

ON TOLERANCE

Set this in a broader philosophical perspective: The conflict between the demand of free will on the one hand and the demands of socialization on the other. Insofar as the individual is concerned, without free will there is no Torah, and the halakha regards coercive behavior as a denial of freedom. On the other hand, there can be no community without accepted norms of conduct, and the community must socialize individuals into accepting its basic principles both of theory and practice.

If we go too far in the direction of freedom, we have destroyed society. If we tip the balance to society and community, we have robbed the individual of his freedom.

Hence, what is necessary is an ongoing dialectic between both extremes, such that the basic integrity of a human being is preserved, allowing him to express his freedom, and provision is made for the orderly continuity of the society.

Refer to the Gemora (Shabbat 88) that the Torah was not normative as long as it was forced upon us, and did not become authoritative until it was reaccepted in the days of Mordechai and Esther.