

THE MOSLEM WORLD: THEORETICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEMS

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The authors of the article consider religious tolerance as one of the basic principles of interfaith relations in Russian society. According to researchers, the task of state policy in the field of religion is to optimize interfaith relations in the country, relying on the support and creation of effective dialogue and cooperation between church organizations of traditional Russian confessions both at the regional level and at the level of central governing bodies.

* Translation of the title is presented in author's version.

During the 1990s–2000s, Russia passed the process of religious revival. Freedom of Conscience, guaranteed by the Constitution and by Law, replaced the previous atheistic state policy of the USSR. However, the post-Soviet religious revival cannot be called a completely successful and problem-free process. The authors of the article believe that the atheistic worldview that has developed in the masses of the population during the years of Soviet power is still prevalent today.

Mass atheism is gradually giving way to complete indifference to issues of faith and spirituality in the post-Soviet period. Although many citizens have turned to the traditional religions of Russia, their faith is often formal in nature, since newly converted believers do not know the basics of religious dogma and rituals, and they do not regularly observe the requirements of a religious cult.

The social instability of modern Russian society, its deep social stratification, economic crises undermine the psychological stability of Russian citizens and creates potential prerequisites for psychological intolerance rather than tolerance and loyalty. The authors of the article note that the fact of the poly-confessional nature of Russian society sharply reveals the problem of interfaith relations, especially in the context of the division of spheres of influence, social resources (material, informational and educational) and missionary activity.

Defining freedom of conscience as the principle of choosing the Faith, and religious tolerance as an attitude towards a member of another confession, the authors emphasize the inadmissibility of identifying religious tolerance with confessional equality. Confessional equality determines the balance of sociocultural and prestigious statuses of various confessions, and religious tolerance determines the way of their relationships and interactions. Tolerance should be viewed as an independent principle of religious policy in a multi-confessional society, characterizing the mutual respect of believers of different confessions and mutual recognition of the right to exist for various religious beliefs in the

presence of their own convictions and a willingness to defend them.

Analyzing the essence of religious tolerance, the authors also analyze the concept of “tolerance”, which came to Russia from Western cultural discourse. The concept of “tolerance” is much broader in scope than the concept of “religious tolerance”, since it refers to the entire sphere of intercultural relations of various forms of social and cultural organization of modern society. Religious tolerance is one of the forms of general cultural tolerance. However, the extensive interpretation of religious tolerance as a form of tolerance, according to the authors, distorts the meaning of religious tolerance as a norm of interfaith relations. It is proposed to search for a certain universal, ecumenical religion instead of mutual respect and peaceful coexistence of different confessions, which actually means the abolition of original religious systems.

Tolerance in Orthodoxy. Orthodoxy is a deeply humanistic religion in its dogmatic and moral content, emphasizing the spiritual autonomy and responsibility of the individual, and the inalienable freedom of moral choice in particular. Tolerance towards other religions as respect for the personal choice of the believer follows naturally from this. The authors consider religious tolerance as an essential feature of Christianity manifested itself most clearly in the history of not Western, but Eastern Christianity – Russian Orthodoxy, which is associated with the history of the formation of Russian civilization as a free multinational and poly-confessional community.

Tolerance in Islam. Like Christianity, Islam also has a great potential for a true religious tolerance as a humanistic religion. Islam considers the freedom of religion as an inalienable right of a person with consciousness and will. The Quran states that there is no compulsion in religion. The tolerance of Islam in relation to the gentiles is proved by the fact that the attitude towards non-Muslims was quite tolerant both in the Arab Caliphate and in the Ottoman Empire. Islamic humanism respects the rights of every

person, including the right to choose one's faith. The population of the conquered countries either converted to Islam or continued to practice their old faith, but in this case they paid a special tax and were not full subjects of the caliph. Islamic humanism respects the rights of every person, including the right to choose one's faith. A tolerant attitude to the other faiths is not introduced into Islam from other creeds and ideologies. There are many examples of Islamic extremism in the history of Islam, despite the fact that tolerance and respect for the individual believer and his personal free choice of faith in Islam are fundamental, basic. The authors of the article point out that Islamic extremism took root in Russia in the 1990s, becoming one of the most serious problems for Russian society. However, this does not disprove the fact that Islam in its essence is a religion of peace and religious tolerance, since each specific case of Islamic extremism and fanaticism has its own specific historical reasons and manifestations. As for the ideological basis of various forms of Islamic extremism, it is always associated with a greater or lesser complex of incorrect, "extremist" distortions of traditional Islam, one of which necessarily turns out to be a false substitution of the principle of religious tolerance by the principles of religious intolerance and violence against gentiles.

Tolerance as a norm of interfaith relations can be considered at three levels, according to the authors of the article: at the level of individual religious behavior of believers; interchurch relations of confessions; religious policy of a poly-confessional state.

Tolerance at the level of individual religious behavior of believers is manifested as a loyal attitude towards other believers and atheists. In this regard, it is extremely important that traditional Russian religious confessions deliberately cultivate the tolerance of their flock in relation to other confessions.

Tolerance at the level of interchurch relations of confessions is realized as an orientation towards the interfaith world, dialogue and cooperation of confessions in maintaining the socio-cultural stability of Russian society. The organization of an effective and

constructive dialogue and cooperation between traditional Russian confessions in the common cause of increasing the spirituality of Russian society is an urgent modern task. And the positive experience of such dialogue and cooperation between the Russian Orthodox Church (the ROC) and Islamic religious organizations has already been accumulated. This does not mean that there are no problems and tense issues in matters of interfaith relations between the ROC and Islamic religious organizations. The problem of increasing the number of the flock, as well as the struggle for spiritual leadership in certain regions and in Russia in general, can serve as a ground for tension. However, the general tasks of maintaining interfaith peace and social stability in Russian society are the basis for finding effective solutions to problems in the course of dialogue.

The authors come to the conclusion, that religious tolerance is closely related to the principles of freedom of conscience and confessional equality in a multi-confessional society, but it is not limited to them only. Religious tolerance is individual and has a specific historical character in different countries between different confessions and peoples, and within individual countries it has regional characteristic features. Religious tolerance is an uncontested principle for the modern spiritual situation in Russia, although there is still no complete correspondence between its legislative declaration and the actual practice of interfaith relations. The task of state policy in the sphere of religion, according to the authors of the article, is to optimize interfaith relations in the country. One of the main advantages of the modern Russian system of religious tolerance is regional and situational flexibility and adaptability.

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