

“RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE IN BULGARIA TODAY”

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Abstract: *Religious tolerance continues to grow today, but at a moderate pace. Even after the International Conference of Religious Tolerance in the Light of Human Rights in 1995 in the capital of Bulgaria – Sofia the question of studying religious tolerance between different religious communities arose. New times open a wider horizon of worldview and new generations become more responsive and tolerant of new personalities and religion movements. In the increasingly global world in which we live, we are confronted every day with different attitudes in the relations between different religious communities, their traditions and customs. Unfortunately, there is both religious tolerance and religious intolerance. This study aims to show religious tolerance now and how different religious groups live together side by side. Many new religious movements have emerged in the last few years. These religious movements are more or less accepted by different generations society. The sooner we seek answers to important questions such as peace and harmony between different religious communities and its implementation the sooner other answers will emerge. We are all different as individuals, different in religion and understanding of life. This is a root of the secret of our earthly path in the application of sharing, tolerance, respect of each other. However, there is still an imposition in human relationship. Quantitative method was used. Secondary data analysis is performed. Religious tolerance will always be a leading topic for reflections between the struggle between good and evil, the difference between white and black or the meaning of the eastern symbol “yin and yang”. Above all leading should be what kind of person you define yourself and what is your attitude to the color world around you.*

Keywords: *Bulgaria, religious attitudes, religious communities, religious tolerance, communication*

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Introduction

Technology and science, in the broadest sense of the word, are nothing but adaptation of the environment to man's needs. That is, from a certain period onwards, people live in an environment that is itself, to a large extent, a product of their intervention. And by shaping the environment, we shape ourselves. Religious tolerance in Bulgaria is increasing intensely. In the last decade, a picture has undoubtedly emerged, which for many is a cause for joy. It is noticeable how globalization in the world in which we live with full force also applies to religious attitudes and attitudes in Bulgaria. This attitude is clearly displayed by the younger generation. The young person does not divide his friends, peers and colleagues of ethnicity, religion, culture, national identity. Of course, in these. In the 21st century we are seeing the increasing secularisation entering Bulgarian homes and how religious differences in young people are falling away by the day. Religious tolerance today in Bulgaria was most felt in the traumatic and stressful situations that the global phenomenon brought us, namely Covid-19. Then the citizens of the Republic of Bulgaria saw how different religious denominations stood side by side in the fight against the invisible enemy. Various religious denominations live harmoniously in Bulgaria, including Eastern Orthodox Christians, Protestants, Catholics, Muslims and minorities from small religious groups of other religions. Only in the capital of Bulgaria, Sofia, can you see in one place all these religious denominations, which are different in their nature, living completely normally and peacefully in coexistence with each other.

After all, Christianity itself is disjointed by small or medium-sized communities that identify themselves as Christians, but differ in their quality of thought about life, moral ideas, death, and everything else. Always, regardless of what field of cultivation it was, reciprocity and sharedness are the two highest manifestations of peace and harmony in a person's life. When bread is shared it is sweeter, when a story is shared it is sweeter, incredibly everything is sweeter when it is shared. However, in the religious area that we have set out to investigate, we are investigating a large group of communities that define themselves as believers, believing in the same manifestation of divine power, but under different names. They have several in number of God's commandments, and those modified to be different from the preceding faith before them. All of us humans believe in something, but we get separated along the way. We all have the same genetic structure, we have limbs, brains, eyes, but the color of our irises is different, our views are different, our feelings are also different, probably our souls, here I can only guess. Eastern Orthodoxy, Catholicism and Protestantism are the largest higher religious denominations not only in the world, but also in Bulgaria. Every society does not fail to categorize religion as one of the most important spheres in its national life and structures. It ranks as a leading force along with politics, culture, human resources and economics. Even in difficult

times such as those in which in the last two years time seems to have stopped due to the epidemiological situation that is still raging around the world and in our country, the state does not forget about its jurisdiction to consult its religious partners in the fight against the invisible enemy. After all, Christianity itself is divided by small or medium-sized communities that identify themselves as Christians, but differ in their quality of thought about life, moral ideas, death and all. "The scientific approach was accepted not only in practice (as in America) but also in theory, and what Peter Burger called 'methodological atheism' became established as the sociologists' principled position on religion. This position is evident in the works of Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud. According to them, religion must not only be explained, but also refuted. According to Marx, religion is a mystification, a manifestation of false consciousness. It is to be explained as the striving of the people to obtain compensation for their sufferings and as a means of social control used by the ruling classes in the class struggle. According to Freud, religion is an institutionalized mass neurosis. Despite his recognition that description alone will not free a person from his irrational psychological predispositions, through therapy people can understand the nature of their dependence on the illusory nature of the religious fictions they have created for themselves for self-protective purposes. Marx, preoccupied with his own science of society, said little about the mystification that Marxism was expected to dispel, but Freud engaged in a lengthy discussion of religion whenever he moved from his clinical cases to society analysis. Religion is a key to understanding social and individual consciousness and their pathologies." (Wilson, 2001, p.16) Identity is a phenomenon that is born from the individual and the society. Belief in religion, to summarize in the Christian religion, is like our active participation in the political or cultural life of the country. It is filled with many alternatives and guidelines for life, among which we can single out those that tend to involve us in certain beliefs and rules that we do not approve of, but after they are introduced in a given jurisdiction, they become mandatory and purposefully lead to the popularization and their acceptance by their followers. Religious tolerance is above all faith in the particular religious group you believe in, the ideology you follow, the experience you gain, the knowledge you learn, the church you go to confess to. All these foundations you bow to. This is what you are to the world and this is what it is to you.

In this regard, it is good not to forget the meaning of the words in question and their important content, which we associate with our hearts and souls. Here I will use the biblical interpretation of faith, since for me it comes closest to the true meaning of this word.

"Faith is the perception by the mind of an assumed truth. The Christian faith is the apprehension by the mind of the truth of divine revelation, and of the teachings which it reveals to the world. The Christian faith may be merely historical, without producing any action upon the lives of men; in that case it is a dead faith, such as demons have. A living or saving faith not only believes the great teachings of Christianity to be true, but accepts them heart and soul, and so produces a sincere

submission to the will of God. Faith in Christ is a grace from the Holy Spirit, through the power of which we accept Christ as Savior, Prophet, Priest and King, and love and obey Him. Living faith in Christ is the only means of salvation freely given to us. Without living faith there is no forgiveness of sins and holiness of life. Those who are justified by faith will live by faith." - Mk. 16:16; Jn. 3:15,16; D. A. 16:31; 1 Jn. 5:10. (<http://rechnik.info/%D0%B2%D1%8F%D1%80%D0%B0>)

"Weber points out that no matter how important the picture of the world (or the concept of God) is, it does not unambiguously determine the created attitude towards the world and the practical way of life formed under its influence. Therefore, he prefers to speak only of a common "kinship" (affinity) between theocentrism and active attitudes towards the world, cosmocentrism and passive attitude towards it." (Daskalov, 2018, p. 228)

Religious tolerance is a direction, a way of life. All people distributed in different cultures and ethnicities touch it during their conscious life. Initially, every person by birth, and even then, has tolerance within himself. Depending on the environment in which a person lives and the atmosphere in which his life passes, he begins to feel his religious tolerance. It often appears in unexpected situations. With the advent of more and more religions, religious tolerance has grown in scale. In Bulgaria, different religious groups manage to live together and harmoniously with each other. Religious tolerance is honored especially in the capital of Bulgaria - Sofia, where every year the different religions in Bulgaria celebrate the traditional holiday and religions. Peace and understanding are the main driving forces of these communities. Undoubtedly, the motto of the initiative is "Together in our differences". The individuality of each one of us makes us unique and thus we can be associated together. Religious tolerance in itself includes three directions in which it occurs, namely society, education and school. In the same reverse order, religious tolerance arises in man from his maturation and continues throughout his entire life. As far back as 1686, John Locke created his famous work entitled "Letter on Toleration". It supports the idea that religious tolerance is not a recommendation, but a condition for peaceful coexistence for the citizens of a country. In Bulgaria, the idea is mostly supported by the younger generation, which shows its broad-mindedness and its respect for the different people of the day. Indeed, the topic of religious tolerance is old and quite broad and extensive, but it is always relevant and deeply discussed over the years and beyond. Religious tolerance is a global issue in its own right. Religious tolerance is an important part of human rights. "The right to freedom of religion was later formulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), where in Article 18 we read: "Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes the right to change one's religion or belief, and freedom to manifest one's religion or belief, individually or collectively, publicly or privately, in education, rites, worship and observance." (Religious tolerance in the light of human rights, 1995, p. 11)

Different religious groups show different attitudes towards any other religious group that does not support their ideologies and goals, but in no way criticizes or judges the different creeds, opinions and perspectives that come from their different strata and worlds. The years of antagonism are over and now no one is trying to impose the same ideology on everyone. "For a country like Bulgaria, which in its constitution recognizes Eastern Orthodox Christianity as a traditional religion, the following conclusion of the Committee is very important: "The fact that a given religion is recognized as official or traditional for a country or that its followers represent the majority of the population does not must in no way become the cause of prejudice to any of the human rights guaranteed in the Covenant, including Articles 18 and 27, and must not be the cause of discrimination against adherents of other religions or non-believers." (Religious tolerance in the light of human rights, 1995, p.16)

One of the most important facts about Bulgaria is that it is a member of the Council of Europe and has ratified the European Convention on Human Rights. In recent years, every decade in Bulgaria has had its own change on the outlook and life of all the different religious groups and their way of life. A consistent trend and specific initiatives have been observed in recent years. which enhance and emphasize multicultural dialogue. The initiatives concern and take into account intercultural dialogues, social cohesion, lifestyles. This, of course, is a set of educational and social strategies and methodologies that mutually cooperate. Societal changes shape the development of interreligious tolerance as an educational foundation. Dialogue between different religions and secular perspectives is perfectly acceptable when it comes to being used in scientific debate. Of course, religious tolerance cannot help but be connected to ethnic groups. "Each of the known ethnic groups is associated with one or another religion or religions, which have a different scope and strength of influence within the borders of the given ethnic group. The relationship between ethnicity and religion is not unambiguous. There are religions that include in the circle of their confession a large number diverse ethnicities A prominent example in this renewal are the major, world religions, such as Christianity in general and even the major branches of Christianity (Catholicism, Orthodoxy, Protestantism, etc.), Islam, Buddhism, etc. Moreover, there are numerous cases where different religions are rooted in one ethnic group, which has different consequences for the historical life of the ethnic group. But even when the consequences are in the nature of sharply expressed internal antagonism, the ethnicity as such is preserved. Such cases suggest that it seems more appropriate to bracket the question of religion and religious denominations when identifying a separate ethnicity or diverse ethnicities." (Fotev, 1994, p.23)

Although in a country like Bulgaria the majority of the population is made up of one religious denomination, this in no way limits other minorities and denominations. In schools, it is clearly shown how children are introduced and, with appropriate materials, they are shown the differences and similarities between different minorities, religious groups, ethnic, religious and demographic characteristics. Ed-

education about tolerance develops in children the need and their easier inclusion to the moral relativism that is embedded in traditional religions such as Christianity, Islam, Judaism and the way for their easier understanding. Until the beginning of modern times and before the emergence of nation-states, that is. in the conditions of the so-called "traditional societies", ethnocentrism is the natural attitude of dormitory and collective self-assertion. The self-closure of ethnic groups is due to their natural attachment to a certain territory they inhabit and the absence of the need for and opportunities for inter-ethnic mobility.

Another is the case of the well-known large migrations of peoples, the conquest of foreign territories, the formation of empires, etc. In these cases, the natural tendency is ethnic assimilation, which depends on the tools of assimilation available to the conquerors. Either way, neighboring ethnicities are indifferent to their neighbors when they do not threaten them, and hostile when the neighborhood itself is problematized. When neighborhood is not problematized, ethnic identity is not problematized either. Conflicts, clashes of different ethnicities have a fundamental constitutive importance in terms of ethnic self-determination." (Fotev, 1994, p. 189)

Religious tolerance in Bulgaria is determined by the various parameters, specific features and entry of the increasingly global world into the thickets of the sacred, the spiritual, etc. Yet there is a strong possibility that the two worlds will permanently intertwine, unfolding their full potential in the future.

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