

A PHILOSOPHICAL INTERPRETATION OF TOLERANCE, HUMANISM, AND INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE IN SUFISM

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ABSTRACT	KEYWORDS
The article analyzes the philosophical content of the ideas of tolerance, humanism, compassion, and interreligious harmony developed within the Sufi tradition. It substantiates the view that the Sufi understanding of purifying the inner self, cultivating spiritual qualities, and attaining spiritual perfection contributes to the formation of respectful, harmonious, and tolerant attitudes toward others. Through a comparative analysis of the views of Ahmad Yasawi, Jalal al-Din Rumi, Baha al-Din Naqshband, and Alisher Navoi, the study demonstrates that the Sufi tradition places greater emphasis on a person's moral and spiritual qualities than on their religious, national, or social affiliation. The findings highlight the potential of Sufi values as a spiritual and ethical resource for fostering a contemporary culture of tolerance.	Sufism, tolerance, humanism, interreligious dialogue, spiritual perfection, the Perfect Human, love, morality.

Introduction

In the context of contemporary globalization, developing constructive forms of interaction among representatives of different religions, cultures, nations, and worldviews constitutes an important socio-philosophical task. Religious and cultural diversity can contribute to social stability and solidarity only when social relations are organized on the basis of mutual respect, dialogue, and cooperation. UNESCO also regards intercultural dialogue as one of the important means of strengthening trust among different groups, promoting social cohesion, and preventing conflict. From this perspective, the Sufi-philosophical heritage that developed ideas of humanism and tolerance in the history of Eastern thought is of particular significance. Sufism focuses not so much on a person's outward appearance, social status, or affiliation as on their inner self, morality, and spiritual condition. The cultivation of the self, purification of the heart, and aspiration to do good to others are interpreted as essential conditions for the formation of the Perfect Human.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The studies of Eastern and Western scholars constitute an important theoretical and methodological basis for examining tolerance, humanism, and interreligious dialogue in Sufism. The scholarly literature in this field can conventionally be divided into studies that examine the theoretical foundations of Sufism, works devoted to the history of Sufi orders, and sources analyzing the direct spiritual and philosophical heritage of Sufi thinkers. In Western Sufi studies, the research of William C. Chittick is of particular importance [1]. He analyzes Sufism as the inner and spiritual dimension of Islamic thought, focusing on spiritual development, love, the apprehension of divine truth, and spiritual experience. Chittick interprets Sufism as a spiritual path directed toward understanding the inner world, attaining spiritual perfection, and apprehending divine truth [1, p. 63]. This approach makes it possible to examine tolerance not merely as an external social relationship, but also as a phenomenon associated with an individual's spiritual maturity.

Henry Corbin's work *Alone with the Alone: Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn 'Arabi* is devoted to the philosophical and metaphysical dimensions of Sufism, particularly the relationship among the human being, spiritual experience, and divine truth in Ibn 'Arabi's thought [2]. In Corbin's conception, the human spiritual world and its capacity to apprehend divine truth occupy a central position. As he states, "Imagination is the field where the supersensible-divine and the sensible worlds meet" [2, p. 216]. This approach enables a deeper examination of the philosophical essence of Sufi humanism, namely the understanding of the human being not merely as a biological or social entity, but as a spiritual being.

J. Spencer Trimingham's *The Sufi Orders in Islam* is regarded as a fundamental study of the formation and development of Sufi orders and their role in social life [3]. He writes, "I use the term 'Sufi' in a broad sense: I apply it to anyone who believes that it is possible to have a direct apprehension of God and who seeks to bring himself into the appropriate spiritual state to attain this" [3, p. 17]. The author analyzes the historical development, organizational structures, and activities of various Sufi orders in Muslim societies. The work provides a methodological basis for comparative study of the social and spiritual characteristics of the Naqshbandiyya, Qadiriyya, Chishtiyya, and other orders.

The legacy of Jalal al-Din Rumi is also of particular importance for studying the humanistic and tolerant dimensions of Sufism [4]. In Rumi's works, the spiritual essence that unites people, together with the ideas of love and mutual respect, takes precedence over external differences among human beings. Rumi emphasizes the spiritual essence that unites people rather than their external differences. In stating that "The lamps are different, but the Light is the same; it comes from the other world," he emphasizes the existence of a single spiritual truth behind diversity of outward forms [4, p. 166]. In this respect, his philosophical views constitute an important source for studying the spiritual foundations of human dialogue under conditions of religious and cultural diversity. Rumi's views on tolerance have also been examined in contemporary scholarship in connection with the problems of religious persecution and intolerance. In addition, studies of interreligious dialogue and intercultural cooperation are important for examining Sufi tolerance from a contemporary scholarly perspective. In modern academic literature, religious tolerance is interpreted not simply as the coexistence of people of different faiths, but as a process based on mutual respect, constructive dialogue, understanding different perspectives, and cooperation around shared human values.

Overall, the literature reviewed makes it possible to examine tolerance and humanism in Sufism at several interconnected levels. Chittick and Nasr illuminate the spiritual and philosophical essence of

Sufism; Corbin examines its metaphysical and experiential dimensions; and Trimingham addresses the historical and social development of Sufi orders, together with ideas of spiritual and moral development, love, goodness, and humanism. However, these studies have not sufficiently systematized, in an integrated manner, the potential of Sufi values to strengthen contemporary interreligious dialogue, a culture of tolerance, and social cohesion. The scientific novelty of this article lies precisely in addressing this dimension through a comparative analysis of the spiritual and moral values contained in Sufi heritage and contemporary concepts of tolerance and interreligious dialogue.

Research Methodology

The study employs historical-philosophical, comparative-analytical, hermeneutic, and systemic approaches. Sufi perspectives on tolerance and humanism are examined through the works and intellectual heritage of Ahmad Yasawi, Baha al-Din Naqshband, Jalal al-Din Rumi, and Alisher Navoi.

DISCUSSION

One of the principal aims of Sufism is to cultivate the human inner world and elevate the individual spiritually and morally. This process is achieved through disciplining the self and purifying the heart from such vices as envy, arrogance, hostility, and selfishness. From a Sufi perspective, a person's spiritual development is also manifested in their relationship with other people. Genuine spiritual maturity is therefore not limited to personal worship or spiritual experience. It is manifested through a person's conduct in society, their attitude toward others, and their good deeds. Accordingly, principles such as "loving people," "valuing human beings," and "doing good to others" emerge in Sufism as important indicators of spiritual perfection. This approach demonstrates that Sufism links individual spiritual experience with social and moral responsibility.

The spiritual purification and moral perfection of the human being occupy a central place in the wisdoms of Ahmad Yasawi [5]. For Yasawi, human perfection is associated with restraining the self, patience, honesty, humility, and compassion. In Yasawi's teaching, spiritual development cannot be separated from a person's relations within society. Kindness toward others, assistance to those in need, abstention from injustice, and an honest way of life are regarded as signs of spiritual maturity. In this sense, the Sufi views represented in Yasawi's heritage may be interpreted not as a direct political model of religious tolerance, but as a spiritual and moral foundation capable of cultivating tolerance within the individual's inner world.

The Naqshbandiyya order founded by Baha al-Din Naqshband is distinguished by its refusal to separate spiritual perfection from everyday life. This principle is expressed in the maxim "Dil ba Yār, dast ba kār" ("The heart with the Beloved, the hand at work"), which signifies that while inwardly aspiring toward divine truth, a person should also engage in practical work and remain socially active [6, p. 36]. This aspect is important for understanding the humanistic essence of the Naqshbandiyya teaching. Spiritual perfection is not merely an individual's inner state; it is also manifested in their attitude toward others and their responsibility to society.

When Sufi perspectives are analyzed from the standpoint of interreligious dialogue, a number of shared values can be identified:

No.	Sufi Value	Significance for Interreligious Dialogue
1.	Love	Strengthens mutual respect among people
2.	Tolerance	Helps foster respect for diverse perspectives
3.	Patience	Contributes to resolving disagreements peacefully
4.	Forgiveness	Helps mitigate hostility and conflicts
5.	Generosity	Strengthens social solidarity
6.	Humility	Helps prevent absolutism and intolerance
7.	Humanism	Recognizes human dignity as a shared value
8.	Spiritual perfection	Fosters responsible and ethical conduct

These values are consistent with contemporary concepts of intercultural dialogue. According to UNESCO, respect, tolerance, acceptance, willingness to understand different perspectives, and inclusive participation are important conditions for effective dialogue.

RESULTS

The findings demonstrate that understanding Sufi tolerance merely as an accommodating attitude toward representatives of other religions is insufficient. Its meaning is broader and primarily involves disciplining the self, overcoming arrogance and selfishness, recognizing the dignity of others, and remaining open to dialogue. In this respect, the Sufi concept of tolerance can be interpreted through the sequence “inner cultivation – moral perfection – respect for others – dialogue – social cohesion.” An important point is that Sufi heritage should not be equated directly with contemporary religious or political concepts. Historically, Sufism has encompassed diverse schools and orders, and reducing the views of all its representatives to a single “model of tolerance” would be methodologically inappropriate. Nevertheless, the heritage of Yasawi, Rumi, Naqshband, and Navoi reveals a strong emphasis on values such as respect for human dignity, compassion, spiritual purification, and goodness.

Contemporary forms of interreligious dialogue rely not only on spiritual values but also on legal equality, human rights, mutual respect, and constructive communication. Therefore, under contemporary conditions, Sufi heritage may be employed as a spiritual and moral foundation while being integrated with modern legal and institutional mechanisms.

The study establishes the following: The principal roots of tolerance in Sufism lie in the ideas of inner spiritual cultivation and self-discipline. Sufi humanism is manifested through the prioritization of human dignity over external affiliation and through the promotion of compassion and goodness. In the heritage of Jalal al-Din Rumi, love and mutual understanding emerge as important spiritual foundations for dialogue among different religious and cultural groups.

In the Naqshbandiyya tradition, spiritual perfection is interpreted in conjunction with everyday life and social responsibility. In the heritage of Ahmad Yasawi and Alisher Navoi, the moral perfection of the individual, concern for the people, compassion, and goodness occupy a central place. The contemporary significance of Sufi values is reflected in the possibility of reinterpreting them in relation to interreligious dialogue, intercultural cooperation, and the spiritual and moral education of young people.

CONCLUSION

The ideas of tolerance and humanism in Sufism constitute a spiritual and moral conception aimed at improving social relations through the cultivation of the human inner world. A comparative study of the heritage of Ahmad Yasawi, Jalal al-Din Rumi, Baha al-Din Naqshband, and Alisher Navoi demonstrates that values such as love, patience, generosity, forgiveness, respect for human dignity, and goodness occupy an important place in their thought. The historical experience of Sufism is significant not as a direct model of contemporary interreligious dialogue, but as a philosophical and educational source for cultivating mutual respect, humanism, and spiritual responsibility. Therefore, the scholarly and critical study of Sufi heritage can contribute to enriching the spiritual and moral worldview of young people, developing a culture of tolerance, and strengthening the values of peace and social harmony.

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