



Sulh-i kul

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What is it?

Sulh-i kul is an Arabic term literally meaning “peace with all,” “universal peace,” or “absolute peace,” drawn from a Sufi mystic principle. As applied by the third Mughal Emperor of India, Akbar (who reigned 1556-1605), it described a peaceful and harmonious relationship among different religions. In keeping with efforts to mesh the diverse populations of his realm, Akbar proposed unity and peace among all human beings – *sulh-i kul*. The concept implies not just tolerance, but also the sorts of balance, civility, respect, and compromise required to maintain harmony among a diverse population.

Who uses the concept?

Sulh-i kul was originally used during Akbar's reign and sometimes after him in the Mughal court and among some Sufi movements in India. Today the term is used primarily by historians, art historians, and scholars researching in the field of Mughal culture and Sufi movements of India, and less so by other scholars and peace activists.

Fit with intercultural dialogue?

In the field of interfaith dialogue, tolerance plays an important role in constructive interactions, so the concept of *sulh-i kul* has great potential relevance to discussions of intercultural dialogue specifically, and cultural diversity more generally.

What work remains?

Sulh-i kul was invented to describe universal peace, specifically with regard to interfaith tolerance and equal treatment for all, regardless of religious beliefs. Given continuing religious conflicts matched to the reality of cultural pluralism, it seems useful to resurrect this historic term as a modern tool. The concept also has potential for discussions of such concrete contexts as managing a multicultural workforce.

Resources

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