

ALBERT EINSTEIN'S RELATIVISTIC COSMOLOGY AND TOLERANCE

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Abstract

This article makes a link between these three concepts namely; Einstein's Relativistic Cosmology, Ethical Relativism, and Tolerance. This work also establishes the contrasts between them. This material is a thoroughly review of arguments concerning the relationship between Einstein's Relativistic Cosmology, Ethical Relativism, and Tolerance. The research employs analytic method. In the course of the research the findings include; ethical relativists argue that there are no moral principles that are universally valid i.e. all moral codes are relative; in contrast, moral objectivists insist that there are moral principles that can be applied to all peoples, societies and cultures; paradoxes and dilemmas of tolerance for instance, tolerance can function as a virtue as well as a vice, in the sense that excessive tolerance is a perversion of tolerance and therefore not tolerance at all, also intolerance can be a virtue and a vice, as a virtue in the case of condemning evils, as a vice in the case of rejecting toleration etc. This paper argues that Einstein's Relativity and Ethical Relativism cannot entail Tolerance. Ethical relativism cannot provide a basis for either tolerance or mutual respect. Tolerance sometimes can be a virtue and sometimes it can function as a vice in the face of tolerating evil like immoral behaviors, immodest dressing, pornography, genocide, infanticide, LGBT etc.

Keywords: Relativity, Relativism, Ethical Relativity, Moral Relativity, Tolerance.

1. Introduction

Einstein's relativistic Cosmology reveals that everything in the universe is relative. To put it differently, everything in the universe is interconnected with each other. He tells us that space, time, and gravity have no separate existence from matter. He posits that physical objects are not in space, but these objects are spatially extended. In this way, the concept of 'empty space' loses its meaning. Therefore, argues Einstein we exist as spatially extended structures of the universe—the discrete and separate body an illusion.¹ Einstein writes:

The free unhampered exchange of ideas and scientific conclusions is necessary for the sound development of science, as it is in all spheres of cultural life....we must not conceal from ourselves that no improvement in the present depressing situation is possible without a severe struggle; for the handful of those who are really determined to do something in minute in comparison with the mass of the lukewarm and the misguided..."Humanity is going to need a substantially new

way of thinking if it is to survive". A human being is part of the whole called by us universe, a part limited in time and space. We experience ourselves, our thoughts, and feelings as something separate from the rest, a kind of optical delusion of consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from the prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty. The true value of a human being is determined primarily by the measure and the sense in which they have obtained liberation from the self....We shall require a substantially new manner of thinking if humanity is to survive.²

Furthermore, Einstein believes in humanity and in a peaceful world of mutual helpfulness, and in the high mission of science. In his Relativistic Cosmology he argues with his Principle of Equivalent that Gravity and Acceleration are indistinguishable. In other words, gravity and acceleration cannot be distinguished experimentally; in fact, they are one and the same thing or different forms of the same reality. Besides, one of Einstein's assumptions of his Relativistic Cosmology is that the universe is Homogenous and Isotropic meaning that the universe is the same in all locations and directions.

In Einstein's book entitled "The world as I see it" he preaches that the whole of our actions and desires are mixed up with the existence of other human beings. For instance, we eat food that others grow, wear clothes that others have made, live in houses that others have built among others, the lists are endless.³ However, the summary of what Einstein is driving at is that no man is an Island, and that no human being is completely independent. All of us needed each other in this cosmic world. He also advocates for the respect for every honest opinion, to tolerance, and freedom of thought.

In another development, according to the proponents of Ethical Relativism, there are no absolute truths in ethics and that what is morally right or wrong varies from person to person, from society to society, and from culture to culture.⁴ In other words, ethical relativism posits that moral judgments, beliefs about right and wrong, good or bad, not only vary greatly across time and contexts, but that their correctness is dependent on or relative to individual or cultural perspectives and frameworks.⁵ According to Encyclopedia Britannica, ethical relativism seems especially well suited to explain the virtue of tolerance. This is simply because, if, for instance, from an objective point of view, one's own values and the values of one's society have no special standing, then, an attitude of "live and let live" towards other people's values seems appropriate.⁶

However, according to Merriam-Webster's Dictionary tolerance means sympathy or indulgence for beliefs or practices differing from or conflicting with one's own; the act of allowing something.⁷ But then, there are a lot of dilemma in the society in which we live that decries the rise of crime, no instinct of virtue or total absence of virtue, and at the same time they believe that truth and morality are relative. They accuse those who deny or reject moral relativism as fanatics, insensitivists, and extremists. Nowadays it is common to hear people saying "who are you to judge" when they are being corrected of their immoral utterances and behaviors. Furthermore, the difficulty of toleration is great indeed. For instance, when our brothers, sisters, friends, neighbors, and countrymen, choose things that we do not like, our emotional reactions could be aroused. We may feel offended, resentful, betrayed, and even insulted. But we want unity and harmony because we identify ourselves with these others with whom we share our lives so much. Interestingly, although toleration allows for peaceful coexistence with those with whom we disagree, it also admits that there are disagreements that may not be resolvable.

On the basis of these dilemmas, ethical relativism and tolerance invoke some questions such as: is there such thing like objective truth? Or are there moral principles that apply to everyone or do moral ideas just represent the opinions and preferences of individuals or cultures? Does tolerance entails relativism? Does relativism require tolerance? Can ethical relativism be the basis for democracy? Can ethical relativism promote tolerance? Can we practice morality without God or religion? Does religion rest on morality? Or does morality depends on religion etc? The goal of this paper is to address these ethical questions and issues. Also the intention of this work is to make a plea to compel everyone to overhaul his or her mental attitude and ideas and make tolerance a virtue in the way we interpret reality and the way we relate with our neighbors in the midst of our own finitude, shortcomings, imperfections, and fallibility.

2. A Brief Historical Reflection on Relativism

Relativism as an English term came into existence and usage only in 19th century. Probably, John Grote was the first to employ the term when in his *Exploratio Philosophica* where he holds that, "The notion of the mask over the face of nature is....what I have called "Relativism". If "the face of nature" is reality, then, the mask over it, which is what theory gives us, is so much deception, and that is what Relativism really comes to."⁸ Besides, its German counterpart "*Relativismus*", has a longer history. Wilhelm Traugott Krug, who succeeded Kant defines relativism thus: "the assumption that everything which we experience and think (the self, the idea of reason, truth, morality, religion etc) is only something relative, and therefore has no essential endurance and no universal validity."⁹

However, the term relativism” is of recent coinage, doctrines, and positions, with some of the hallmarks of contemporary relativism, date back to the very beginnings of Western philosophy. Obviously, Protagoras of Abdera (c. 490-420BC) is often considered the first overt champion of relativism. His dictum runs thus: “Man (*anthropos*) is the measure (*metron*) of all things (*chrematon*), of all things which are, that they are, and of things which are not, that they are not.”¹⁰ Plato tells us that Protagoras first battle-cry is “Each thing appears (*phainesthai*) to me, so it is for me, and as it appears to you, so it is for you---you and I each being a man”.¹¹ To buttress his position he argues that the same wind could be cold to one person and hot to another. But then, the extent to which Protagoras’ view, or at least what comes down to us from Plato, amounts to genuine relativism remains somewhat controversial. Plato goes on to ascribe a social and ethical dimension to Protagorean relativism which seem to go beyond individualistic subjectivism. For instance in *Theaetetus* 172a 2—6 he asserts thus:

What may or may not fittingly be done, of just and unjust, of what is sanctioned by religion and what is not; and here the theory may be prepared to maintain that whatever view a city takes on these matters and establishes as its law or convention, is truth and fact for that city. In such matters, neither any individual nor any city can claim superior wisdom.¹²

However, Plato is the first person who attempts to refute Protagoras’ relativism. In his write-up known as *Peritrope* or “turning-around” he attempts to show that relativism is self-refuting. Sextus Empiricus in his “Relativity Mode” states that judgments and observations are relative to the person who makes them, to their context as well as the object being observed. Based on this argument he goes on to say: “since we have established in this way that everything is relative (*pros ti*), it is clear then that we shall not be able to say what an existing object is like in its own nature and purely, but only what it appears to be like relative to something.”¹³ “It follows that we must suspend judgment about the nature of objects”¹⁴

Montaigne relying on faraway cultures argues that: “we have no other criterion of truth or right-reason than the example and form of the opinion and customs of our own country.”¹⁵ His advocacy of toleration, even for the cannibal, paves the way for not only the acceptance but the valorization of idealized versions of alien creeds and distant cultures by Enlightenment figures such as Rousseau, Voltaire, Diderot, Montesquieu, Condorcet, who in turn, were instrumental in establishing an intellectual climate hospitable to cultural relativism. Interestingly, these authors were also the first to explore the idea of viewing one’s culture from an outsider’s point of view and using this external perspective as a vehicle to criticize local customs and norms. For instance, Diderot tells us that the Tahitian is mild, innocent, and happy while civilized people are corrupt, vile, and wretched; the natives live according to customs and rules that vary greatly from the Western ones. The natives do not possess private properties

or even operate their affairs on the basis of egalitarian principles, and they exercise sexual freedom not accepted by the civilized societies. Diderot passionately opposes the European mission of civilizing the natives, and despite his belief in a common human nature, he goes on to advocate the relativistic sounding maxim as thus: “to be monks in France and savages in Tahiti. Put on the costume of the country you visit, but keep the suit of clothes you will need to go home in”.¹⁶

In another development, George Hamann, one of the people who opposed Enlightenment rejects objectivism. His rejection of objectivism is central to Nietzsche’s response to objectivism. Nietzsche is possibly the single most influential voice in shaping relativistic sensibilities in twenty century continental philosophy. He argues that all human conceptions and descriptions, including those advanced by scientists are “only an interpretation and arrangement of the world (according to our requirements, if I may say so!)—and not an explanation of the world.”¹⁷ And that “there is only a perspective of seeing, only a perspective of knowing.”¹⁸

In the final analysis, the popularity of the very idea of relativism in the twenty century owes something to Albert Einstein’s special Theory of Relativity (1905) which is being used both as model and as well as a vindication for various relativistic claims. Gilbert Harman is among the philosophers to use Einsteinian relativity as a model for philosophical versions of relativism. He argues:

According to Einstein’s Theory of Relativity even an object’s mass is relative to a choice of spatio-temporal framework. An object can have one mass in relation to one such framework and a different mass in relation to another.I am going to argue for a similar claim about moral right and wrong.I am going to argue that moral right and wrongare always relative to a choice of moral framework.¹⁹

It is also suspected or thought that The Sapir-Whorf Theory of Linguistic Relativity have been inspired by the Relativity Theory. But then, it appears that Einstein himself does not think that the Theory of Relativity supported relativism in ethics or epistemology because, although in his model simultaneity and sameness of a place are relative to reference frames, the physical laws expressing such relativity are constant and universal and hence in no sense relative.

3. The Meaning of Ethical Relativism

Ethical Relativism is the doctrine that there are no absolute truths in ethics and that what is morally right or wrong varies from person to person or from society to society. The Greek Historian, Herodotus in 5th century is the first person that advances this view in which he observes that different societies have different customs and that each person thinks that his own society’s customs are the best. Confusedly, Herodotus also asserts that no set of social customs is really better or worse than any other. Some sociologists and anthropologists have also argued along similar lines of this argument

in which they argue that morality, because it is a social product, develops differently within different cultures. Each society develops their own moral standard and based their judgment of right and wrong on those moral codes. Thus, according to them, if practices such as polygamy or infanticide are considered right within a society, then, they are right for that society; and if the same practices are considered wrong within a different society, then those practices are wrong for that society. Furthermore, they argue that there is no such thing like as what is “really” right, apart from these social codes, for there is no culture-neutral standard to which we can appeal to determine which society’s view is correct. They conclude that the different social codes are all that exist.²⁰

4. The Meaning of Ethical or Moral Objectivism

Ethical or moral objectivism is the view that there are objective, universal moral principles that are valid for all people. This theory insists that there are moral principles that could be applied to everyone and everywhere. Pojman an advocate of moral objectivism in his article proposes some moral principles that support moral objectivism as follows: do not kill innocent people; do not cause unnecessary pain or suffering; do not lie or deceive; do not steal or cheat; etc. He argues that there are no circumstances that anyone else could violate these principles. That the existences of these moral principles are good enough to demonstrate that moral objectivism is correct. However, what each of this moral principle has in common is that they all contribute to the development and function of a healthy society. That is, a society that does not typically follow these moral principles would never survive for long. Moral principles are intended to guide the society for orderly moral behavior.

Nevertheless, moral objectivism is not the same thing with moral absolutism; sometimes both of them are being used confusedly. Whereas moral objectivism holds that there are universal, objective moral principles, moral absolutism insists that objective moral principles are exceptionless and non-overrideable.

For instance, a moral absolutist might argue that one should never lie or deceive. But if faced with a dangerous situation where a murderer would kill an innocent person, unless you lie about the person’s whereabouts, the moral absolutist would definitely insist that you tell the truth. But a moderate moral objectivist, on the other hand, might weigh two or three objective principles that are relevant to the situation—such as, (1) do not lie or deceive, (2) protect innocent human life, or (3) avoid unnecessary harm—and conclude that the second and the third ones take priority over the first in this situation. This is definitely an example of ethical situationalism. However, ethical situationalism is the notion that objective moral principles are to be applied differently depending on the circumstances. But then, you should know that this does not mean

that we should arbitrarily disregard a moral principle just because it might be inconvenient to follow in a given situation. Instead, it simply means that we should weigh it against other relevant moral principles to see if one or the other has greater priority in that circumstance. Therefore, an objective moral principle can be overridden only by another objective moral principle, if appropriate.

Cultural relativism is the view that all moral principles are justified only by their cultural acceptance, and are not binding by or upon other cultures. It is sometimes known as conventional ethical relativism. Ethical Subjectivism posits that all moral principles are justified only by the individual, and do not necessarily apply to people other than the individual who accepts them. So the difference between the cultural relativism and ethical relativism is that subjective relativism is only restricted to individual whereas cultural relativism is restricted to a larger culture or society. Based on this, the relativist looks at the differences of opinions among people and cultures as regard how to approach ethics, including how to identify objective moral principles, and concludes that because there is diversity, and even uncertainty, among moral views, and differing moral situations, there is no objective right and wrong. For instance, the statement, “What is right for you may not be right for me”. This statement is an example of ethical relativism, more specifically ethical subjectivism.

Ethical Nihilism postulates that there are no valid moral principles—that morality is a complete fiction. But it must be noted that ethical relativism and ethical nihilism are not the same thing. The reason is that while ethical relativism holds that there are no universal or objective moral principles that apply to everyone, and that moral principles vary on the basis of individual or cultural preferences, ethical nihilism on its own part holds that there are no valid moral principles at all—effectively, that morality does not exist or that there are no such things like morality.²¹

5. The Meaning of Tolerance

Tolerance could be defined as the willingness to accept or tolerate somebody or something, especially opinions or behaviors that you may not agree with, or people who are not like you. On the other hand, toleration is a willingness to allow something that you do not like or agree with to happen or to continue.²² However, so many authors attempted to define tolerance but they failed to get the complete meaning of the concept. But what is obvious is that evil should not be tolerated and whatever is good should not only be tolerated but also encouraged. But where the problem or difficulty lies is that persons, society, culture might have different ways to conceive what is evil and what is good. Paradoxically, it seems that there are times when intolerance should be tolerated, and times when toleration should not be tolerated. Another paradox is that opposition of some evils might result into greater evils. Conversely, toleration of some evils might result into greater evils still. Who is the moral expert that can determine what is evil or good for everyone or objective morality or moral principles that can be universally applied.

Furthermore, according to John H. Dreher, he says that the disposition to tolerate is itself an intellectual and moral virtue. But intolerance on the other hand sometimes appears to be a vice, in the sense that it can function as the disposition to reject or to disregard the rules of toleration; intolerance also can be the disposition to avoid or to condemn evil, which is a virtuous act. Sometimes he argues, intolerance is good and sometimes bad. Anything goes in thought and behavior appears to be excessive toleration, on the grounds that it tolerates more than it should; in extreme cases perhaps it is correct to say that excessive toleration is a perversion of toleration and therefore not really toleration at all. Excessive toleration is essentially desultory and wanton simply because it claims that every thought or idea or word or even action is just as good as another. Based on the above arguments concerning tolerance and intolerance, it appears that sometimes tolerance functions as a virtue and sometimes intolerance also functions as a virtue. Conversely, sometimes when tolerance is in excessive it results into a vice as in the case of tolerating evil, also intolerance results into vice as in cases where it denies others freedom, equality, or legitimate power.²³

According to John Horton the idea of tolerance has a long and rich history, and no single understanding of it commands universal assent. But he goes on to define tolerance as the willing putting up with the beliefs, actions or practices of others, by a person or group that disapproves of them, and who would otherwise be inclined to prohibit or suppress them, if they had the power to do so. He argues that tolerance in this sense is a deliberate exercise of self-restraint, a willed refusal to interfere coercively with what is regarded as the objectionably behavior of others. It is an attitude and practice of restraint, typically distinguished from approval, indifference or mere acquiescence.²⁴

Consequently, Andrew Fiala in his book entitled *Tolerance and the Ethical Life* defines or describes tolerance as a virtue that is closely allied with other virtues such as modesty, generosity, and hospitality. Since it is a virtue it is not a form of passive indifference. Rather, it is a positive value linked to other values that allow for human flourishing. Tolerance involves the pursuit of wisdom within the community of difference. The recognition of difference within the community reveals how tolerance is a difficult virtue. Tolerance is required where there are moments of disagreement and conflicting issues within communities, unless we are willing to use violent to resolve the conflict. The fact of the matter is that tolerance involves a spirit of sacrifice. The reason for this sacrifice is that individuals cannot share a life in common without giving up something of value. Therefore, tolerance requires us to sacrifice the comfortable sense of self-certainty that is found in closed community. Tolerance is a virtue of what we might call tragic communities. These are communities of those who do not have everything in common. Besides, tolerant communities are fragile and precarious: in the sense that they are always at the risk from the dogmatic and fanatical forces of intolerance. In contrasts, the intolerance is a form of hubris that

condemns and destroys what is not understood. The intolerance instead of inspiring questions, aim to stifle debate; instead of provoking wonder, they mask uncertainty with fanaticism. But tolerance results from a modest, self-critical understanding of human limitations. Tolerant thinkers are not afraid to admit their ignorance or uncertainty. A tolerant person sees the loyalties of others as worthy of respect.²⁵

In the same vein, Andrew Fiala tells us that toleration focuses on those activities of which we do not approve, but which we do not feel compelled to negate or disapprove. In contrast, fanaticism is the idea that my values are right and all other alternatives are wrong and intolerable. Fanaticism is collated or closely linked to dogmatism. Dogmatism is the belief of an opinion or doctrine as true and beyond doubt. Dogmatism is about the logical status of a belief whereas fanaticism is about the psychological investment that a person has in his beliefs. Fanatics and dogmatists tend to think “either you are with me or against me”²⁶ Philippe Sassier in his book entitled *Porquoi La tolerance*, states that the attitude of tolerant has been accompanied by different objectives along all its history. During the Middle Ages, some writers such as St. Augustine of Hippo or Erasmus of Rotterdam defend a tolerant attitude against those who practice different beliefs from the Catholic Church, as a command of piety and mercy from God. People were asked to be tolerant as a way to obey God and secure His blessings and glory during this life and whatever comes after death.²⁷

6. Relativism and Tolerance

According to Mark Ressler’s article on relativism and tolerance he says that what is especially curious about the question of the relation between relativism and tolerance is that the question can be asked in either direction which results into two questions, namely: Does tolerance entail relativism? Does relativism require tolerance? He noticed that both relativism and tolerance have been advocated at various times, and both have at times been perceived as pernicious in some way, leading to a concern that advocating one may lead to noxious results if the other follows as a consequence. These questions can properly be asked if the uses of tolerance at the beginning and end are different or if they emphasize different aspects of tolerance. For instance, the first use may concern tolerance of persons, while the second use concerns tolerance of particular actions. But then, it appears that the relativism as the middle term can simply drop out, leaving a concern about the nature and limits of tolerance. For example, if I embrace tolerance of all people and all ways of life, do I have to tolerate everything that they do especially their evil deeds or things? Obviously relativism is not clearly part of this issue, so it may be that the concern over the relation between relativism and tolerance is fundamentally a concern over tolerance itself.

However, the question whether tolerance entails relativism, Mark Ressler argues that it does not. He takes epistemological stance in his arguments in which he says that tolerance is epistemological in nature on the grounds that tolerance is being adopted

either on the grounds of ignorance or knowledge. For instance he argues I might be tolerant precisely when I am ignorant of what is correct in a particular situation; on the other hand, intolerance might run the risk of rejecting what is correct. Alternatively, I might be tolerant when I know what is correct, but such knowledge also requires tolerance by virtue of other constraints, such as respect for rational autonomy. Furthermore, Mark's epistemological arguments on this subject are as follows:

Suppose that I am ignorant of what is correct in a given case. Then ignorance cannot support a claim of relativism, since relativism seems to represent a positive claim affirming a plurality of points of view. My ignorance is merely a negative claim that I cannot determine what is correct, not a positive that each competing point of view is somehow equally valid. Suppose then that I know what is correct in a given case. Then I know either: (1) that one position is correct and the others are incorrect, (2) that no position is correct, or (3) that several positions are correct. If only one position is correct, then my knowledge cannot support a claim of relativism, since relativism indicates a plurality of positions, not a single one. My tolerance in such a case would seem to represent tolerance for error, not relativism. If, however, I know that no position is correct, my knowledge cannot support a claim of relativism either, since as already noted, relativism represents a positive claim affirming a plurality of positions, not a negative claim denying all positions. My tolerance in such a case would represent a kind of nihilism or perhaps sympathy for the deluded, not relativism. If I know that several positions are correct, then my tolerance does indeed seem to be compatible with relativism. However, my knowledge in such a case seems already to represent an acknowledgment of relativism or at least pluralism. Yet by hypothesis my tolerance in such a case was grounded precisely in this knowledge. Therefore, I conclude that tolerance entails relativism only when relativism or pluralism is presuppose, then begging the question.²⁸

In the similar trending, Karl Popper's arguments for the paradox of tolerance are as follows:

Unlimited tolerance must lead to the disappearance of tolerance. If we extent unlimited tolerance even to those who are intolerance, if we are not prepared to defend a tolerant society against the onslaught of the intolerant, then the tolerant will be destroyed, and tolerance with them.²⁹

Bernard Williams on the dilemma concerning tolerance articulates as follows:

The difficulty with tolerance is that it seems to be at one necessary and impossible. It is necessary where different groups have conflicting beliefs—moral, political, or religious—and realize that there is no other alternative to their living together, that is to say, no other alternative except armed conflict, which will not resolve their disagreements and will impose continuous suffering. These are the circumstances in which toleration is necessary. Yet in those same circumstances it may well seem impossible.³⁰

W. T. Stace's response that has come to be known as an *argumentum ad Nazium* he counters as follows:

Certainly, if we believe that any one moral standard is as good as any other, we are likely to be more tolerant. We shall tolerate widow-burning, human sacrifice, cannibalism, slavery, the infliction of physical torture, or any other of the thousand and one abomination which are, or have been, from time to time approved by one moral code or another. But this is not the kind of toleration that we want, and I do not think its cultivation will prove 'an advantage to morality'.³¹

Nevertheless, the argument called *argumentum ad Nazium* continues to be a challenge for advocates of relativism. But for W. T. Stace the tolerance of atrocities that seems to be required by relativism serves as an absurdity by which relativism can be refuted, but other philosophers reason that the supposed link between relativism and tolerance is overly hasty. For Bernard Williams he criticizes a kind of vulgar relativism in which tolerance of other cultures may seem to follow from the relativity of judgments about what is right, arguing that this supposed relation between relativism and tolerance involves a non-relative use of tolerance that is not warranted by the relativity of the notion of what is right from which is supposedly follows.³²

Albert Einstein in his book entitled "The World as I see it" argues that tolerance is imperative since almost the whole of our actions and desires are bound up with the existence with each other. His reasoning is worth quoting in full:

When we survey our lives and endeavors we soon observe that almost the whole of our actions and desires are bound up with the existence of other human beings. We see that our whole nature resembles that of social animals. We eat food that others have grown, wear clothes that others have made, live in houses that others have built. The greater part of our knowledge and beliefs has been communicated to us by other people through the

medium of a language which others have created. Without language our mental capacities would be poor indeed, comparable to those of the higher animals; we have, therefore, to admit that we owe our principal advantage over the beasts to the fact of living in human society. The individual, if left alone from birth would remain primitive and beast-like in his thoughts and feelings to a degree that we can hardly conceive. The individual is what he is and has the significance that he has not so much in virtue of his individuality, but rather as a member of a great human society, which directs his material and spiritual existence from the cradle to the grave. A man's value to the community depends primarily on far his feelings, thoughts, and actions are directed towards promoting the good of his fellows. We call him good or bad according to how he stands in this matter. It looks at first sight as if our estimate of a man depended entirely on his social qualities. And yet such an attitude would be wrong. It is clear that all the valuable things, material, spiritual, and moral, which we receive from the society can be traced back through countless generations to certain creative individuals. The use of fire, the cultivation of edible plants, the steam-engine, each was discovered by one man. Only the individual can think, and thereby creative new values for society—nay, even set up new moral standards to which the life of the community conforms. Without creative, independently thinking and judging personalities the upward development of the society is as unthinkable as the development of individual personality without the nourishing soil of the community. The health of the society thus depends quite as much on the independence of the individual composing it as on their close political cohesion.³³

John Locke in his letter concerning toleration argues that no church is bound by the duty of toleration to retain offender or erring member in her bosom as, after admonition, continues obstinately to offend against the laws of the society. But then, care must be taken that the execution of the sentence of excommunication should carry with it no rough usage of word and action whereby the ejected person may any wise be damnified in body or estate. According to Locke the reason for this is that all force belongs only to the magistrate, nor ought any private persons at any time to use force, unless it be in self-defense against unjust violence. According to John Locke the so called excommunication should in no way deprive the excommunicated person of any of those civil goods that he formerly possessed. This is because all those things belong to the civil government and are under the magistrate's protection.

John Locke also preaches on the subject of toleration that no private person has any right in any manner to prejudice another person in his civil enjoyments because he is of another church or religion. All the rights and franchises that belong to him as a man, or as a denizen, are inviolably to be preserved to him. These are not the business of religion he concludes. Also neither violence, nor injury is to be offered him, whether he is Christian or pagan.³⁴

7. Socrates Model of Tolerance

The example of Socrates' life continues to inspire us to cultivate tolerance and to create philosophical communities, even in the face of intolerance. According to Socrates wisdom is not established by coercive force; rather, it is simply developed through tolerant dialogue. But the difficulty is that the tolerant love of wisdom is always at risk from those who are willing to use violence to enforce conformity.

However, Socrates' principle "unexamined life is not worth living" is subject to constant critical self-evaluation and it is closely related to the spirit of tolerance. This is simply because tolerance demands that all convictions could be questioned. The tolerant should always be open to an educational process that asks them to wonder whether their convictions are in fact justified.

In *Chamides*, Socrates defines tolerance as 'doing your own business'. Before you mind your own business you equally need to know what your own business is all about. Thus, we ought to question ourselves constantly to ensure that we are always acting with the right reasons. Obviously, we cannot be tolerant towards the intolerant if we do not have the spirit of tolerance and right reasons. But then, one of the difficulties of tolerance is that the spirit of tolerance seems to leave us without the capacity to make positive arguments against the intolerant in favor of tolerance. Socrates also is a victim of this in the sense that whenever he engages argument with his interlocutors and agreement is not forthcoming he allows his opponents to go their own way. He does not resort to violence to have his way in any argument. Even when he was condemned to death unjustly by Athenian government he refuses to plead for his life. Interestingly, Socrates' goal is not merely to win the argument; instead, it is to understand himself and his interlocutors. In contrast to his political opponents, he is not even in a moment willing to condemn the activities of another without first seeking to understand them. Amazingly, when it turns out that the ideas or activities of another are inconsistent or not clearly understandable; he does not resort to violence or active intervention or quarrelling. Instead and interestingly, he utilizes dialectic as his weapon and instrument of criticism.

However, Socrates is not immune from the difficulty or problem of tolerance, the reason is that the spirit of tolerance exposes Socrates to intolerant political power of the Athenians. Definitely, it does make sense to assert that Socrates tolerates the

verdict of the Athenians, as well as the death sentence imposed upon him. Socrates remained invincible and undaunted and declares that ‘the really important thing is not to live, but to live well’.³⁵ The lesson and implication of this Socrates’ attitude towards his executioners is that we should tolerate threats to our lives out of concern for higher goods. Marvelously, Socrates argues that the higher good requires him to tolerate the decision of the city. In the book of *Crito* it is said that the Laws of the city appear to Socrates in a vision and claim that they are one of the most venerable entities known to man. And they conclude, ‘If you cannot persuade your country, you must do whatever it orders and patiently submit (*hesuchian agonta*) to any punishment it imposes’.³⁶ It appears that the idea of gently or quietly undergoing is quite close to the idea of tolerance. In this sense the choice presented here is thus either to tolerate or to persuade.

In this story Socrates tolerates the verdict because he has not been able to persuade the city otherwise and he is not willing to employ other means to affect the outcome. To some, Socrates tolerance may appear to be politically naïve. This is because such sort of tolerance should be best suited for private encounters between individuals and not with public or government. Besides, Socrates tolerantly allows his interlocutors to leave him when they are being befuddled by his circular reasoning. This usually indicates that the interlocutor has reached the limit of his toleration for Socrates’ inquiry. Interestingly, Socrates tolerantly allows his opponents to break off and he does not force them to change their minds or chase them down and badger them into submission. Still, he does not even pursue them further and does not force them to go deeper or farther than they are willing to go. Nevertheless, this Socrates method of tolerance appears to be risky because he permits his opponents to leave the philosophical community without convincing them about the truth of his arguments. Thus he risks having them destroy that community from the outside.³⁷

8. Stoic Method of Tolerance

Stoic tolerance is a kind of self-control in which we do not allow the foibles or weaknesses of our fellow human beings to distract us from pursuing the common good which includes our obligation to respect our fellows and to work with them in the pursuit of virtue. The development of stoic tolerance stems from proper control of our negative emotional responses to others. Application of stoic tolerance might foster an inhuman and un-humane apathetic indifference. Stoicism asks us to develop *eupathia* or *metriopathia* that is proper emotion or measured emotion. But here stoicism is not talking about complete lack of passion. On this note Becker argues: ‘no stoic ever held the view that the sage’s life should be empty of affect, emotion, and passion’.³⁸ Instead, the goal of stoicism is to restrain passion properly under the control and guidance of reason. Stoicism proper conception of emotion can provide a useful approach to tolerance simply because it can allow us to think of tolerance as a habit of self-control when confronted with difference and disagreement. In any case, a total

and full conception or notion of tolerance demands from us or requires us to conjoin proper emotion with our duty to criticize others and administer justice.

In another development, stoicism maintains a unitary vision of the good life for us human beings. Unfortunately, this conception may seem antithetical to contemporary discourse about toleration, which emphasizes toleration on the part of the value-neutral state as the best way to deal with the fundamental problem of diversity. Obviously, stoicism is not committed to value neutrality. Rather, tolerance can only be understood as a moral virtue, not as a political idea of impartial procedural justice.

In stoicism, justice requires critical engagement with those we tolerate, even while reason requires proper control of our emotional reactions when confronted by the incorrigible and intransigent. The stoic position maintains that we should argue with our opponents while admitting that it should be unwise to become indignant and unjust to interfere except where necessary. Stoicism describes tolerance as a virtue which involves controlling the negative passions in order to engage in fruitful critical moral pedagogy. Stoicism tries and attempts to restrain impassioned revulsion in order to allow us to consider some reason for not negating the other. Yes, restraint of negative judgment makes it possible to see in the other something of value that transcends or goes beyond our feelings of repugnance. To this end therefore tolerance is thus a habit of social discourse that allows us to engage the rational part of our companions without succumbing to the vicissitude of our emotional responses in order to carry out the critical pedagogical task. Of a truth, tolerance is based upon moral concern for the well-being of the other as a rational being capable of pursuing virtue in his or her own way.

Stoicism's best way to contribute to the development of virtue in rational adults is to avoid coercion but appeal to argument. The best way to avoid manipulation and coercion is simply by restraining emotional responses in order to focus upon arguments and reasons. Obviously, emotional responses results into rational criticism. It is also pertinent to note that coercion will never help us to lead others either to moral autonomy or to the truth. Besides, tolerance does not mean mere acquiescence in the face of diversity, rather, tolerance requires that we confront those with whom we disagree and exhort, admonish, argue, and in general, attempt to persuade them towards the truth. However, a problem may occur because it seems to claim that I ought to tolerate immoral behavior so that I may better understand why it is immoral and thus why I ought not to choose it. To this end, my quest for autonomy would come at expense of some others who are the victims of immoral behavior (after all, I could learn valuable lessons from their mistakes and their pains).

Another issue at stake is what should we do about our emotional responses to those with whom we disagree? The question is whether one should be entirely dispassionate or whether we should care about those others who disgust or disturb us. To solve this problem we can use the idea of *eupathia* here. *Eupathia* results as we use reason to see

the real causes of disgust and anger. Emotional responses to those we find repugnant disrupt reason and so prevent us from developing understanding. So we must at all costs control our emotion rationally in order to arrive at a tolerant critical perspective. The application of this virtue would help us in some cases to move beyond an injury. Marcus says: 'Put from you the belief that "I have been wronged", and with it will go the feeling. Reject your sense of injury, and the injury itself disappears".³⁹ It would help us pursue justice impartially and mercifully.

Consequently, it is equally good to be in friendship with other good people to complete our own quest for goodness. We should always try to reject anger and disgust because it can only serve to undermine reason, thereby alienating us from others and preventing us from fulfilling our social duties. But then, pursuit of the good requires that we should criticize our neighbors rationally and at the same time listen to their criticism of us. We should also tolerate their failings when it is obvious that justice has failed to intervene. To achieve this we should distance ourselves from our passions long enough to listen to reason and to examine the arguments made about one's passions. The difficulty here is that this stoic method of tolerance has a lot of paradoxes just as tolerance itself has its own paradoxes. The question is: how do we critically engage each other while not becoming intolerant and while not sacrificing the demands of justice? Stoicism answers that we should control our passions properly such that justice is not obscured by immoderate emotional responses.⁴⁰

Conclusion

In Einstein's relativistic cosmology he argues that everything in this cosmos is interconnected. Our actions and desires are bound up with existence of other human beings. Ethical relativism or moral relativism holds that there are no such things like universal moral principles. In contrast, moral objectivism holds that some truths or values can be applied to everyone, irrespective of times, places or social and cultural frameworks. There are such things like universal truths. Tolerance is the willingness to allow something that you do not like or agree to happen or to continue although one has the power to stop it. On the other hand, toleration is the deliberate decision to refrain from prohibiting, hindering, or stopping the conducts or behavior of which one disapproves, although one has the power to do so. Moral tolerance is the belief that one should not judge the moral behavior of others. People should not condemn, harshly judge, or attempt to change the beliefs of others who have differing moral beliefs. Einstein's Relativistic Cosmology reveals that everything in this universe is dependent upon each other. He tells us that space, time, and gravity have no separate existence from matter. He teaches also that our actions and desires can affect the others positively or negatively. On the other hand Ethical Relativism insists that every moral principle should be respected. All moral codes are good in themselves. No one has the right to judge others moral standard. Ethical Relativism maxim is "Who are

you to judge”. Similarly, moral tolerance is the belief that one should not condemn, or harshly judge the moral behavior of others.

However, of a truth Einstein is correct in his argument of human existence in which his arguments resemble the dictum that says ‘no man is island’. But then, neither Einstein nor his celebrated theory of relativity is the least bit relativistic. But Ethical Relativism fails in their deification of moral principles in the sense that there are a lot countries and cultures that their moral principles are ethically or morally unacceptable. For instance, some cultures or societies approved genocide, infanticide, homosexuality, suicide, same-sex marriages, abortion, LGBT, among others and these are highly morally unacceptable in many counties and cultures. Relativism is no different than having no moral principles or morality at all. Ethical Relativism is almost the same thing with Ethical Nihilism the theory that denies morality. With Relativism there is no such thing like moral teachers and moral codes. Everyone does whatever pleases him or her. Ethical Relativism proponents argue that there is no objective standard of morality that can be applied to all people in all times and places. Which means people can rape, kill, steal, tell lies etc and get away with it within the culture that approves of such immoral acts. To this end, relativism does away with the need to think rationally. Besides, if the mind cannot know the moral objective truth and all opinions warrant equal respect, why then do we struggle to comprehend the incomprehensible? Why do we have laws and constitutions? Why do we have prisons for erring members of the society?

On the other hand, Moral objectivism disagree with Ethical Relativism arguing that there are such things like objective truths, that is, morality does not depend upon what people think or believe. Morality is not a matter of taste. Instead, there are many things that are just plain wrong or right regardless of what anyone thinks. For instance, the sun is the source of all lights, the Earth orbits the Sun, injustice is bad, evil should not be tolerated whereas the good should not only be tolerated but also encouraged etc. Besides, tolerance has a lot of paradoxes and dilemmas, for instance, excessive or over tolerance could lead to evil. Thus, tolerance can function as a virtue as well as a vice. What is common to tolerance and ethical relativism is apathy, unconcern, and indifference to evils. Tolerance also resembles ethical relativism in the sense that a tolerant person rejects dogmatism and moral absolutism and objectivism. He is always appreciative, open-minded, and in friendly terms with all sorts of people with different types of cultures, religious beliefs and moral principles. Thus, tolerance makes difference possible and difference in turns makes tolerance necessary. Also tolerance could be found in the middle path between dogmatism and relativism. But tolerance enhances a peaceful coexistence between a society that is culturally, religiously, ideologically, and morally different.

The research submission is that God is the source and origin of morality and He is the moral Teacher and moral Law Giver. Any morality that is not according to God's laws and commandments is no morality at all. Just like unjust law is no law.

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