

ON MORAL IDEAL BETWEEN PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION IN THE GLOBALIZING CONTEXT

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Abstract: Nowadays, humanity is continuously challenged by globalization at all levels: technological, economic, political, ecological, and social-cultural. The axiological crisis we face makes us find and develop viable values – by priority, ethical values - for the present time. More than ever, man needs to look for and to reconstruct his moral ideal by discovering new points of reference concerning the choices to be done. This paper focuses on the necessity of an ethical perspective open to principles rich in philosophy and religion. The purpose is to highlight the question of the moral ideal of human life in a globalizing context by accounting the offer of these two major cultural domains.

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Introduction

Lately the phenomenon of globalization generated more and more challenges for humanity, from technological, economic, and political challenges to socio-cultural challenges. Because of this phenomenon we find ourselves in a value crisis which invites us to create new values that apply to our times. Now more than ever, people need a restriction on their moral ideals and new role models in decision making. The starting point is the reconstruction of the fundamental global humanity, reconstruction of the profound ethics, based on philosophy and theology. From this point of view, a factor to consider is the perspective offered by contemporary philosophy and also the way theology faces globalization trends today.

Thus, the globalization phenomenon even from the beginning, from 1870, when international formalization and implementation in social environment of the new ideas took shape, was described by the fight for power- at a global scale. Another important globalization characteristic is the development of communication systems and of global systems of production and exchange. Specific to this economical process, and from a social-cultural point of view, this phenomenon must be seen as way of changing the world, with the goal to overtake the borders of the old order.

An important role in developing this level of global culture is held by the ethnical aspect of the globalization process, which implies the exchange of different cultural values from one part of the globe to another. Thus, we find strong communities of European citizens in other continents of the globe, and vice versa, for example, communities of the Far East in European countries each of them keeping their own individual cultural characteristics.

Globalization as a unifying process

Starting with the globalization, we face a progressive process of world unification toward one big market dominated by more and more competitive relationships and marked by serious tension. As I mentioned before, this process was developed from before the first industrial revolution and, in the last few years, had developed in a very intense and unexpected way. At its base, this development has financial, economical, informatics and political phenomenon. What takes shape, is in actual fact a type of fight between nations' global classes, where a safe place doesn't exist anymore, there aren't any borders: "In this world, it is difficult to hide and, in many cases, it is almost impossible. All economies are intertwined in a competitive market and, unfortunately, in this cruel game, which takes place on this stage, the whole society has integrated; to back out this game impossible" (Dahrendorf, 2009).

From this international, national, political and cultural aspect, it is important to reflect on the person who, by importance, is above state and even above international realities involved in the globalization process. Now our considerations are becoming more of philosophical, theological and of a Christian nature. The traditional scale of values, theoretical behavioral and practical are questioned, or even ignored or disputed in many of their parts. We think about the fact that the Christian religion is isolated in the intimate sphere of the person, and it is driven out more and more in the public space, in

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the state. Today's crises of values and profound principles create a mist in front of the view, leaving man prey to his or her uncertainties and anguish.

The value and importance of Christian diversity can disturb some; it is to notice that there is an attempt to create a new human being, without roots, lacking transcendence, adapted to new technology and economic interests. From a historical and cultural European point of view, today globalization represents the last phase to secularization of thinking and of life, which started at the end of the Middle Ages. The process is long and complex and it cannot be defined through sentences or comprehensive definitions.

Therefore, we consider that globalization is not a new phenomenon, but a present phase to a process, to a confrontation between sacred and layman, between theology and natural science, between the Church and the European states, everything evolving over many centuries. In the process, especially in the current time, we can see that the human being is not seen in their transcendental dimension. Although the fundamental human rights are respected, the right to life, to freedom of religion, or to have no religion, the human being is only a citizen on Earth and is living in a desacralized space, in an immanency spirituality, without having any superior benchmarks, always cropping the new, always reconsidering, reinventing everything, including their own nature (Gatti, 2001).

The history of the model of the contemporary human being, marked by this phenomenon, is a horizontal one, without references to the transcendent, who lives in *polis* which he build for himself- the global state. His identification is without an exact outline, and his routes are uncertain and in a constant change; from this uncertainty rise existential anguish and fears. It is obviously that as humans have more as material goods, the more they discover themselves being frail and needing more attention and protection. In this context rise values and constraint crises, one way, the human being at fundamentally questions the meaning of life and history, the rate between reason and faith, why does evil exist, etc...

Starting with the experience of an interior call for doing the good, human being understands that he is in a fundamental way a moral being, no matter what the contingent circumstance he is on. This call for good "corresponds the profound wish of the human being- as any being- aims in a spontaneous, natural way at what completes it fully, at what enables it to reach perfection, which is his own happiness" (Commissione Teologica Internazionale, 2009).

On moral ideal between philosophy and religion

According to a document of the International Theological Commission about the search for a universal ethics related to the natural law, human being -as a spiritual and rational one living in society- is not merely able to engage a conscious and mutual dialogue with others, but he also can look for the communion with God. Thus, human being is to be led by the imperative of justice within the social relations, which claims the recognition of equal dignity and mutual respect for each individual (Commissione Teologica Internazionale, 2009).

On the same tone, in his book *Psychologie Consonantiste*, Ștefan Odobleja argues that: "the moral ideal is the perfect balance between self and the others, between individual and society" (Odobleja, 1982).

Each person assumes for himself an ideal model in accordance to which the person is projecting, unwinding and appreciating his behavior. The moral ideal doesn't reflect what is at a certain time or in a certain condition, as human reality, but what it must be; there is a need for change and self-improvement. Through this takes shape a state in which the human being desires to be, because it's a better one than the present one, in the light of fulfilled personality (Albulescu, 2008).

In different cultures, people had elaborated and developed in a progressive way tradition of wisdom through which they express and pass on their vision about the world, so, their perception reflects the place human being hold in society and the universe. Before becoming any existential theory, these wisdoms, which are of a religious nature, send an experience which shows what favors or blocks the full manifestation of the personal life and the good function of the social life. They constitute for a kind of "cultural capital" available for the search of a general wisdom, necessary for answering the challenges of today's ethics.

According to the Christian faith, the wisdom traditions in spite of their limits and, sometimes, even their errors, show a reflection of the divine wisdom which works in humans' heart. Nevertheless, they constitute the testimony of the existence of values patrimony common to all people, regardless the way these values are justify in the interior of a particular vision about the world. For example, we can find in one form or another "the golden rule" in most of the sapiential traditions.

It is *dharma*, in Hindu traditions, which defines the social and religious obligation for human being: "The human who is practicing his religion (dharma) to not harm (ahimsa) universally he will obtain the greatest Good. [...] This human being who considers all the creatures as himself and treats them as he treats himself, laying down the punitive rood and totally controlling his anger, this will ensure his happiness" (Augustinus, 1962, III, XIV, 22).

Deep selflessness of Buddhist tradition, which translates itself by a deliberate attitude of non-violence, through friendly good will and compassion goes with the golden rule. Chinese civilization is profoundly marked by the Taoism of Lao-Tze and after, of Confucius, who was named "Kong Master", tends to, in the context of a profound crisis of the period, restores the order by respecting the rites, based on filial piety that has to be the core of any social life.

In fact, social relationships take over the model of family relationships. Harmony is obtained by an ethic of the right measure, in which the ritual relationship (Li), that inserts the human being in the natural order, is the measure of all things. The ideal that needs to be touched is REN, the perfect virtue of humanity, formed by self control and good will for others. According to Confucius, "Is in it kindness the keyword? What you don't want others to do to you, don't do to them" (Entretiens de Confucius, 1981, 15, 23).

In African traditions, the fundamental reality is life itself. It constitutes the greatest good, and individual's goal is, not only to live happily ever after, but to stay, first of all, even after death, a vital force, always reinforced and vitalized. An anthropological and vital ethics is unfolded by favouring life, keeping, protecting and developing it, especially growing the potential of community life, which goes to the good. Consequently, anything might harm the individual or community life represents the evil.

Muslim ethic is one of listening. Doing good means obeying the rules; to not obey rules leads to the evil. Human reason has to recognize the relevant character of the Law and get from it the concrete juridical implications (Commissione Teologica Internazionale, 2009).

In Christianity, more exactly in the Holy Scripture, the "Ten Words" constitute the centre; they are the essential elements of the religious experience of Israel. This Law of the Alliance contains precepts of the fundamental ethics. Alongside the texts referring to the history of salvation, with the major theological themes of choice, of promise and of the Alliance, the Bible contains a literature of wisdom which doesn't handle first-hand the national history of Israel, but who takes interest on the place of human being in the world. There is the belief that there is a fair and wise way to do things and to plan life. In the New Testament, in a sort of moral teachings, Jesus renews on his side the golden rule: "Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets" (Mathew 7, 12). This positive precept completes and somehow overcomes the negative wording of the same rule from the Old Testament: "What thou (thyself) hatest, do to no man." In its negative expression, the Golden Rule is to be found stated "in various forms by Confucius, Hillel, the Stoics, and others" (Calhoun, 2013, p.186).

Through the examination of the great traditions of moral wisdom, I wanted to highlight that some types of human behaviour are recognized, in most of the cultures as expressions of a certain excellence in the way a human being lives and accomplish his own humanity through: acts of courage, of patience in the face of challenges and difficulties of life, compassion for the weak, moderation in using materials goods, responsible attitude for the common good. These ethic elements define the great lines of the moral ideal of life "in accordance with the nature"; this is in accordance with the deep being of human subject. On the other hand, certain elements are universally perceived as being reprehensible: murder, theft, lie, anger, etc... They appear as negative attempts at the dignity of the human being and at the right precepts of life in society. There is a consensus beyond the cultural diversity, enlightening us as regards "the natural law" of St. Thomas Aquinas (I-II, a 2). The term of natural law refers to that complex of moral concepts which a human being is capable to know using reason, without the

intervention of the revelation or from God. The doctrine of natural law has a fundamental importance for two reasons: first, it stays at the base of moral, universal order and constitutes the spring of moral wisdom which Christians share with all humanity, because it is founded on that common reality of all, and second, natural law is the only protection against the political and legislative power- and constitutes the ultimate High Court against the unfair laws given by human authorities (Peschke, 1988).

Human beings accede only in a progressive way at the moral experience and become capable to give themselves rules to guide their actions. It supposes that they are part of the human relationships network from the birth moment within the family, gaining step by step self-consciousness as part of the entire world.

These are some pivotal ideas we find in a synthetic scientific theory – which since 1936 has announced a generalized cybernetics – belonging to Ștefan Odobleja. In his *Psychologie Consonantiste*, first published in two volumes in Paris (1938-1939), the Romanian thinker stressed the importance of understanding man – among other particularities – as an ethical being, self-fulfilling in the social relations framework, because “the moral ideal is the most perfect balance between self and others, between individual and society” (Odobleja, 1982).

Conclusion

Considering the great traditions of moral wisdom, I tried to highlight that some types of human behaviour are recognized in most of cultures as expressions of a certain excellence in the way a human being lives and accomplishes his own humanity through courage and patience dealing with challenges and difficulties of life, no less compassion, moderation and responsibility for the common good. These ethical elements define the great lines of the moral ideal of life in accordance with the law of nature and of God, supporting man to experience harmony as much as possible in a globalizing world.

The social and cultural circumstances play an important role in educating moral values. It seems that, in the context of globalization, communities and cultures must practice an honest dialogue and right exchange grounded on co-responsibility of all for the common good on the planet; before anything else, we need reach the moral values and rules, comprehending the authentic call of our very own human status in this world.

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