the British nation was a common by virtue of its religious communion, which was depends upon a uniformity of belief, and supported by sanctions designed to enforce that uniformity by admitting adherents of nonconforming faiths would endanger not only the security of church and state but Britain's national humanity.³³

Defining toleration as a primarily philosophical issue could lead to one of the important shifts that changed the social and religious context of the medieval and early modern periods. Efforts to provide universal principles might affect on every possible configuration of tolerance can obscure two important conclusions. First, practices usually characterized as tolerant were as much a part of everyday life during this period as were widespread intolerance or persecution. Second, the religious changes the sixteenth century required contemporaries and modern analysts to consider carefully exactly the real meaning of toleration. The long sixteenth century means a coherent era beginning with the Italian wars and Columbus's journey in the 1490s, and containing the backward-looking decades of the early seventeenth century, reaching the end with the politico-religious crises between 1620 and 1640, the Thirty Years' War, the English Revolution, and the breaking of the French Protestant movement with the fall of La Rochelle in 1630. The breakdown of the western church's hegemony was the major development that changed views about religious toleration. Basically, with other major events two, such as the Protestant Reformation, and theoretical unity in the Latin West, which submit facilities for the magisterial faiths, the post Tridentine, the Reformed or the Calvinist, the Lutheran, and the Anglican, and for the sectarian movements ranging across a wide spectrum from the communitarian Hutterites and the quietest Anabaptist to millenarian revolutionist, such as Tomas Müntzer.³⁴

³² Ibid [1796], p. 21.

³³Mark Canuel, *Religion, Toleration and British Writing: 1790 – 1830* (UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 13.

³⁴ Randolph C. Head, "Introduction: Transformations of the Long Sixteenth Century," in: *Beyond the Perspective Society:*

We can also note that Hamburg, Spain, Portugal, Britain, Holland, Prussia and later Joseph II's Austria had passed a long history, (1529-1819), in order to reach the religious toleration as an intrinsic value in political and social term. We could observe that, by revealing survey of enlightened literature, how fundamental the idea of toleration was to the Aufklärung. Travel reports, topographies, encyclopedias, sermons, studies of populations, economy and growth, novels and poems, all are littered with references to the evils of religious persecution and the beneficial results of an irenic pacifism. The writings of Locke, Voltaire and Bayle became the devotional literature of a new cult of humanity which condemned the brutality of Old Testament. Both the Orthodox guardians of the intolerant Jesuit and the Lutheran Church became the object of passionate criticism.³⁵

In Case of Germany, the vision of an end to the religious controversies which had marred the history of Christianity was neither new nor confined to Germany. As Hans Guggisberg has shown, the later debate had its roots in the writings of Nicholas of Cusa, Ficino and Pico della Mirandola. Their works were synthesized in the work of Erasmus who propagated a return to the fundamental texts of Christianity (the works of Church Fathers and the first texts of the Gospels), an end to elaborate theological speculation, and the reduction of faith to a limited set of basic teachings. These ideas were taken by several philosophers and thinkers as Lock, Leibniz, Castelli, and Thomasius. The desires for the reunion of Christendom and then for toleration were for bitter confessional strife embraced the whole of Europe.³⁶

There were many reasons that make Hamburg to struggle for political satiability and purity of belief from the beginning of Reformation. Peter Gay confirms this limitation by indicating that Hamburg, one of Free Cities in the German Empire. It avoided the decay of most of the others by welcoming foreigners of all nationalities and giving them a place in civic and commercial affairs. The Constitutions of 1712, perhaps the least oligarchical urban charter of the age, reflected this tolerant and liberal spirit and promoted it.³⁷

The separation of church and state and the acceptance of plurality of religions offer a paradigm of the conditions under which toleration was possible in the modern era. It was immediately apparent that the degree of toleration thus achieved was dependent not on any ideals about the theological or philosophical desirability of toleration, not on any altruistic regard for the rights of minorities, but was a consequence of Erfurt's unusual constitution, social and economic, what is might

Religious Toleration before Enlightenment, eds. Laursen & Nederman, pp. 95-96.

³⁵ Joachim Whaley, *Religious Toleration and Social Change in Hamburg 1529-1819* (UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002) pp.1-2.

³⁶ *Ibid*, p. 2.

³⁷ *Ibid*, p. 8.

be call a paradigm conjuncture, which overrode other, under different circumstances towards intolerance and even fanaticism³⁸.

Religious toleration was the lifeline that enabled Netherlands to pass the difficult conditions of religious persecutions. Colonel Jean – Baptiste Stoupe, the Reformed Swiss commander of Louis XIV's troops in Utrecht during the occupation of 1672-3, indicated that the Dutch were not at all reformed, It is well known that in addition to the Reformed', Stoupe wrote in his tract *On the Religion of Hollanders* (1673), there are Lutherans, Roman Catholics, Brownists, Armenians, Independents, Anabaptists, Socinians, Enthusiasts, Quakers, Arians, Borelists, Muscovites, Libertines, and may any more... He was not even speaking of the Jews, Turks, and Persian. He also reported on an enlightened and learned man, who has a great following. His name was Spinoza. He was born a Jew and had not sworn off allegiance to the Jewish religion, nor has he accepted Christianity. He is a wicked and very bad Jew, and not a better Christian either.³⁹

Hans de Ries, in his preface to the *Martelaers Spiegel* (1553-1638), lamented the languor of his fellow Mennonites. He chastised the Mennonites for being cold and careless in religious matter. He saw a community preoccupied with temporal affairs, and indicated that the oxen must first be checked and the field inspected before one can come to the heavenly celebration. Clothes have become expensive, but interior beauty is gone, wickedness is changed into splendor and pomp; goods are multiplied, but the soul is impoverished; love has grown cold and diminished, and quarrels have increased. Finally, the Mennonite found themselves in a new society and state, where religious toleration enabled a gradual process of cultural and economic assimilation.⁴⁰

³⁸ Bob Scriber, "Preconditions of Tolerance and Intolerance in sixteenth- Century Germany," in: *Toleration in Enlightenment Europe*, eds. Ole Peter and Roy Porter (UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 32. For more discussions on religious toleration in Germany, see: Mattias J. Fritsch, *Religiöse Toleranz im Zeitalter der Aufklärung: Naturrechtliche Begründung-Konfessionelle Differenzen* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 2004); Kristin Purfürst, *Religiöse Toleranz in mittelhochdeutschen Religionsgesprächen* (Germany: Grin Verlag, 2009).

³⁹ Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia, "Introduction," in: *Calvinism and Religious Toleration in the Dutch Golden Age*, eds. R. Po-Chia Hsia, and H. F. K. Van Nierop (UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 1.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, p.1-2.

The United Province of the Netherlands, the new state, emerged out of the revolt against Spain in an alliance that guaranteed freedom of conciseness; in the Union of Utrecht (1579), the rebel provinces agreed in article 13 that "nobody shall be persecuted or examined for religious reasons". Not everyone concurred, the Calvinist Church vehemently opposed and official status for Catholicism, apposition shared by other protestant leaders during the long war with Spain, when Catholicism remained a potential source of rebellion inside the new Dutch republic. The central paradox of the Dutch Republic is the existence of a confessionally pluralistic society with an official intolerant Calvinist Church that discriminated against Catholics, but whose pragmatic religious toleration elicited admiration and bewilderment in ancient régime Europe and whose longevity surpassed the perhaps more tolerant religious regime of the sixteenth – century Polish – Lithuanian Commonwealth.⁴¹

We could see also that on October 27, 1553, on the field of Champel in the shadow of Geneva's city walls, the Spanish physician Michael Servetus was tied to a stake and burned for heresy. This execution accident was one of the most notorious, controversial acts of the sixteenth century. We could know the reason of his execution if we know that it began with a very ordinary occurrence, a quarrel between cousins. Antoine Arneys, a Roman Catholic, lived in Lion; his cousin Guillaume Trie had converted to Protestantism and fled to Catholic homeland for Geneva, workplace, of the great reformer Calvin. Arneys and Trie still felt bound to one another, and one way of their expression was by arguing. In February 1553, Arneys wrote Trie pleading him to leave a religion that would lead to his damnation. As evidence of Protestantism's falsehood he alleged that vices of every kind flourished in Geneva, unchecked by any proper system of ecclesiastical discipline and order. Arneys presumed that the true religion produced true godliness, and that the truth of a religion could be judged – not solely, but in strong, presumptive way by the behavior of those who embraced it. He presumed also that his cousin held the same belief- that it was a piece of common ground shared by Catholics and Protestants. He was correct. The accusation astounded Trie, who threw it back in his cousin's face: not Geneva but Lyon lacked good order and discipline. Finally, his execution for heresy, the first in Geneva since the Reformation, caused an international uproar and sparked Europ's first great debate on the subject of religious toleration. Protests flew in from France, Italy, and elsewhere in Switzerland, especially from Basel. Castellio, the philologist and the poet from Savoy, had once been on good terms with Calvin, and in the early 1540s had even served as rector of Geneva's institutions of higher learning, the Collège de Rive. Since then, Castellio's beliefs had moved far way from Reformed orthodoxy. He led the protests against Geneva's treatment of Servetus-not because he agreed with the latter's teachings, but on the principle that heretics should never be executed. To argue to this accident, he published in 1554 his critical survey: Concerning Heretics: Whether they are to be persecuted and how they are to be treated.

⁴¹ Ibid, p.2.

It was the first major treatise in early modern Europe arguing for religious toleration.⁴²

We can see that there are several elements which were behind religious toleration in Europe, i.e., the Protestant Reformation, the invention of printing and the reactions of princes and popes brought furious struggles, political and theological, over freedom and faith, coercion and conscience. Throughout the Reformation, Europe remained uncompromisingly a persecuting society, even when toleration was also being advanced. The publicists of the Enlightenment developed such pleas for toleration, and in the process their basis and character was transformed, with the original religious rationales becoming incorporated within a wider philosophy of freedom conceived as precondition for civilized society and fundamental human value. Toleration was thus to acquire a secular cast as freedom of thought and speech became definitive of human rights, alongside other cherished freedom.⁴³

We have reached to the fact that diversity is now an everywhere fact of life. In the industrialized and illuminated West and increasingly in less-developed parts of the world as well, people are so interesting with information about and images and interpretations of people unlike themselves. The globalization of the televisions and film industries, to say nothing of the impact of the World Wide Web means that people from across the global encounter one another as never before in history. For the world's religions, this is an important new situation. Not only do religions imagine one another in doctrine, in principle, and in theory, but they now experience and engage one another increasingly in practice.⁴⁴

The few earlier pages have proved, even in summary that religious toleration, in Europe in particular, has over a difficult and long path to be arrived to what is now, and this indicate on the other hand that we need to achieve greater achievements in order to complete the subsequent steps for the establishment of a comprehensive philosophy of toleration and especially in the religious sphere.

Indeed, in our search for some priori and necessary principles of toleration for establishing a tolerant religious reason, i.e. uncertainty and probability, we do not intend to make the basic and necessary religious principles, i.e. unity of God, prophecy and resurrection...etc, in the situation of inspection, testing,

⁴² Benjamin J. Kaplan, *Divided by Faith: Religious Conflict and the Practice of Toleration in Early Modern Europe* (USA: Harvard University Press, 2007), p. 15-18.

⁴³ Ole Peter Grell and Roy Porter, eds., *Toleration in Enlightenment Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 1.

⁴⁴ William Scott Green, "The "What" and "Why" of Religious Toleration: Some Questions to Consider," in: *Religious Tolerance in World Toleration*, ed. Jacob Neusner (USA: Templeton Foundation Press, 2008), p. 3.

wonder and questioning, because any doubt in these necessary principles eliminates the religion itself. But what is intended is introducing the systematic uncertainty in the field of intellectual understanding, i.e., on the religious reason that fulfils the process of understanding and then the application of religious principles. The theological, sectarian and religious reason has to achieve the process of critique on the way of its interpretation of religion, and its relationship with human and universe. Theological reading of religion is not the religion itself. It is a human, historical and dialectical reading that is exposed to the probabilities of right and wrong. Uncertainty and probability associate with reason as a human phenomenon. It represents basically in the evolution of reason itself, through the stages of reason changing: childhood, adolescent, youth and aging. The reason represents different things appear to be certain, and then leave them in a later mental development. Thus, the values that we talked above are anti- values of intolerance, narrow-mindedness, and dogmatism, which are negative values of tolerance.

Quite frankly, what we want to say in this current work is that overall global tolerance and religious toleration, in particular, is one of the necessary values that are no less important than the necessary means to protect human life, dignity and fundamental rights, and no less than the different achievements of modern sciences. Without toleration life becomes impossible on this earth.

III. CONCLUSION

1. Toleration is a universal human value, by which organisms can live side by side, and without it this co-existence becomes impossible.
2. It is a human virtue, this virtue that without it human beings will be courtyard and commodified.
3. It is a part of general natural order; i.e. it is the origin and basis of natural existence and human acquaintance, but intolerance is a perversion and exception of natural role of human relationships.
4. It is an act, which provides law the cover and protection to be applied.
5. It is justice, because by it humanitarian groups become equal in terms of purely humanitarian standard, everyone is honored under his humanity, and belongs to human race, and this is justice, in its general human form.
6. The multiplicity of concepts about toleration return to the different on religions, minds and ideas.
7. Overall global and religious toleration is one of the necessary values that are no less important than the necessary means to protect human life, dignity and fundamental rights, and no less than the different achievements of modern sciences. Without toleration life becomes impossible on this earth.

IV. FUTURE WORK

1. Without toleration, diversity would be destroyed and moving people to be engaged in one box, a locked cage or a dark prison.
2. Toleration means to keep self and other; it is to keep the other by giving him the right to exist first, then the consequence of this freedom of choice guaranteed by the right to exist. It also keeps other, because he will do the same role toward self on the basis of action and reaction, and although it is a natural base, but, at the same time, a role of human relations.
3. The availability of toleration and freedom makes society starts to grow and evolve, and from which, it begins to climb the ladder of social evolution and rise through giving each individual his freedom to think and act.
4. Toleration alleviates the conflict among humanitarian groups, which begins when society loses the value of tolerance.
5. There is no freedom without toleration, and no toleration if freedom was absent from society.
6. We need to achieve greater achievements in order to complete the subsequent steps for the establishment of a comprehensive philosophy of toleration and especially in the religious sphere.
7. The theme of religious toleration has passed through a long and difficult road, and is still as well. Tension still exists; it is difficult to completely being canceled, as there are no looming signs of full cancellation; i.e. cancellation of any blameworthy fanaticism, this one that bases on the fully cancellation the other and remove him existentially.
8. What is intended is introducing the systematic uncertainty in the field of intellectual understanding, i.e., on the religious reason that fulfils the process of understanding and then the application of religious principles. The theological, sectarian and religious reason has to achieve the process of critique on the way of its interpretation of religion, and its relationship with human and universe. Thus, the values that we talked above are anti- values of intolerance, narrow-mindedness, and dogmatism, which are negative values of tolerance.

AUTHORS

First Author – Rawaa Mahmoud Hussain, Asst. Prof. Dr. Islamic Philosophy, Rochester Muslim Community Center (RMCC), NY, USA, Rawaa_mahmoud@yahoo.com