

# The Axiological Dimension of Tolerance

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## ABSTRACT:

I contend that tolerance is not the expression of a simple attitude, but constitutes a moral value which penetrates all spheres of social life. My argument assumes that globalization is a fundamental tendency of the contemporary world and that the ideal of such a world cannot be enacted without tolerance. After identifying the constituent elements of this value and its conditions of functioning, we conclude that any reconstruction of human society from the globalization point of view presumes tolerance as a fundamental factor. Functional tolerance assumes that everyone enjoys similar education in the spirit of tolerance at any age and any .level. The future of humanity depends upon such a solution in the face of current woes

## Main Article

Overthrown to most intimate structures, the contemporary society sets itself again on the principle of globality. An older global tendency is asking its right to existence. Indisputably, the ampleness and the gravity of the problems confronting the humankind need a global approach, in order to find the saving solution. But "globality" or "mondialization" does not mean a uniform and indistinct totality swarming with the slogan of economic efficiently, no matter how important would it be. A such point of view, if it exists in somebody's mind, is a monstrosity and it cannot be accepted as such.

Justified by the condition of the humankind in this millenium end, globalization presumes the difference and coexistent individualities on the ground of common and unanimous accepted values and ideals. In turn, the difference entails the democracy as a constitutive part of a mondializing process. Of course, it is not about a globalization of the democracy, but a need of democracy, which asserts itself in different forms and situation on all the meridians of the earth.

It is quite clear that the diversity and democracy are ones of that is named now postmodernism. To live in a world, which is evolving or should be in accordance with these principles is near impossible out of the tolerance. Among others, the tolerance becomes necessarily the guiding star of the individual and human community by their will and action to reach the noble ideals of Good, Prosperity and Peace.

But what is tolerance? Keeping its means from the Latin, the notion of tolerance means to

support, to allow, enduring. These meanings refer to behavior expressing the acceptance of the individual, community or situation embodied difference. It could be talking about an ontological sense of the tolerance appearing in the endless variety of the manifesting existence forms. The biological organisms and the mineral elements or structures have intrinsic individual properties, which make them able to resist to the external agents action. That is to say tolerate them but in some limits. Beyond these limits of tolerance, they get new qualities so far as to become anything else or even disappear. An other aspect of the ontological tolerance is represented by the relations among the individuals constituting the diverse organic and mineral structures. It is frequent, in the long becoming of the being, the coexistence of some individuals with such different appropriations so far as to the adversity. They have mutually supported in their own benefit and in the benefit of the system whom they belong to. The attempt to remove one in another's benefit can trouble the equilibrium and the salient features of the named system, bringing about unsuspected effects.

But the tolerance reveals its whole and specific sense in the human field. Here the tolerance is structured as a reaction of the spirit provoked by something on the further side of itself. Being alone, the individual feels the tolerance merely as a determined predisposition of his spirit. An other person must interfere and an interindividual or more exactly interspiritual relation should appear, in order to become in actu a such predisposition. Therefore, the tolerance is born on the ground of certain communication relations. These relations can take place among persons, between a person and a community and finally among communities comprising the whole social environment. Not as much, but I think that we can enlarge the approach including also the relation between the individual and community on the one side, and the natural environment on the other side. The tolerance is constituted as an other form of a harmonious integration of the human being into the nature disheartening his temptations towards a discretionary behavior, as if the nature would be given to hers exclusively for make use of it. In the social life pluralism conditions, i.e., *ens pluralis*, the tolerance is expressed through a reaction determining a lenient attitude and a superior understanding, given the other or a certain situation where we are taking part or not. In this context, the syntagm superior understanding does not identify with the arrogance, the self-pride or the haughtiness. Supposing that, then the tolerance would be considerably distorted and would generate its opposite i.e., the intolerance. In this case a superior understanding means wisdom and a deep thinking which takes into account the principles. A person, that is tolerant and watching temperately but with love the diversity of the world where we live, has the inner propensity to admit the other with his physical appropriations especially with his sensibility, his kind of

thinking and his tradition where from he has claimed himself. Moreover, beyond the interspirituality, a such person could accept in the present or the future any situation serving the Good, the Truth and the Beauty, which is the valuable trinity lighting the human being life. Which good reason, though sometimes with an attempt to reduce to a minimum it was told that tolerance is the most useful virtues in the social existence.

If we agree that the value is an existential dimension of the human being, then, on the ground of the aforesaid, we can assert that the tolerance is a value. It represents one of those values taking out the human being of the zoological sphere and placing him in noesis. As the value hypostasis the tolerance is not confused with the tolerant attitude or behavior which are objectifying the value.(1)

In this sense, we are agree with Nicolai Hartmann's point of view that the values are free of value realizations or goods. They are positively the conditions for values.(2) The contents are through them in fact available. In our case, the tolerance as value acts as a paradigm, an archetype for the practical attitudes and behaviors. This does not mean that the tolerance and the values generally speking are conditions for the possibility of goods. Consequently, they are not the source of reality but it's a priori justification.

As value the tolerance is a part of the large category of the ethical values guiding the practical life. The human existence is unfolding entirely in the value horizon. "The psychical life is an indefatigable run for values, and this run is our thirst or will for unity or inner convergency."(3) A such irresistible attraction towards values is in the same time identical with our soul exigency for being in a progressive values world, in a world with a continuos increase value. Therefore, there is an endless tendency for filing some purposes or values that we reach by a straining of the will and by the adequate actions. The tolerance is not fundamental purpose of our existence. Nobody takes the proposal to devote his life to become tolerant. But any normal person and community wish to contribute even a few to the realization of the general Good and to action as such. In this tireless fight with his self and with his outer environment, the individual finds in the tolerance the basic ally leading him towards the essential ideal, cast in the Good of the whole human community. In other words, the tolerance is a value promoting the performance of an other higher value instituting itself as a purpose or ideal. This position diminishes in no way its importance and its meaning; on the contrary, it even intensifies them.

For the accomplishment of an ideal ever finally depends on the utilizing means. The individual and the community are, generally speaking, the supports or the bearer for any moral value and implicitly for the tolerance fusing in the named axiological subject. It pops from here the next interrogation: which is the nature of the tolerance? Is it an exclusive product

of our soul consciousness sensations and feelings depending on them? If a such assumption were true, then the value as determined by the sensibility impulses will be placed in a such relativism suppressing at any time the boundary between the tolerance and intolerance, between love and hate. Moreover, in the moment when the generating impulses would disappear even the existence of the tolerance as value ceases.

Of course, the affectivity is a very important element in the structure of the tolerance, but not sufficient. We feel the tolerance as a tendency sprung from a not just easy to identify soul complex. All the same as the other values, it is not immanent to any feeling, but only to those the subject takes up an attitude for, e.g., a certain representation, and only for those associating intellectually with the formation of a judgement. Therefore, an other fundamental element exists too in the structure of the tolerance as value i. e. the intellect. It protects us against the sensibility caprices, it founds the judgment, the valuation and it orientates the

action to ensure the stability and the universality of the tolerance and the value in the main. It follows that the tolerance, as any other value, has a structural duality being reflected in the value realizations. Consequently, the tolerant attitude and behavior, as modalities of the value functioning, entail in turn the affectivity governed by love and the intellect as reason. There is soul energy converted in love feeling, feeding our will for an intimate consensus and harmony with all that surrounds us especially with the people. There is no doubt about Scheler's available remark that love orientates the spirit towards higher and higher values<sup>(4)</sup> as the tolerance; love ensures the conditions for the presence and the action of the tolerance and it makes possible the existence of some new and superior values connected with our feeling and preference. This spiritual elevation process is guided by reason towards a moral supreme value, which is a form of the eternal and the universal. The socratic formula is confirmed, accordingly to that for being good everything must be performed consciously. The striving for reaching the supreme moral value subordinates all the objectifying tolerance as value. It is shown to us in this way the reciprocal relation between the value of the Ego seized with a permanent aspiration towards an inner unity, and the value of the world considered in an axiological horizon. "With every growth of the value assigned to the world-Eugeniu Speranția said-the Ego itself being with it in a continuous reciprocal osmosis assumes an equivalent growth of its own value."<sup>(5)</sup> So that a person surpasses himself he must, among others, appeal to love and through this to the tolerance, but also to the charity and altruism which can lead him towards that type of the creative personality in the field of the culture comprising the maximum of the humankind in the human individual, and being the supreme moral value.

The value feeling, indicating its presence in the consciousness associates with the will of

realizing it. We feel the tolerance in our mind not only as an expression of the inner unity of our Ego but also as a possibility of convergence with the outer world, being convinced that we found out an available way of integration in the community for many people, that we have discovered the spring of some needs and general satisfaction.<sup>(6)</sup> But it is not sufficient to realize, at the level of the consciousness, the human general meaning of the tolerance. Particularly important it to the behaviors and attitudes of laniency, acceptance, endurance in comparison with the alter, with the outer world. Otherwise it appears only at the desiderative level. As such, the act by which we feel the tolerance value must set about moving the will to transpose it in the practical behavior and actions. Because it is determined by reason, not by the instincts, the moral will is, as Kant would say, practical reason. In the outer order of the world is translates and confirms the content of the tolerance value, as it stood out in the inside of our spirit. In other words, our will integrates the human action and behaviors under a spiritual government and it proclaim the victory of reason and the spirit over the hate and the intolerance, over the animal being. An action is tolerant to that extent of a coincidence with the sense of the claiming value and it can be considered intolerant when it is diverging with regard to this sense.

Acting in accordance with the intrinsec meanings of the tolerance, the will affirms its own freedom sprung from the inside of our spirit. And because it is free, it has chosen its ways for reaching the supreme moral value. But it is possible that the reason and its valuation judgments should be influenced by the confuse perceptions of our senses and then the will, because of its freedom, can resort to the instruments of the intolerance and the evil on the whole. Just that thing Leibniz thinks when he affirms:

. . . if there is an independent out of reason liberty . . . the man will be the most incorrigible among all the animals, and we never can be sure that we will make him to take the good decision.<sup>(7)</sup>

Paraphrasing a phrase of the same philosopher, we could say that: well-used freedom brings satisfaction and joy; badly used liberty brings suffering and misfortune.<sup>(8)</sup> Therefore, although it bears the mark of liberty, not any will is in the service of the tolerance but only that which is determined by the clear representation of the supreme moral value.

The same way as any other value, the tolerance is irreducible. This means that it cannot be defined by an other value,<sup>(9)</sup> because it possesses a series of appropriations conferring on its autonomy and unicity. That is why the tolerance can not be subordinated by any other value such as kindness, austerity, love, charity, frankness etc. The irreducigleness that entails the autonomy consciousness of the value points out the differentiating value phenomenon, which

is a huge benefit for the development of the modern culture and the civil society in the main. Consequently, the tolerance itself is again more consolidated in the axiological system and it concentrates towards itself more and more living and firm aspiration. And this is so because the value autonomy is a condition for the possibility of the general tolerance growth. Having a full consciousness of the autonomous condition of all the value, a person preferably embracing a certain value, is conciliatory looking and he accepts the others supporting other values. From this point of view we can understand and accept other ways of thinking and individual action, other forms and features of the community expression. The diversity is a fundamental characteristic of the world we live, and that entails a permanent cognition effort towards the other, keeping in our mind the premiss that are not identical, and as such all of us can not manifest in the same way. The objective value of the particular minds and the different from our Ego consciousness contents value are parts of the interspiritual existence substratum. They constitute the ground of the intercommunication relations with a scale stretching from the simple gesture to the most subtle dialogue. The dialogue promotion and its maintenance with a continuous interest for the alter, is a defining manner of the tolerance. On the contrary, the cold indifference and discrimination are generating the intolerance. In the same way, the extrapolation of the peculiar and individual remains the main intolerance agents. That is why the frightened by the extremes J. Locke said that the tolerance has some limits which can not be negligible. This does not mean to give up the dignity, but nor to admit its exacerbation. The conscious freedom is an other guarantor of an acting tolerance. He who is guided in his action by a certain value, pretends his freedom to perform it, and in his turn he behaves respectfully for the special value of the other.<sup>(11)</sup> Accordingly to Kant, man is phenomenon and noumenon in the same time; phenomenon as the object of the experience, and noumenon because he thinks himself as something different in comparison with the phenomena. The liberty belongs to the noumenon, to the intelligible world and it expresses the human dignity. Just this dignity must be strictly respected, and this is not forgotten by a genuine tolerant spirit. Because the tolerance has an intransigent limit. Therefore, the tolerance entails the tolerance.

Beyond any doubt the tolerance is a universal value; it is applied in all the fields of the social. For a long period of time the tolerance has been called upon the sphere of religion, but in present it got into and is looked for any segment of the human community. The society reconstruction on the global long-term plan must include the tolerance among its definite elements. But the functioning of this value claims a proper education at any age and any level.

.It is a situation such as the ideals realization of the contemporary world depends on

- (1) Cf. Marin Aiftincă, Valoare și valorizare. Contribuții moderne la filosofia valorii (Value and valuation. Modern contributions to philosophy of value), Bucharest, Editura Academiei Române, 1994, p. 34.
- (2) Cf. N. Hartmann, Ethik, Berlin, W. de Gruyter & Co., 1926, pp. 108-109.
- (3) Eugeniu Speranția, Resorturile psihologice ale evoluției umane (The psychological springs of the human evolution), vol. I, Cluj, Editura Universității, "Regele Ferdinand I", 1974, p. 54.
- (4) M. Scheler, Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik. Neue Versuch der Grundlegung eines ethischen Personalismus, 3, Aufl. M. Niemeyer, a.d.r., 1927, p. 109.
- (5) Ibid., p. 56.
- (6) Cf. Tudor Vianu, Introducere în teoria valorilor (Introduction in the Value Theory), în: Opere (Works), vol. 8, Bucharest, Editura Minerva, 1979, pp. 133-134
- (7) G. W. Leibniz, Eseuri de teodicee (Essays on Theodicy), trad. în română de Diana Morărașu și Ingrid Ilinca, Iași, Polirom, 1997, p. 259.
- (8) Ibid., p. 260.
- (9) Cf. Tudor Vianu, Op. cit., pp. 166-168.
- (10) Cf. John Locke, A Letter concerning Toleration, Liberal Arts Press Inc., New York, August 1995, p. 10.
- (11) Ibid., p. 17