



The Depiction of Tolerance in Sufi Sources

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Abstract: This study explores the concept of tolerance in Sufi sources, particularly within the Naqshbandiya tariqah, and its impact on interfaith harmony and social coexistence. The research aims to analyze the historical and philosophical foundations of tolerance in Sufism and its role in fostering justice, equality, and mutual respect among different religious and ethnic groups. The study employs a qualitative descriptive method, utilizing literary analysis and historical interpretation of Sufi manuscripts, the Qur'an, and Hadith. Primary sources include classical Sufi texts and scholarly works from the Manghit period, which emphasize the significance of tolerance and community-oriented teachings in Sufi thought. The findings reveal that Sufi teachings strongly advocate for tolerance as a fundamental principle of justice, rooted in Islamic teachings and reflected in the practices of Sufi orders. The Naqshbandiya-Mujaddidiya tariqah, in particular, promotes an active social life alongside spiritual discipline, reinforcing social unity and ethical conduct. The study underscores that Sufi principles continue to play a crucial role in contemporary discussions on interfaith harmony and cultural integration, highlighting their relevance in addressing modern religious and social challenges.

Keywords: Sufism, Tariqah, Naqshbandiya, Naqshbandiya-Mujaddidiya, Social Equality, Justice, Tolerance, Generosity, Shaykh, Murid, Murshid

Introduction

The people of Uzbekistan have always been tolerant and hospitable. All necessary conditions have been created in this country for representatives of various religions to celebrate their religious ceremonies and actively participate in the country's life. It should be noted that this land has gained unique and valuable experience in this regard. This is recognized worldwide. The main reason for such harmony is that representatives of different religions in Uzbekistan are united by a common goal.

Special attention is given in the republic to preserving the values of various religions, creating the necessary conditions for all citizens to practice their faith, strengthening interfaith and interethnic harmony, and developing ancient shared traditions among them. This, in turn, contributes to the peace and progress of the country, as well as to the development of universal culture and spirituality.

Today, alongside Muslims, representatives of various religious denominations live peacefully and harmoniously in this land. Reforms in the religious and educational sphere are aimed at strengthening cooperation, mutual respect, and solidarity among different nationalities and faiths, supporting and preserving interfaith, intercultural, and interethnic dialogue, and ensuring peace and harmony in our country.

In the development of Islamic culture, the principle of tolerance has been one of the fundamental values. In this regard, Sufi scholars have expressed their views and ideas in written sources based on the foundations of Islam. When studying the history of Islamic cultural development through manuscript sources, it has been established that the concept of “tolerance” is closely linked to the notions of justice and patience. The foundation of tolerance is justice, which means applying laws and legal norms fairly among members of society, regardless of their religion, nationality, or ethnicity. It also involves showing respect for the religious practices, customs, and lawful actions of others, as well as refraining from expressing anger or hatred towards them.

The concept of “justice” is mentioned in numerous verses of the Holy Qur’an. For instance,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تُؤَدُّوا الْأَمَانَاتِ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهَا وَإِذَا حَكَمْتُمْ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ أَنْ تَحْكُمُوا بِالْعَدْلِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ نِعِمَّا يَعِظُكُمْ بِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ سَمِيعًا بَصِيرًا

“Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due and when you judge between people to judge with justice. Excellent is that which Allah instructs you. Indeed, Allah is ever Hearing and Seeing”.

From the meaning of the above verse, it is clear that Allah commands justice in all matters. Tolerance fosters love and understanding among people of different nationalities and religions, which in turn serves as a crucial foundation for a nation’s progress and peaceful coexistence. In a hadith narrated by Imam Daylami, the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) said: “The best aspect of faith is patience and tolerance”. This hadith is intended to discourage all forms of fanaticism and encourage tolerance.

Methodology

The word “tolerance” carries a similar or complementary meaning in almost all languages. In general, “tolerance” can be understood as endurance, patience, forbearance, showing respect for differing views and actions, kindness, compassion, forgiveness, love, and empathy. Tolerance in Sufism should be understood in such a way that it does not involve causing harm to humans, animals, or plants without reason. Even in a state of war, when human life is threatened, one is prohibited from destroying orchards without reason or cutting down trees unnecessarily. According to the views of Sufi sheikhs, One hour of fairness and justice is superior to a lifetime of voluntary worship. There is no higher virtue than fairness and justice in both worlds”. It is appropriate to explain futuvvat through the following lines: “Futuvvat illuminates the eye of the heart and nourishes the soul with the sunlight of purity”. The word “tolerance” is a modern interpretation of the term “chivalry”, teaching loyalty to one’s promises, considering others as more important than oneself, and not elevating oneself above others. Based on Sufi teachings, it can be emphasized that a chivalrous person’s words, actions, intentions, and thoughts must all be pure.

According to sources related to Sufism, chivalrous individuals have adhered to certain principles and rules, demonstrating courage and nobility regardless of the task they undertake. Each of them had their own community, spiritual mentor, and a place for gathering. The chivalrous disciple, who took the hand of the mentor and swore an oath in front of the master, tied the belt of chivalry around their waist and dedicated themselves to

remaining loyal to their oath for life. Even during the Manghit period, chivalry existed, with nobility, social idealism, human virtues, and courage being characteristics inherent to them. Their ideas laid the foundation for the introduction of the teachings of futuvvat into the social-political life of Mawarannahr. The characteristics of futuvvat were embraced by the farming community, and wherever the ideas of futuvvat spread, they influenced various social groups. It also spread among craftsmen, and for this reason, the principles of chivalry were implemented, especially in the workshops of cities. Through the futuvvat-chivalry movement, the moral character of individuals was nurtured, gradually guiding them toward the level of a perfect human being.

Result and Discussion

It is emphasized in many sources that Islam is a religion that promotes equality. For instance, during the Manghit period, numerous sources discuss the call to prayer (adhan) and the issue of prayer. The sources highlight that as soon as the adhan is called in the mosque, those who wish to worship Allah should immediately gather, and it is praised that they hasten to worship rather than to themselves. This is considered a commendable act. In reality, Muslims pray five times a day, standing in one row, side by side. They follow the imam, performing the bowing (ruku) and prostration (sajda). "Islamic equality is most beautifully manifested in prayer". The practical strength of Islam in uniting individuals of different nationalities within the system of brotherhood can also be seen in other forms of worship and actions. In the fourth chapter of Musakhon Dahbadi's "Navodir ul-Ma'arif", titled "در ذکر حقیقت پیری و مریدی" ("Dar Zikri Haqiqati Piri va Muridi"), he encourages not solitude in worship and acquiring knowledge but being part of a community. Musakhon Dahbadi emphasized the following:

طریقت ما گفتگوست و خوبی در جماعت است. نفع گفتگو با جماعت همین است که منفعت متقابل است

"Our path is through companionship, and goodness is found in community. The community in companionship has this condition: it must be mutually beneficial. And if the members of this way converse with each other, there will be much good and blessing". According to his emphasis, the method of companionship requires being together in community, exchanging thoughts, and supporting one another, highlighting that the benefit of being in a community is greater than solitude. This method does not favor solitude or seclusion but calls for unity and brings goodness, benefit, and advantage to individuals. In this section of the work, Musakhon Dahbadi emphasizes that the relationship between the master (pir) and the disciple (murid) is one of the requirements of Sufism, providing valuable insights into the personal qualities and activities of the disciple. Besides the disciple's personal characteristics and manners, he also highlights six additional principles that are essential to the disciple. These are: "obedience, speaking the truth, being loyal, listening to advice, keeping secrets, and not causing harm to others".

Conclusion

In the development of Islamic culture, the manifestations and expressions of the roots of tolerance are primarily found in the Qur'an and the Hadith. Even Sufi scholars, in expressing their ideas and views on tolerance while writing their unique works, effectively used the verses of the Qur'an and Hadith as evidence and proof of their thoughts. At the same time, Sufi views and advice were actively utilized in illuminating the lifestyle of the people and everyday events. Scholars of the Manghit period, like the Sufi scholars, engaged in similar thinking, and in the scientific heritage of this era, Sufi views and the Sufi spirit held a leading position (Almost all poets, writers, thinkers, and scholars of the Manghit era were nourished by Sufism, inspired by its ideas of humanism, hard work, and patriotism, and created their own cultural heritage, which is considered the source of Islamic culture). Because Sufism and the tariqah were at the center of the scholars' thoughts during that period, even historians could not avoid addressing the lifestyle, customs, and culture of the people when discussing historical events. During this time, the Naqshbandiya-Mujaddidiya tariqah was particularly widespread and developed. Naturally, the laws, rules, and teachings of the Naqshbandiya-Mujaddidiya order became deeply intertwined with the culture and traditions of the people.

In recent years, certain groups who carry out destructive actions in the name of Islam, such as inciting fear and terror among people, shedding the blood of innocent civilians, and causing harm to property, have been increasing. The President of the Republic of Uzbekistan stated on this matter, "We strongly condemn those who equate our sacred religion with violence and bloodshed, and we will never compromise with them".

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