

The Interpretation of the Concept of “Tolerance” in Philosophy and Literature (On the basis of “The Moor’s Account” by L.Lalami and “On Toleration” by M.Walzer)

Iskandarova Shamsiyabonu Ulugjonovna
iskandarovashamsiyabonu@gmail.com

Annotation: The article discusses the concept of tolerance, especially religious and interethnic tolerance, how distinctly and similarly they are interpreted in the spectra of philosophy. The analyses are conducted on the basis of “The Moor’s Account” by Laila Lalami and “On Toleration” by American philosopher Michael Walzer.

Keywords: Tolerance, Laila Lalami, Michael Walzer, “The Moor’s Account”, “On Toleration”, fiction.

INTRODUCTION

In our time, one of the most important functions of literature is to teach people to live together. It is at school that the child should get acquainted with tolerant attitudes. In fact, it is difficult to unequivocally answer the question of what tolerance is, although it is quite easy for a knowledgeable person to do this, but this ease, upon further deeper consideration, seems to be an illusion and delusion. The difficulty lies not in the definition itself, but in all the shades of the meaning of tolerance. According to the generally accepted opinion, tolerance is tolerance, the desire and ability to establish and maintain community with people who differ in some respect from the prevailing type or do not adhere to generally accepted opinions, the ability to establish and maintain community with people who differ from us in any respect, the desire agreement, non-conflict. In philosophy, it is defined as “tolerance of some kind of views”.

This means that in modern philosophy and even in literature, tolerance has different explanations. Even in many literary works, one can easily trace the theme of a patient attitude towards people who hold a different opinion, a search for a compromise and an interest in life in all its diversity. Literature faces the difficult task of preparing the younger generation for life in a multinational and multicultural environment, it is important to teach young people, along with the development of their own culture, understand and appreciate the uniqueness of other cultures, educate them in the spirit of peace and respect for all peoples. Literature lessons should contribute to the development of a tolerant personality. After all, literature is a means of latent education in general and tolerance in particular; it contains a huge potential for cultivating patience and self-respect.

DISCUSSION

The idea of tolerance is mainly studied in philosophy, but it is impossible to convey it to people without the help of fiction. Because all subjects participate in the education of morality, but literature plays an especially important role, which, due to its specificity, directly goes to the problems of morality. One of them, and if I may say, one of the extensive studies in the study of the issue of tolerance, can be considered the work of the American philosopher Michael Walzer “On Toleration” (1997). The book is a concise but elegant and articulate reflection on the problems of multiculturalism. Walzer claims that “The subject of my research is tolerance, or, better, what

makes tolerance possible, namely the peaceful coexistence of groups of people with different histories, cultures and identities” [1, 25]. It is this interpretation that we can see in the main idea of L. Lalami’s historical fiction “The Moor’s Account”. Because the plot of this novel compares the culture, society and religion of three continents: Europe, Africa and America, which developed at different social levels.

M. Walzer notes that many philosophers tend to limit the meaning of the concept of tolerance exclusively to its first variety. This type of detached-submissive attitude reflects a certain underlying resistance attributed by public opinion to the practical implementation of tolerance. But this same interpretation of tolerance completely ignores the enthusiasm of many of the early proponents of the idea of tolerance, as Michael Walzer puts it: “Taken as an attitude or mindset, tolerance includes a number of possibilities” [1, 26]. The book *On Tolerance* sheds light on the historical and analytical roots of tolerance as accepted in philosophy. In particular, the second chapter of the work that is known as “Five Regimes of Tolerance”, in which the author reflects on five important elements of the concept of tolerance, which has evolved from the earliest times of history to today. I will try to compare this study to the common and different aspects of the concepts of tolerance in philosophy (“On Toleration”) and fiction (“The Moor’s Account”). The first of these, the religious tolerance between 16th and 17th centuries, rooted in practice is nothing more than a detached and humble attitude towards differences in the name of preserving peace. So, for centuries, people continue to kill each other, and then comes the saving stage of exhaustion: this is what we call tolerance. At the same time, there are number of more significant ways of accepting differences. Here Laila Lalami compares the religious appearance of the world after the Great Geographical Discoveries, the Reformations and the beginning of colonialism. L. Lalami also describes exactly this period, as the events that became the prototypes of the novel “The Moor’s Account” took place in the 16th century.

“On behalf of the King and Queen, he said, we wish to make it known that this land belongs to God our Lord, Living and Eternal” [2, 4]. Through this idea, it is understood that all peoples should obey the god that the Spaniards worship, and the religious freedom of other religions is degraded. “God has appointed one man, called St. Peter, to be the governor of all the men in the world, wherever they should live, and under whatever law, sect, or belief they should be” [2, 4]. That is, the colonizers insist that the total power in the territory they conquered should be united in the hands of the Pope, and the representatives of the ruling class are deified, and each action that they commit and decision is carried out under the guise of the creator's will. “The successor of St. Peter in this role is our Holy Father, the Pope, who has made a donation of this terra firma to the King and Queen. Therefore, we ask and require that you acknowledge the Church as the ruler of this world, and the priest whom we call Pope, and the King and Queen, as lords of this territory” [2, 4]. Now, establishing a single citizenship in the occupied territories and putting an end to cultural tolerance shows the real intention of the conquerors. In “The Moor’s Account”, Lalami also tries to show the tolerance and intolerance aspects of the character and behavior of the characters. But if you refuse to comply, or maliciously delay in it, we inform you that we will make war against you in all manners that we can, and shall take your wives and children, and shall make slaves of them, and shall take away your goods, and shall do you all the mischief and damage that we can. And if this should happen, we protest that the deaths and losses will be your fault, and not that of their Highnesses, or of the cavaliers here present. Now that we have said this to you, we request the notary to give us his testimony in writing and the rest who are present to be witnesses of this Requisition” [2, 4]

According to the idea of M. Walzer, “The second possible attitude is the position of passivity, relaxation, gracious indifference to differences: Live and let live” [1, 26]. This element can be

found in various places in the subject of “The Moor’s Account”. In particular, the Spanish colonists, who treated blacks as slaves and Indians as red skinned uncivilized heathens in the early stages of the story however, at the end of the novel, Spaniards begin to be indifferent to these “different aspects”. Harsh natural conditions, diseases, food shortages, swamps force the heroes of the work to unite, regardless of their religion, nationality, or race. The black slave becomes a translator and healer, and the Indian becomes a friend who provides food and shelter.

RESULTS

According to the American philosopher, “The third stems from a kind of moral stoicism rather than political- the principled recognition that “others” have rights, even if their way of using these rights causes hostility” [1, 27]. In the novel “The Moor’s Account” the reader often encounters this element of morality. As she admits in several interviews, Lalami’s goal is not to show white race as conquerors and bloodthirsty, rather to remove the negative vices (slavery, greed, violence, the concept of a superior race) that were considered normal morals for the Middle Ages and from the ideology of today’s readers, precisely she tries to reject the concept that the white people of today should compensate for the bloodshed of the European colonizers in the past and apologize for these inhuman acts. Instead, “The Moor’s Account” serves as a unique voice in challenging people not to repeat the mistakes of history. In particular, if the unique aspect of Spanish colonialism described in the work is taken into account, Morocco in Africa and Indian land in America have been conquered by Spain and both have the same status as colonies. According to the regime established by the colonizers, they should live in a friendly and tolerant spirit, obeying the laws they created before, without taking any action against the Spanish occupation. It is this regime that is emphasized in “The Moor’s Account”.

The fourth expresses openness towards others, curiosity, perhaps even respect, a desire to listen and learn. Moral conflicts are recreated in all the best works of modern literature. In particular, in the books of L. Lalami, tolerance is mainly reflected in two forms: firstly, relations between people are shown as they should be, that is, without violence, and, secondly, showing the intolerant behavior of their characters, the author protests against them.

“And the last in this series is an enthusiastic approval of differences, aesthetic approval, in which differences are perceived as a cultural hypostasis of the vastness and diversity of God’s creations or nature; or it is a functional approval, in which differences are considered (for example, by liberal supporters of multiculturalism) as an indispensable condition for the flourishing of mankind, providing any man and any woman with the full freedom of choice, for it is freedom of choice that constitutes the meaning of their autonomy” [1, 27].

It should be noted that the difference between tolerance and tolerance clearly follows from the fact that the fourth (openness towards others) and fifth (enthusiastic approval of differences) varieties of tolerance do not fit the definition of tolerance (respectful and enthusiastic tolerance?), and this subtlety, apparently, it should be taken into account when using the synonymous use of the word “tolerance” in the sense of tolerance, and vice versa.

The last way of tolerance according to the classification of M. Walzer is “out of the ordinary, because how can we talk about tolerance in relation to what I approve of? If I want others to be here, in this society, with us, then it means that I not only tolerate differences, but also support the fact of their existence. This, however, does not mean that I am necessarily in favor of one particular kind of difference or another. It is possible that I prefer some other variety that is closer culturally or religiously to me.

In any pluralistic society, even among the personages of “The Moor’s Account” there will always be people who, while approving the very existence of differences, can do nothing more than

tolerate this or that particular difference. “But even those people”, Walzer notes, “who do not experience this difficulty, it would be correct to call tolerant, they are ready to provide a place under the sun for those men and women whose beliefs they do not share and whose behavior they do not want to copy; they coexist with “otherness” which, for all their approving attitude towards everything that is different from what they know, is still something alien and strange” [1, 28]. Thus, according to Walzer, “every person who is capable of such behavior - regardless of whether he experiences feelings of detachment, indifference, stoic acceptance, curiosity or enthusiasm - can be said to have the virtue of tolerance” [1, 29].

CONCLUSION

Summing up, it can be said that the concept of tolerance deserves much closer attention and in-depth analysis than we can find in modern literature on this issue. And this analysis should be devoted not only to practical, but also (primarily) theoretical aspects of tolerance. Based, in particular, on a brief typology of tolerance developed by M. Walzer, we can significantly expand our understanding of some issues related to the problems of discussion and dialogue, philosophical and scientific pluralism. If we take into account the connection between tolerance and universalism, when tolerance acts as a necessary condition for the implementation of a universal position, and a universal position can be formulated and accepted only as a met principle, then the search for an answer to the question of how the intolerant can be tolerated acquires a new philosophical dimension that allows a non-trivial approach to solving many of the problems put forward by modernity. And every idea of a philosopher about tolerance can be seen and analyzed in the book “The Moor’s Account” because if philosophy is an interpretation of the laws of life, and literature represents to live correctly with these laws.

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