

A STRONGHOLD OF ETHICAL EXISTENCE OF THE SERBS AND CONFRONTING IMMORAL PHENOMENA IN MODERN SPORT

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SUMMARY

The entire field of ethics (as a discipline of philosophy) is loaded with various issues, different approaches, schools and opinions (as the very field of philosophy, after all).

Unlike ethics in general, theological ethics keeps a serious distance from most of those issues. Its starting belief is that whole moral and moral norms rest on God's revelation, which eliminates any relativity in moral understanding. In other words, God is considered as an ultimate foundation of ethics because man in his essence is far from any perfection.

Interaction between the meaning of human and ethical existence (which is based on faith in the Holy Trinity) is discussed in the paper in order to reveal a true origin of ethical existence of the Serbs. In addition, those universal ethical principles are confronted (in the field of sport in particular) with various deviant phenomena in society and sport (phenomenology of immorality in sport).

Key words: ethics, faith in the Holy Trinity, ethical existence of the Serbs, sport, immorality in sport

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INTRODUCTION

The entire field of ethics (as a discipline of philosophy) is loaded with various issues, different approaches, teachings and opinions (as the very field of

philosophy, after all). As early as the ancient times (when it primarily studied virtues and the highest good), ethics began and continued to seek identification and background of the origin of moral, investigate the meaning of moral intentions as well as build basic criteria for the estimation of moral actions.

History has witnessed development of various ethical approaches and views. Thus two key views were formed of the origin of human moral behaviour: autonomous (the origin of human moral behaviour is intrinsic) and heteronomous (the origin of human moral behaviour is extrinsic that is, found in natural world or even in God – theonomous teaching).

Similarly, whether or not the free will exists in considerations of human actions (determinism and indeterminism) is also a question philosophers still debate today.

The following theories have developed from moral philosophy: aprioristic (moral conduct lies beyond experience that is, it precedes experience); empiristic (giving significance to specific empirical conditions and motivation); intellectualistic (only reason can govern any moral action); naturalistic (moral life is only the continuation of biological life, where everything is subject to natural laws); voluntaristic (the will is primary or superior and alongside reason, it leads to the good).

In addition, ethical concepts can be: eudaimonism (the object of moral action is to achieve one's own or someone else's happiness); hedonism (physical pleasure is superior to any other value in life); utilitarianism (the morally right action is the action that produces the most good); perfectionism (moral conduct aims at both individual and communal improvements that is, at the improvement of mankind); pessimism (since life is essentially evil, zest for life should be therefore overcome and ignored); immoralism (rejection of the current morality or opposition to its valid criteria); amoralism (showing no concern about any morality), etc.

Ethicists have been debating the issue of whether humans in their nature give priority to egoism, selfishness and narcissism pursuing their personal interests before any other interests, or strive to provide welfare to others, even at the cost of their own happiness (altruism).

The science of theology keeps clear and distinct distance from most of these philosophical dilemmas. It starts from the assumption that morality and moral norms are generally based on God's revelation. Accordingly, the entire Christian life must be subject to moral law (excluding any relativism). (Of course, an individual can have freedom of choice as a prerequisite of his or her moral actions.)

Thus, only supernatural and superhuman background of ethics, in other words, God can be absolute. Plato argued that God is the measure of all things. Even Kant, who considered his "categorical imperative" absolutely free from any stronghold

(both on earth and in heaven), finally concluded that this ethics requires God as a guarantee of its obligatoriness.

Some claim that every ethics is religious. There is no ethics without religion and no religion without ethics. Christian religion is of universal nature and contains so many general human themes that Tertullian found accounts of Christian nature of the soul in every pagan.

Hence, the ethical views of the Christian Serbs are, in their original meaning, grounded in the belief in the Holy Trinity. In other words, historical and national identity of the Christian Serbs has its starting point in God's being, who provides full meaning of human existence. Accordingly, it could be said that there can be no development of the existence and true love for virtues without believing. It is however obvious that new age has reversed the traditional ethical beliefs to a great extent, hence in our modern society it happens more often than not that practices of manipulating, politicking, lavishing, etc. are considered as something quite common. Money, horoscope, fortunetellers, sects, alcohol and drugs have been increasingly celebrated. The ethics of "utility" at any cost, various forms of "machievellianism" (the end justifies the means), adoption of fake consumer values and uncritical recognition of many of things not known to our culture and traditions have been debilitating our national identity. These phenomena can be found in any area of life, and in sports as well.

Therefore, in our modern age of great temptations, inspiration and support should be sought in already approved and everlasting values of our St. Sava's ethos. In this view, we are trying to confront the original Christian views of ethical existence with certain current phenomena in society, particularly in sport (as a specific social phenomenon), where moral deformation, erosion and destruction have been prevailing.

THE ORIGINS OF THE SERBIAN PEOPLE'S ETHICAL EXISTENCE

We all know that human existence has been encountering numerous and persistent troubles. When faced with insecurity and uncertainty, it generally seeks a sound stronghold and certain values it can hold on. This quest for the meaning of human existence and life has produced an abundance of philosophical viewpoints, most of which can be considered (in terms of original strives for certainty) as having pessimistic and nihilistic outcomes or leading to philosophy of the absurd. Though, modern science offers abundant and impressive results and solutions (which seemingly provide answers to most of existential issues) but which can also confuse us with regard to their actual purpose and scope. Because there is no such thing as perfect knowledge and it generally remains within the natural world, not spreading beyond it. Thus, among other things, this proclaimed power of human mind (and the benefits achieved), which is demonstrated through

technological and information achievements, tends to tie human existence, in the full meaning, to the establishment of a "paradise on earth" including, of course, many fake values, thus neglecting its ontological essence.

In the view of the foregoing, one should remember that the very original standpoint of existence is referred to religious behaviour. In other words, it is God's being that should provide meaning to human existence. Accordingly, it can be argued that there can be no development of existence without believing.

The primary characteristic of spiritual life of the Orthodox Serbian people that is (according to Serbian saints), the belief in the Holy Trinity emerges from has been previously said. It orthodoxly follows evangelistic truth that Christian God "in our history is revealed as a perfect absolute being that is, the union of the Holy Trinity (the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit) cannot be broken or reduced to an impersonal absolute One" (Irinej the Bishop of Bačka). In his programme *The Sermon on True Belief* presented at the all-Serbs Assembly in Žiča held on Ascension Day in 1221, Sait Sava disclosed the Orthodox religion in two fundamental Christian truths: the Holy and Divine Trinity – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit ("the unity of three persons in one Godhead") and incarnation of "the One from the Trinity" – the God-Man Jesus Christ from the Holy Spirit and our Most Holy Theotokos for our salvation. Accordingly, an orthodox priest begins the mass "with known and ever celebrating words: Blessed be the realm of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit" (St. Prince Bishop Nikolai).

Briefly, in the centre of ethical existence of the Serb people lies the belief in the Holy Trinity (in God's love and benevolence) alongside the wish to fight human weaknesses in order to come as close as possible to God's perfection. Thus, ethical existence is "an attempt to stand firmly on the ground of values" (Nagren Preobraženović) that is, the ground of truth. Ethical is considered as general which, being as such, applies to every individual. The fundamental concept of ethical existence is *obligation*, which ensures that the life is firmly grounded. A sense of obligation is found in intrinsic conscience (a law inscribed in human heart, which makes one implement moral law). It is indeed a definition of what is required from an individual by God's will. Because the Lord lets both will and act. ("It is God who works in you to will and act" – Philippians 2: 13). In this view, any attempt to attribute obligation in implementing moral law to one's autonomous will, or nature as it is, cannot be true.

Of course, freedom is precedent to moral obligation, which is left to an individual in order to show his good will in the appreciation of God's law or, on the other side, to choose a fall and a sin. There can be no sin without freedom, just as there can be no hope without eternity. Therefore, the will (and freedom as the essence of the will) is the power of one's soul penetrating deepest into one's being. And the soul is the most precious unit of ours, the value of which cannot be compared to the entire world. Well-known words of Christ also make reference to

this truth: "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?" (Matthew, 16).

MORAL LOOSENESS IN SOCIETY

Every human action, at the very least, includes moral intervention. Moral behaviour is an integral part of every human relationship (family life, political practice, cultural creations, business affairs, sport activities). Since legislation cannot fully cover all the areas of human life (legislation has generally more limited scope than ethics), ethics has drawn much attention and certain ethical codes have been established and adopted in some professions (such as medicine, journalism, business affairs, sport). Ethical codes provide a set of moral standards and values to be followed by all the members of the given organizations.

However, despite finely articulated "deontology" (specified ethical obligations) within all those codes the apparent moral looseness in society can be observed in everyday life. Ruling ethical relativism and moral subjectivism insist on denial of (or doubt) universal and common values. Consequently, the very basics of Christian teaching are questioned, which teaching promotes agreement of the entire human moral behaviour with God's morals.

As a product of the described moral views, which emphasize subjective ethical judgements and opinions (but also due to deeper social causes), general weakening and looseness of important moral values have occurred, particularly apparently in sport practice.

PHENOMENOLOGY OF IMMORAL SPORTING PRACTICE

Today, social and sporting authorities encounter many challenges regarding unacceptable and immoral practice. Professionalization of sport and sport dependence on sport market and profit have conditioned widespread corruption and violence in sport competitions. Insisting on success at any cost and taking performance-enhancing drugs to reach the specified aim (sporting machiavellianism) have brought many other immoral actions and phenomena into sport: match fixing by referees, violent behaviour of fans, noneducational practice of coaches with excessive and unreal requirements in workouts and competitions, increased impact of social agents and advertising, overambitious parents and their attempts to make their children recognized at any cost and push them to their limits in the fields of sport and media (in the USA, a furious parent killed an ice hockey coach, etc.) Moreover, other dangerous forms of dehumanization and immorality follow up, of which particularly concerning are various laboratory experiments of "genetic engineering" with the purpose of generating bionic

humans (cyborgs), which results in sport competitions completely deprived of any meaning. Dehumanization of sport is particularly apparent in sport disciplines where athletes are on the edge of risking their lives while competing: ski jumping, car racing¹, motocross, professional boxing, full-contact, ultimate fight, etc. Here, the following questions are also revealed: how serious physical harming of one man by another can be legitimate? Is there any reason for justification other than money or having fun? Can investment of huge amounts of money in training modern gladiators be justified?

Taking prohibited performance-enhancing drugs (to beat the opponents) is a result of a fraud organized by all the interested parties. Here, even science shows its ambivalent nature: on the one hand, it is being exploited in the development of new stimulants that athletes use to improve their fitness and performance but on the other hand, it has been required to develop efficient methods of detecting drugs in athletes.

Depersonalization of athletes in the entire machinery for generating desired results is also one of immoral practices. In such an environment, the health of an athlete seems to decrease in significance. Acute and chronic overexertion in order to achieve top results and records often endanger the life of an athlete. Negligence in (or even closing eyes intentionally to) treating his or her general health condition has already resulted in tragedies (such as deaths of a young karateist from Kragujevac, a twenty-year-old football player from Belgrade and thirteen-year-old boy who died on the field, etc.). Therefore, exercising and sport practicing do not always improve health because one can often see top athletes become severely disabled people.

In human interrelations and interactions, people are generally self-centred. Today, it is difficult to find fair play which was introduced into sport as a substitute for genuine spirit and honesty in sport in order to make universal sport guidelines acceptable to any national and cultural areas. Competitions are turning into arenas where aims are achieved by any means. And this is all accompanied with bursts of vulgar behavior (such as swearing, fighting, etc.).

ESTABLISHING ADVANTAGE OF ETHICS OVER RESULTS

In our modern age, can a barrier be built to prevent deviant phenomena in sport, maximalist and inhuman requirements imposed to athletes as well as aggressive behaviour and marketing pressures used to achieve results with the

¹ The most disastrous accident in car racing happened on 11 June 1955 during the 1955 Le Mans 24 Hours when Pierre Levegh's Mercedes-Benz was launched into the earth bank, killing over 80 spectators and the driver himself and wounding another 100 people.

ultimate purpose of – money? Our tradition, spirit, belief and culture grounded in Christian deontology may have an answer to the question. An athlete should just follow his or her conscious that is, to do what is expected from man in order to comply with laws of God. The world's number one tennis player Novak Đoković has long been proving this point by his sporting personality, glowing as a true guard of genuine play, honour and humanity. He is a man of faith really facing the heavens (both when winning and losing). He has always been demonstrating his ethical behaviour not through a simple and fake fair-play show but through his genuine desire to keep his soul clean. In various sporting events and using any given chance, Đoković demonstrates his wish to "grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ". And he does that in an unflamboyant yet Christian manner. For, who else but "our Nole" would signal an umpire that the ball had touched him although the umpire did not notice it when the point was of utmost significance for the final outcome of the match.

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НЕПОКОЛЕБИМОСТЬ ЭТИЧЕСКОГО БЫТИЯ СЕРБОВ И ПРОТИВОСТОЯНИЕ АМОРАЛЬНЫМ ЯВЛЕНИЯМ В СОВРЕМЕННОМ СПОРТЕ

АННОТАЦИЯ

Вся область этики (как философской дисциплины) рассматривает различные вопросы, различные подходы, школы и мнения (как собственно область философии, в конечном счете).

В отличие от этики в целом, теологическая этика сохраняет серьезную дистанцию в большей части этих аспектов. Теологическая этика исходит из убеждения о том, что все моральные и нравственные нормы происходят от озарения Бога, что исключает всякую относительность в нравственном понимании. Иными словами, Бог рассматривается как высшая основа этики, поскольку человек по своей сути далек от всякого совершенства.

В статье рассматривается взаимодействие между смыслом человекоориентированного и этического бытия (в основе которого лежит вера в Святую Троицу) с целью выявления истинного происхождения этического бытия сербов. Кроме того, эти универсальные этические принципы противостоят (в частности, в области спорта) различным девиантным явлениям в обществе и спорте (феноменология безнравственности в спорте).

Ключевые слова: этика, вера в Святую Троицу, этическое существование сербов, спорт, безнравственность в спорте

УПОРИШТЕ ЕТИЧКЕ ЕГЗИСТЕНЦИЈЕ СРБА И СУЧЕЉАВАЊЕ СА НЕМОРАЛНИМ ПОЈАВАМА У САВРЕМЕНОМ СПОРТУ

САЖЕТАК

Целокупно подручје етике (као филозофске дисциплине) испуњено је различитим питањима, многоврним теоријским приступима, школама и мишљењима (уосталом, као и само подручје филозофије).

За разлику од опште етике, богословска етика прави оштру дистанцу према већини тих проблема. Она полази од тога да целокупан морал и норме моралности почивају на Божанском откривењу, што искључује сваки релативизам у моралном поимању. Другим речима, за апсолутну основу етике узима се Бог, јер је човек, по својој природи, далеко од сваког савршенства.

У раду се перципира садејство између смисла људске и етичке егзистенције (чији фундамент чини вера у Свету Тројицу), да би се показало истинско исходиште етичке егзистенције Срба. Исто тако, прави се сучељавање тих универзалних етичких принципа (посебно на терену спорта), са разним девијантним појавама у друштву и спорту (феноменологија спортског неморала).

Кључне речи: етика, вера у Свету Тројицу, етичка егзистенција Срба, спорт, спортски неморал

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