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Freedom and Love as contrary to Violence

What does it mean to be free and where does freedom come from?

> The essence of freedom lies in the spiritual, inner experience of man, his facts, which is the connection of the subject with constituting factor. A state in which there is total integration of personality is a state of belief.[1]

When God created man free, he pushed him His image. Human history is developed on the basis of nature, which man got from his Creator, in a free implementation of the objectives to which he is led by his inclinations, desires and mental abilities. A man decides about himself via his free will; he can do it in a positive as well as destructive sense. He can betray his profession of freedom. Spontaneous response to the question: "What does it mean to be free?" is as follows: "Free is one who can do what he wants without being prevented from this by some external pressure, and who therefore uses full independence. The opposite of freedom would be the dependence of our will to external, foreign will. But does a man always know what he wants? Can he do everything he wants to? Is it in accordance with human nature to confine one's own "I" and to separate it from the will of others?"[2] Momentary will is often not the real one, and conflicting desires may exist in the same man. But above all, one comes across the border to his own nature – he wants more than he can, so the obstacle that gets in the way of his desire does not always come from the outside, but from the narrowness of his being. That is why one must learn to place his will to comply with his own nature, and personal "calling for freedom", otherwise he is exposed to the danger of

1 Stefania Lubańska, "Wolność w koncepcji wiary Kierkegaarda." in *Wolność we współczesnej kulturze*, ed. Zofia J. Zdybicka (Lublin: KUL 1997), 737.

2 Kongregácia pre Vieroučné Otázky, Dokumenty o Teológii Oslobodenia (Rím: SÚSCM 1987), 77–80.

self-destruction. Moreover, everyone is aimed at another person, other people, and everyone needs a community. Thus to learn aligning one's own will with the will of others with regard to the true good, means to be able to "want in the right way". The truth and justice is the measure of true freedom. When a person withdraws this base and believes himself to be God, he falls into a lie and instead of realizing his freedom he may destroy himself.

Freedom does not mean to be free to do anything: Freedom is for good, in which the true happiness is only. Good is thus the goal of freedom. Therefore, man is free to the extent in which he comes to the knowledge of the truth and how this knowledge manages his will. Exemption with regard to knowledge of the truth, which only manages the will, is a necessary condition for freedom, worthy of the name.

In his book Freiheit und Verantwortung[3] Romano Guardini deals with several aspects of freedom and offers the following answer: Man is free when he can go where he wants to in his country, when he can do what he considers to be correct, and can give his life a form which suits him. In his monologue he claims that man can do what he likes, if it does not hurt others. He is free when he can do without any barriers what belongs to his human nature, if he does not violate the equal right of others. Freedom does not occur by itself, but it must be wanted. Freedom is based on natural disposition; it matures through history; it is ensured by social order, but it is also the role and work of each individual. Passive freedom does not exist. Not within the meaning of personal existence, because freedom is the expression of spirit which is manifested through a live act. Not even in terms of external order, because even the freest constitution, which is not lived and fulfilled, loses its existence. One asks the right to his beliefs. This means the opportunity to reflect on the meaning of life as he considers being right. Freedom is not entitled to vacancy or free opinion, but it lies in the right relationship to nature.

Man is free to the extent when nobody interferes with his proceedings. English philosophers differed in their views of how wide the area of interfering in the freedom of an individual may, or should be. They considered that in this situation freedom cannot be unlimited, because otherwise it would result in a situation where all people could interfere with the lives of other people without any restrictions, and this kind of "natural" freedom would lead to social chaos, which would not meet the minimum human needs. It is necessary to demarcate areas of private life and public legal authority. People largely depend on each other and no activity is so private, that it never affects lives of others.

3 We use Slovak translation of a book by Romano Guardini, *Sloboda a zodpovednosť* (Trnava: Dobrá kniha 2001), 60-64.

Proper use of freedom

After the fall of totalitarian regimes, societies achieved the coveted freedom. But another major problem also appeared there - the problem of the use of freedom. The danger of this situation lies in the fact that a man tries to depart the use of freedom from an ethical dimension – i.e. the dimension of moral good and evil. Specific understanding of freedom, which is now widespread in public opinion, diverts human attention from ethical right. It is a form of primitive liberalism, whose impact is often devastating. European traditions, even from the enlightenment period, recognize the necessity of criteria for the use of freedom. However, these criteria are not noble good "bonum honestum", but rather the usefulness and pleasantness. Utilitarian anthropology is based on the assumption that man searches only for personal profit. The answer to the utilitarian ethics can be found in the philosophy of Immanuel Kant. The formulation of the categorical imperative is essential to morality: "Act only according to that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law."[4] Kant's ethics of absolute imperative stressed the binding character of man's moral decision, but at the same time it broke him away from what is the basis of morality: the bonum honestum. One can act well or badly because he has free, although fallible will. Objective nobility or usefulness in a utilitarian sense can be assigned as criteria of choice. But the main criterion is true conscience. If one chooses doing the genuine goodness as the principle for his personal, family and social environment, then he truly realizes his freedom. At the same time this allows him to avoid possible deviations or overcome them successfully. "Common good, namely ‚what is useful for a whole', is usually located at the level of State, the most competent community for realizing the ideals of the good life. Right and virtue designate it."[5]

There is no true freedom without love for others – do not confuse freedom with individualism

Unforgettable Pope John Paul II was an extraordinary sign of these times just because of his close relationship to man, his freedom, human dignity and the protection of human life. He had a special relationship to the youth, which he called "the Morning Star of the new millennium". For many it was surprising that elderly Pope was able to mesmerize and rend

4 Immanuel Kant, "Základy metafyziky mravov," in *Pamäť a identita, dielo Jána Pavla II* (Trnava: SSV 2005), 42.

5 Maria Bal-Nowak, "Prawa człowieka a dobro wspólne," in *Etyka i polityka,* ed. Dorota Probucka (Cracow: Akademia Pedagogiczna w Krakowie, Impuls 2005), 362.

the masses of young people. It was so because he spoke to the heart of the matter, even more deeply – to the heart of man. He emphasized that the youth cannot let be torn down by the false ideology of freedom, spurious culture and consumerism, but it should remain faithful to the values that give meaning to life. During his second visit to Slovakia, meeting youth in ancient Nitra – on 30th June 1995 – he was talking about the gift of freedom and its possible misuse in the following way: "Dear friends, remember what a priceless gift it is that you received from God. Do not confuse freedom with individualism. There is no true freedom without love for others. Christians live freedom as a service in the belief that this is what the development of true civilization in Europe and worldwide depends on. Saint Cyril and Methodius to the deployment of life refused to submit the faith to the interests of power. Faith always protects the rights of freedom and condemns the physical and moral slavery." There is slavery caused by others, and there is also slavery which man causes to him. The youth of Slovakia, always keep your eyes open! Do not let you be misled by a false ideology of freedom, which on behalf of a seeming happiness spreads indifferentism and relativism, and thus deprives the conscience of values that give meaning to life. Likewise, in social terms, freedom should not be confused with nationalism. ["Yes" for patriotism, "no" for nationalism.] Cultural diversity is wealth to be managed in large mutual respect and true collaboration. Reject the temptation of violence and racism. Be the makers of peace, dialogue and solidarity."[6]

Freedom and media

Social communication promotes psychological freedom by the means of increasing the choice. Mass media operate on our imagination through images and sounds creating an ideal image that each of us carries in him/herself. Engaging our imagination they involve in creating of ourselves, a kind of eternity in our lives. Creating a free person is a lifelong task; it is an activity that takes place also outside our mind. Media reflect the nature and values of the outside world. When deciding about concrete actions and structures that promote the fundamental freedom, we can refer to the psychological and moral value. "Culture, based on the mass media can have a positive impact in shaping moral life in western communities and opening societies in Central and Eastern Europe."[7]

Media must take the great opportunity that results from their mission to foster dialogue, cultural exchange, solidarity, and world peace.

6 J. Košiar, Š. Labo, Š. Vragaš, *Apoštol národov dvadsiateho storočia* (Trnava: Dobrá kniha 1995), 44-45.

7 Tadeusz Zasępa, *Médiá v čase globalizácie*, (Bratislava: Lúč 2002), 341.

Formation to responsible and critical use of media allows us to use them in a proper and reasonable way. As they form the part of today's culture, they should not be the handlers, but rather the educators especially of the younger generation. "Participation of the media lies in their very nature, since they are inherently good for all the designated people. Social communication as a public service requires a spirit of cooperation and shared responsibility, as well as conscientious attention to the use of public resources and carrying out public tasks; and it also includes compliance and other measures or structures used to achieve this goal."[8]

Social communication means are a powerful force that can use imagination, freedom and reflection to support development of a free man. On the other hand, they can destroy man's balance and order. The process of recovering lost balance is difficult, unpleasant and painful, but it bears fruit in the form of a morally mature person in a balance with world. We may conclude that "over several decades the media strongly affected individual, group or social life almost all over the world. It is documented that they have taken share in acquiring the models and patterns of behaviour, social norms, etc."[9]

Freedom – morality – moral principles

A man is a moral being in his freedom. If he wants the freedom to become his glory, to develop himself into a better, more sophisticated and fully-fledged human being, he is bound to make decisions correctly and responsibly. Man has to decide in accordance with moral principles. They show him what is right and wrong, what is allowed, what is prohibited, what he can and what he cannot do in his freedom. They set boundaries within which a person can use his freedom. If they are kept, freedom is a blessing for him and the world. If, however, he exceeds those limits, freedom becomes a destructive force. Limitless freedom - freedom without any obstacles becomes such a force. Cardinal Ján Chryzostom Korec in his reflections on freedom and morality warns that "a man without morals is able to destroy the globe, living on it and thereby destroy humanity."[10]

One therefore inevitably needs certain principles to live on. He needs morals. Cardinal comes to the conclusion that the only true morality is Christian morality. It was established by God before the foundation of the

8 Pope Benedict XVI, Posolstvo Svätého Otca Benedikta XVI. k 40. svetovému dňu spoločenských komunikačných prostriedkov (Trnava: SSV 2006), 14.

9 Andrea Lesková, "Masmédiá v socializačnom procese jednotlivca," in *Formácia dobrého človeka – project VEGA 1/00113/03* (Nitra: FF UKF 2006), 82.

10 Ján Chryzostom Korec, *Sloboda ako dar – či záhuba?* (Bratislava: LÚČ 2006), 67.

world and certified by two-thousand-year tradition of mankind. Hence no other morality derived from ideology or evolution is tenable. According to the Cardinal, no morality can be derived from evolution; except morality of callousness, violence and other killings in the interest of self-preservation; morality, which is on the side of stronger, more combative, while less proficient individual must give way, and is ultimately sentenced to death. In such a morality man is understood as an aside, random product of evolution, from which God as the creator and originator of everything was removed. And what is that morality without God? For example, it is morality such as that applied in Nazism or communism, in which what suited certain group of people, was considered good. For others, however, it was a tragedy. "Acts of human decency and human morality can be inferred only from an overall perspective of man as a spiritual, physical, free and responsible human being, which is on top of the world as a being, whose ultimate aim is not to die in the tomb, but to live forever."[11]

Important moral principles

If we today speak of moral principles and standards in society, we cannot overlook the area of social communication (media), which became part of everyday life. It is so, unfortunately, even at the expense of physical or mental health of humans. Ethics in social communication applies not only to what occurs in the cinema, television, radio, printed media or on the Internet, but also to many other aspects. Moral dimension is present not only in the content of communication (information) and communication process (how communication happens), but also in fundamental structural and systemic issues, including basic political issues affecting the distribution of the latest information technology and engineering.

The human person and human community are the end and measure of media use in social communication. Communication should be carried on by people, for people and for the sake of human development.

The good of human persons cannot be realized without the common good of communities to which they belong. Common good is the basis of the existence of community itself. Those who have responsibility in decision making and in the field of allocation of funds are required to consider the needs of the most vulnerable: the poor, the elderly, the unborn, the oppressed, and underclass, women, minorities, the sick and disabled, as well as families and religious groups.

Public participation in decision-making in media strategy. Participation at all levels should be organized systematically and truly representatively, never in favour of certain groups. This principle applies

11 Ibid., 86.

particularly where the media are in private hands and are used for business. In the interest of public participation, media makers must try to communicate with people, to know their problems and needs. However, media creators are not the only ones who have moral obligations. And also the public, media recipients – viewers, listeners and readers – have their obligations and responsibilities. In the first instance they should be able to distinguish – to make a choice, have good taste and true moral judgments. Therefore, this is about the formation of conscience.

Church should be in schools and should offer this kind of media education in its education programs (cf. Novae, 28; Communio et Progressio, 107). Church would be greatly served if its leaders and administrators received training on communication. This applies also to seminarians, monks, Catholic laity and pastors.

Parents also have a serious obligation to help their children to evaluate and use the media properly, via the formation of their conscience and developing critical skills in the selection of programs (cf. Familiaris Consortio, 76). In the interest of their children and even in their own interest, the parents must learn to distinguish and assess what they accept as viewers, listeners and readers, and should become a model of wise use of media in the home environment. Also youth needs guidance, in order to resist the temptations of uncritical and passive watching, pressure of classmates and friends, as well as commercial blackmail. Families - parents and children - could meet and form groups that would study and assess the problems and possibilities associated with the action of the means of social communication.[12]

Searching for a sense of morality in humans is now as essential question as it was in the past. Unforgettable Pope John Paul II expressed his opinion about the searching for a sense of morality as follows: "On the threshold of the 21st century, morality is a huge area of confusion. Everyone plays with terms such as "good" and "evil", "virtue" and "obligation" as he pleases, so they lose their ordinary meaning. What is ugly to someone, it is considered a basic human right for another. What is an act of mercy for someone; it is a crime for another. When it comes to the issue of morality, the current world often plays the role of Pontius Pilate, the old cynic with his contemptuous question "What is truth?" (Jn 18, 38). Pilate and many people today believe that this issue ends the whole discussion about morality. John Paul II. in the encyclical Veritatis Splendor suggests that this question is actually just the beginning."[13]

12 Pápežská Rada Pre Spoločenské Komunikačné Prostriedky, Etika v spoločenskej komunikácii, Pápežský list zo 4.6.2000, (Rím - Trnava: SSV 2000), 29–39, 20–26.

13 George Weigel, *Svedok nádeje. Životopis pápeža Jána Pavla II* (Bratislava: Práh 2005), 727.

Many people now argue that the essence of the modern human fate is plurality, and they are right. That is why it is necessary to point out the correlation between moral truth and freedom. There is no true freedom without the truth. In the intellectual climate of relativism, Pope John Paul II raises the bar of morality considerably high, when he claims in the encyclical Veritatis Splendor that "universal moral law – the law, which is a common "language" of serious debate about morality for people of different cultures and life experiences – is built-in in the human condition. Understanding the setting of moral life in universal human nature, according to Pope, is the basis on which it is possible to build a new humanism capable of defending human dignity."[14]

Man as a frailty being has a congenital weakness of moral character. A variety of suffering, the Bible refers to as the penalty for sin, relates to this. "All human life, both individual and collective, thus appears as a dramatic struggle between good and evil, between light and darkness. Indeed, one finds that he himself is unable to stifle onslaughts of evil effectively, so everyone feels as if chained. But the Lord himself came to free man and strengthen him via restoring him internally and driving out "the prince of this world" (Jn 12, 31), who held him in bondage to sin. Sin mutilates man, because it hinders the reach of human fullness. In the light of Revelation, noble profession and the deep misery that people are experiencing finds its ultimate meaning."[15]

Only human is able to realize and understand his acting. He is able to discern God's calling and freely respond to it. This modality of procedure is called the human action. Human also realizes the moral quality of the act. He knows that the act is good, while another act is wrong. "For Karol Wojtyła - John Paul II., an act of love is the fullest moral act, in which a man, filling the Gospel commandments in his freedom, at the same time opens himself to the world of values, and experiences them to such extent that he is willing to sacrifice himself on behalf of their implementation."[16] From a formal moral point of view the way how an acting person sees his/her own actions already in its physical reality is crucial. She/he understands what it means to do something for a reasonable implementation of his/her own person, for a good organization of his/her own good relationship with God. Thus, it is not about the act itself, but about the act as <<decision and personal conduct of a subject>> in due time. We may conclude that: "Human can realize (hear) God's call, to which he may take a position and respond to it. In short, he may freely

14 Ibid., 728.

15 Pope John Paul II, *Pamäť a identita* (Trnava: SSV 2005), 25.

16 Dorota Probucka, "Pojęcie normy w etyce Karola Wojtyły – Jana Pawła II," *Annales Academiae Paedagogicae Cracoviensis. Studia Philosophica*, III (2006): 107.

do what God is calling him to; but he may also freely not to take a note of it."[17] Human resembles to God with his freedom – created in his image. Freedom was given to man to his perfecting, refining, deepening in love. Freedom falls to the original spiritual existence of man. Via freedom man decides about the projecting of his own life.

What is the true face of Christian hope and its moral treasure then? The new generation can build on knowledge and experience of previous generations, so it can draw a moral treasure of all mankind. "The moral treasure of humanity is not present in the way the objects that we use are. It exists as the call for freedom and as an opportunity for freedom. However, this means following:

> Correct state of human affairs, the moral welfare of the world can never be ensured only through the structures, however valuable they were. Although such structures are not only important but also necessary, they cannot and must not exclude human freedom of the game.
>
> Freedom must always be obtained for good. Free assent to the good never exists simply by itself. If there were structures which could provide in some irreversible way – good – world order, the freedom of man would be denied, and therefore, ultimately, these structures would not be good at all."[18]

Summary

We live in a particular present time and our existence may be a specific testimony for the others. Authentic dialogue indicates that people are sincerely seeking the truth. When we take the truth from a human, then it is pure illusion to want to make him free. The truth and freedom either join together, or they both die. It is the same when we consider the relationship between freedom and responsibility. Dialogue and spiritual openness are essential conditions of individual freedom as well as nations.

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17 Anselm Gűnthőr, *Morálna teológia* (Rím: Slovenský ústav sv. Cyrila a Metoda 1989), 13.

18 Pope Benedict XVI, *Spe salv*i (Trnava: SSV 2008), 32–33.

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Wolność i miłość jako przeciwieństwa przemocy

Abstrakt

Jeśli uważamy etykę za dyscyplinę filozoficzną zajmującą się moralnymi aspektami ludzkich działań, to musi ona czerpać z specyficznej jakości woli, którą jest wolność. Właściwe korzystanie z wolności jest ściśle związane ze sposobem, w jaki człowiek postrzega dobro i zło. Swobodna ludzka kreatywność rozwija się trwale i skutecznie, jeśli opiera się na niezachwianej prawdzie, przekazanej człowiekowi. Poznanie prawdy idzie w parze z odpowiedzialnością i działaniem. Akty miłości i dobroci stanowią zaś najbardziej nieskazitelny sposób realizacji decyzji o wolności. Miłość wzmacnia i oczyszcza naszą ludzką zdolność do miłości. Jednocześnie miłość inicjuje oraz odnawia praktykowanie wszystkich naszych cnót. Jest to zasada obrazująca, źródło i cel szczególnego przestrzegania ideału etycznego dobra i piękna w życiu człowieka: miłość zakotwiczona w wolności i odpowiedzialności.
Słowa kluczowe: człowiek – wolna istota, moralność, dobro, wolność, miłość, odpowiedzialność.

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Freedom and Love as a contrary to Violence

Summary

When we consider ethics to be a philosophical discipline dealing with moral aspects of human actions, it needs to draw on substantial quality of will, which is freedom. Using the freedom properly is closely associated with the way human perceives good and evil. Free human creativity is being effectively and permanently developed if it is based on unshaken truth given to human. Knowing the truth goes hand in hand with accountability for and acts. Acts of love and goodness present the most impeccable way of freedom decisions realization. Love strengthens and purges our human ability to love. In the same time love reactivates and initiates the practicing of all of our virtues. It is the depicting principle, the source as well as the target of particular following of ethical ideal of good and beauty in human life. The love, which is anchored in freedom and responsibility.

Key words: man – a free creature, morality, good, freedom, love, responsibility.

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