

TOLERATING THE INTOLERABLE: A MANDATE TO LOVE

Extended Notes
By
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1. INTRODUCTION

- Micah 6:8
- Jeremiah 4:1,2

2. DEFINITION

A. *Tolerance is the #1 virtue in America*

- I asked my son, Sean, (at that time a 17 year old, high school senior), "Were you taught any absolutes at school?" He responded, "Yes." I questioned him further, "What?" "Tolerance!"
- "There is something sacrosanct about toleration in modern political folklore: Without much exaggeration, it can be said that ... [it is] the ultimate and almost the only generally acceptable litmus test of morality. ... No other single category—not justice, not equality, not even freedom—has won such wide moral support in the Western world." C/10
- "... a call for toleration usually outweighs any demand that such an idea or movement should justify its dissenting position. In fact, to make such a demand is frequently interpreted precisely as an expression of intolerance." C/10
- "The problem of tolerance has been called, in the words of Gustav Mensching, 'one of the great and most urgent challenges now confronting our world'. The action taken by the United Nations General Assembly, 25 November 1981, in adopting the 'Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief,' while long overdue, was an important step taken by the family of nations." F/11
- "Tolerance may indeed be the dominant theme of the modern curriculum. The authors of a recent study of American high schools concluded that 'tolerating diversity is the moral glue that holds schools together.' One study of American history books found toleration presented as "the only 'religious' idea worth remembering." G/18

B. *What is tolerance?*

- tolerance: "...permissive attitude toward opinions and practices that differ from one's own."
– Random House Unabridged Dictionary, 2nd edition, Random House, 1993.
- tolerate: "...to recognize and respect (others beliefs, practices, etc.) without sharing them. 2) to bear or put up with (someone or something not especially liked)."
– Websters New World Dictionary of English, 3rd edition, Simon & Shuster, 1994.

1. Traditionally tolerance (negative) has meant:

- "Love the sinner, hate the sin."
- "I love you, accept you ... but I don't agree with your lifestyle."
- "To put up with."
- "To overlook."
- "To embrace all people, but not all beliefs."
- "To listen & learn from all people but not agree with all people."

2. Today tolerance (positive) means:

- All individual beliefs, values, lifestyles and truth claims are equal in value.
- Our universities must teach our students how to live in the America that will be. That nation will be multiethnic and multicultural, and will demand citizens who understand, appreciate, and respect pluralism." K/64
- "They argue that we are witnessing today the decline of strong philosophy, inhumanely objective and hierarchal, and the triumph of essentially weak rhetoric: the criteria of social coexistence, adaptable and malleable, have begun to play a more important role than the suprahuman criteria of truth. As Richard Rorty put it, 'democracy has become prior to philosophy.' " C/616
- "G.B. Madison, does not hesitate to speak of the new era in human relations: 'The politics of postmodernity, like postmodern philosophy itself, will ... no longer be one of opposites. Oppositional thinking goes along with metaphysical hierarchies, and it is precisely these which are being undermined by the new postmodern, global civilization now coming into being. The new era has the potential of being one not of metaphysical, essence-bound homogeneity and modernistic uniformity but of difference, particularity, plurality, and heterogeneity. In regard, for instance, to the new geo-economic order, we are witnessing the emergence of a complex, interlocking, and decentered network of institutions in which there is no longer any identifiable source, origin, or centre.' " C/616
- "On the south side of the city of Madras, not far from the center of the world's theosophical movement (with its largest banyan tree in the world), is the most impressive of India's many monuments to her beloved little Mahatma. Indeed, in the years since his death in New Delhi in 1948, the person of Gandhi has been brought by the devotion of the people ever nearer divinization. Thus, hundreds of villages now have their Gandhi shrines. And the most notable, perhaps, is the fine granite pavilion in Madras named the 'Ghandi Mandapan.' But it is likewise a monument to Gandhi's belief that all religious faith of whatever tradition, form, or creed is worthy of acceptance. Carved on several of the pillars are figures or symbols of the various religions: a Christian crucifix, a meditating Buddha, a Hindu god, and Islamic calligraphy from the Koran. And on a corner pillar are the words of the Mahatma: "I came to the conclusion long ago that all religions were true, and also that all had some error in them; and that whilst I hold my own, I should hold others as dear as Hinduism." L/????
- "... it is reasoned that all those who cherish the value of diversity must perceive those even merely considering the subjection of the plurality of ideals to selection and hierarchal organization to be intolerant." C/619
- "... as postmodernism teaches, we are to renounce basic philosophical categories and to throw traditional belief in the essential meaningfulness of the world into the dustbin of history. It is no trifle that, as pluralist libertarians insist, we are forbidden to discriminate between different ideals and that in case of their con-

flict we must distribute them equally.” C/621

- “One does not know whether the postmodernists propound a highly controversial philosophical thesis that objective truth does not exist, or whether they are arguing that toleration and pluralism require that there be no objective truth.” C/620
- “The essential trouble with positive toleration (especially in its “sympathetic openness” version) is that it attempts to combine two attitudes which are extremely difficult to reconcile. First, it implies that one can have one’s own point of view; second, that one must accept a world of diversity where all points of view are equal (except those that are “fanatical”).” C/620
- “...leads to insoluble conflicts. The possession of a point of view presupposes a certain hierarchy; certain ideas and attitudes have been found right and deserving of sympathy; others found to be tolerable; still others to be wrong, dangerous and repulsive. The supporters of sympathetic openness imply that one is not entitled to such hierarchies.” C/620
- “The absence of effective hierarchies implies that one is forbidden...virtually prohibited to make any negative judgments about other points of view because such negative evaluations could be considered discriminatory. ... One is forced to respect something which, contrary to his deepest convictions, he finds distasteful.” C/620
- “To put it briefly, one would have to become a *homo liberalis*, whose first and foremost loyalty in public as well as in private is to the order of diversity, not to any one particular creed; someone who strongly believes in the equality of cultures, moralities, ideals usually because he feels they are authentic expressions of human existence; someone who compensates for the lack of hierarchy (that is, egalitarianism) by resolutely and vehemently opposing all forms of hierarchical outlooks, defined as ‘fanaticism’...” C/621
- “...the ideal of toleration that stable liberty requires more than subscription to legal or constitutional rules—it requires commonality in moral outlook. ...” D/32
- “...for if all ways of life are worthy of equal respect in a liberal community, it follows that my way of life in particular merits the (unearned) respect of my fellow liberals.” B/614

C. Respect (praise, acceptance) of other values, beliefs, lifestyles and truth claims.

- British philosopher R.M. Haire: Tolerance is “... a readiness to respect other people’s ideals as if they were his own.” C/167
- “If our young people finish their educations without learning to respect each other’s differences and cherish their own backgrounds, the future will be a troubled one.” K/60
- “Colleges must adopt programs and plans to make their community as bias-free as possible. As leaders in the educational field, they should direct changes in high and elementary school programs, so that their future students are better prepared to live peaceably

with each other.” K/60

- “It appears now that to earn the honor of being counted among the tolerant we must all become *homines liberales* and substantially transform our worldviews. Moreover, we must do so not because those worldviews have been proven false but because they are believed to be socially and politically offensive.” C/621
- “The religions of the world, however, need to lead the way in their renunciation of intolerance both in principle and in practice. Tolerance is not in conflict with the truths affirmed by the religions of the world, for tolerance does not mean the absence of personal belief or commitment, but genuine regard for other faiths and their pilgrims.” F/11
- “Civil toleration,...means that adherents of all faiths deserve; equal rights as citizens, whereas religious toleration means that all faiths are equally valid as religions. Under civil toleration, all faiths are equal in the eyes of the state; under religious toleration, all faiths are equal in the eyes of God.” G/18
- An Iowa school board member wrote: “Multiculturalism also teaches tolerance for and appreciation of all cultures and lifestyles.” (Personal correspondence, Gail Karp, May 14, 1993.) A/344
- “...who teach us to recognize the dignity or respectability of ways of life that formerly seemed not only unfamiliar but even contemptible or hateful: love (not fear) is now the psychological root of tolerance (Rorty 1991, 206-08).” But, how do you define LOVE? B/622

D. Other Issues

- Frederick W. Hill (School administrator): “It is a mission of public schools not to tolerate intolerance.”
- It is like saying: “I know people who don’t love their fellow men and I hate people like that.”
- “The most important thing is that university presidents articulate a commitment to creating a campus community with zero tolerance for bigotry.” K/61
- “A faculty member may see a suggestion to include James Baldwin in his literature class as an invasion of academic freedom. If others he or she respects are seen changing their courses and the faculty member allowed the time and access to outside help to make similar curriculum modifications, he or she may do so enthusiastically.” K/61
- “The cause of toleration has been given a new target, more deeply hidden than previous ones. The cause of toleration has been given a new target, more deeply hidden than previous ones. Where once it was the Catholic Church, then political authoritarianism, then customs and prevailing opinion, now it is philosophy, language, intellectual education.” C/616
- Tolerance will undermine everything you stand for, are called to, and are working to accomplish.
- When I asked my daughter Katie (15 years old): “What is one of the names you fear being called at school?” She replied, “Intolerant!”
- All truth is relative to the individual.

- “Students and faculty alike should learn that people interpret their own realities differently, that there is no one perspective that necessarily defines truth.” K/64
- “One does not know whether the postmodernists propound a highly controversial philosophical thesis that objective truth does not exist, or whether they are arguing that toleration and pluralism require that there be no objective truth.” C/620
- “If you should ask a man the direction to New York City and he said, ‘Oh, just take any road you wish, they all lead there,’ you would question either his sanity or his truthfulness. Somehow, we have gotten it into our minds that ‘all roads lead to heaven.’” H/3
- “There is no relativity without absoluteness. If we say that everything changes, that sentence does not change, but is absolute.” J/495
- Tolerance says: “I’m OK ... you’re OK!”
- Permission/Praise/Respect
- Negative tolerance=Permission
- Positive tolerance=Praise/Respect
 - a) “Too often, today’s partisans of freedom immoderately express not only the desire to be left alone, to choose and practice a private way of life, but also the desire to be esteemed in this choice by the community, and even to win this applause against the will, so to speak, of the fans.” B/624
 - b) “They all have to be encouraged through forums, presidential statements, and campus debate to remold the institution into one that will be stimulating, relevant, and comfortable for all its members.” K/64
- Herbert Marcuse
 - a) “Herbert Marcuse—who came to a somewhat baffling conclusion in *A Critique of Pure Tolerance* that ‘liberating tolerance’ meant ‘intolerance against movements from the Right, and toleration of movements from the Left.’” C/615
 - b) “Negative tolerance was defective because—it is maintained—with respect to truth it preached only humility. It is truth as such, regardless of the degree of arrogance or humility with which it is professed, that is responsible for intolerance. Whatever we regard as true, be it in philosophy, morals, ways of life, criteria of permissiveness, is always exclusive. It inevitably relegates some people outside the sphere of what is normal and respectable. For example, by stressing one’s heterosexuality one may be suspected of implying that there is something objectively wrong with homosexuality, which in turn makes one susceptible to the charge of depriving homosexuals of their dignity and consequently of inciting discrimination against them.” C/615
 - c) “The history of the last two hundred years of Western political philosophy may be interpreted, among other things, as a gradual decline of negative toleration and a simultaneous growth

of its positive counterpart. Most of these efforts have aimed at no less than the discovery of the final key to the tolerant world, that is, the creation of a framework of ethical guidelines which effectively prevent intolerance.” C/614

- d) William May describes Herbert Marcuse’s view (*One Dimensional Man and Critique of Pure Tolerance*) on repressive tolerance. “Error does not have equal rights with truth. Hence the political left, while encouraging those ideologies that promote human liberation, must not grant equal privileges to the center and the right for the promotion of their destructive views.” E/47

3. DEVELOPMENT OF TOLERANCE

A. *Not a conspiracy*

B. *Veiled pursuit for power*

- Example: gays, lesbians, radical feminists purposely associate their lifestyles with the civil rights movement and racism.

C. *Several (not all) causes for the rise of “positive” tolerance*

1. Truth shift—objective truth to all truth is relative.
2. Self image
 - “According to Rorty and Sandel, the roots of self-esteem (as well as self-knowledge) are communal or social: there is no reasonable ground of self-esteem beyond the community ...”. B/621
3. Minority discord; cultural diversity.

4. IMPLICATIONS OF POSITIVE TOLERANCE

A. *Community vs. Individual ethics*

- School boards will no longer be needed—except for school management (not to represent community values to the schools).

a.) *Condoms in Schools*: “Massachusetts public schools have the right to distribute condoms to students, the state’s highest courts said in a ruling that rejected arguments that such a policy conflicts with parents’ rights to guide the religious and moral upbringing of their children. **“Parents have no right to tailor public school programs to meet their individual religious or moral preferences,”** Chief Justice Paul Liacos wrote for the court. Parents challenged a policy in Falmouth, where condoms are made available in junior and senior high schools. The parents plan to appeal.

B. *Style over substance*—The Christian evangelist will be/is labeled: fanatic, bigot, intolerant, a heretic.

- “It is part of the liberal’s ideal that a good society, whatever else it is, is one in which the ideals and interests of all are given equal consideration. It is, to use Kantian language, a kingdom of ends in which all are, at least

potentially, legislating members. ... He may even think that a diversity of ideals is in itself a good thing ... because it takes all sorts to make a world. If the liberal's ideal is of any of these kinds, he is not betraying it but following it if he tolerates other people's pursuit of their ideals, provided that, where the pursuit of one ideal hinders the pursuit of another, there shall be ... a just distribution of advantages and disadvantages. It is only the last provision which prevents the liberal from allowing even the fanatic to pursue his ideals without impediment, but the liberal is not required by his own ideal to tolerate intolerance." C/618

- *What is a fanatic?* "The fanatic is no longer a person with excessive, religious or quasi-religious, and usually mistaken enthusiasm for a certain system of beliefs. ... but [one] who opposes egalitarian diversity in principle and who chooses some form of hierarchy in social life as a necessity." C/618
- "...the growth of the pluralistic order is likely to increase the number of suspicions of fanaticism. The more diverse the world, the greater the probability that any statement, act, thought, or idea will be regarded as an expression of the intention to exclude, patronize, limit, subject, discriminate." C/619

1) The #1 heretic (from the world's point of view) in the universities today is the Christian evangelist.

- **Substance:** Heckled previously about the truthfulness of one's message.
- **Style:** Heckled today for "what right do you have to say that ... you are intolerant!"
- "It is just arrogance to remain adamantly particularistic and exclusive? Is it this claim to the uniqueness of Jesus Christ which Toynbee says should be 'purged' from Christianity? Yes, here is where the uniqueness lies. The Lord our God is one Lord; and this one God has entered into the stream of human history in one way, in one man, at one time, for the sake of all men at all times. That is the very nucleus of the Christian affirmation of faith. L/???"
- It appears now that to earn the honor of being counted among the tolerant we must all become homines liberales and substantially transform our worldviews. Moreover, we must do so not because those worldviews have been proven false but because they are believed to be socially and politically offensive." C/621

2) The moment you name the name Jesus Christ, you are now intolerant (a bigot, a fanatic)!

- John 14:6: Jesus answered, "I am the way the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

INTOLERANT!

- John 8:32: "Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

INTOLERANT!

- 2 Cor 5:20-21 *We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf; Be reconciled to God. God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us,*

so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.

INTOLERANT!

- Acts 4:12 *Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.*

INTOLERANT!

- Matt 7:13-14 *Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.*

INTOLERANT!

C. Comparative religion & philosophy

- One previously studied to evaluate truth claims. **INTOLERANCE!**
- Now you study to understand and appreciate truth claims. **TOLERANCE!**
 - a) "From truth to persecution there is then a straight and logical transition. Hence the obvious implication is that in order to secure toleration we must abandon the traditional criteria of evaluation, and in more ambitious projects, we must abandon traditional metaphysics and the epistemology from which the criterion of truth derived its strength. We must eradicate once and for all the sense of philosophical certainty that permitted some to look down on others, a sense of certainty stemming from the assumption that our world has an essence or foundation reachable by the cognitive faculties of the wise, who then impose it on the ignorant. Once we annihilate the assumption of philosophical essentialism and foundationalism, the sting of intolerance will be cut off." C/615

D. Anti- Judeo/Christian Culture

- Cross in urine is tolerance.
- Gay symbol in urine is intolerance..

E. Positive tolerance eliminates:

- 1) Justice
 - Tolerance & justice cannot co-exist. Micah 6:8
 - Justice needs a moral basis to discern right from wrong.
 - 2) Moral Indignation is intolerance
 - "... tolerance is justified by liberal openness or neutrality: intolerance is unreasonable because moral opinions are subjective or (at least) must be admitted to be so for political purposes (Rawls 1987)." B/613
 - 3) Courage
 - 4) Convictions: No truth worth defending (except tolerance).
 - G.K. Chesterton remarked: *Tolerance is a virtue of a man without convictions.*
 - Wolfgang Von Goethe: *Why did I seek the path so yearningly, if I should not share it with my brother?* F/11
- Erosion of confidence that truth can be discovered.

Truth no longer seems worth protecting.

- Privatization of convictions: There is pressure to be silent about your convictions if those convictions are offensive to others.
 - a) Eastern University: A student who displayed an American flag out his window in support of the soldiers in the gulf war was forced by the administration to remove it because he was intolerant to those students who opposed the war.
 - b) Building a cross in a school's woodworking shop denied.
 - Brian McConnell attended Marley Middle School in Baltimore, MD. :Grandmother died–Brian wanted to build a symbol of her faith. Brian was allowed only to cut and sand the pieces of the cross in shop class. But couldn't assemble it at school because it was a Christian symbol.
 - This is being tolerant because the cross is a symbol of intolerance/Christianity is evil = Intolerant.
 - c) 1992 St. Cloud State University
 - To enter the social program one must relinquish specific notions of moral truth.
- 5. Absolute Truth cannot exist with tolerance (except the absolute of tolerance)
 - Tolerance needs an absolute to be true.
- 6. "Defining down deviancy": Sen. Patrick Moynihan

ISAIAH 5:20, 21

*Woe to those who call evil good; and good evil;
who substitute darkness for light and light
for darkness;
who substitute bitter for sweet, and
sweet for bitter!
Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes,
and clever in their sight!*

PROVERBS 14:12

*There is a way which seems right to a man,
but its end is the way of death.*

PROVERBS 14:9

*Fools mock at sin, but among the upright there is
good will.*

PROVERBS 14:15

*The naive believes everything,
but the prudent man considers his steps.*

5. WHAT DO WE DO?

- A. *Pursue Truth*: 1 Peter 3:15; John 8:32; Deut 10:6
 - Embrace all people—not all beliefs.
 - Embrace the speaker—not the message.
 - Listen/Learn from all people—not agree with all people.
- B. *Affirm beliefs so that they become convictions.*
- C. *Identify with justice.* Micah 6:8; Jeremiah 4:1-24)
- D. *Act in love.*
 - We are not commanded to be tolerant but to love.
 - Opposite of tolerance is not intolerance but love.
 - Define love: Eph 5: 28-29; To protect and provide; i.e. to nurture and cherish.
 - Love does not overshadow truth: John 4.
 - We are commanded to love
 - a) Be devoted to one another in love: Rom 12:10.
 - b) Love one another: Rom 13:8.
 - c) Love your enemies: Luke 6:27-32a; Luke 6:32-33.
 - d) Love without hypocrisy, abhor evil: Rom 12:9 a,b.
 - e) Love is... patient, kind, : 1 Cor 13:4-7.
 - Tolerance=indifference; Love=involvement

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