

Moral Norms and Their Role in Modern Society

Shaydullayev N.

Associate of Professor, Namangan Engineering – Construction Institute

Abstract: The author of the article considers spirituality and morality as decisive principles that can influence the socio-cultural situation, believes that it is necessary to fight ideological aggression aimed at imposing false values imbued with ignorance and aimed at inflaming consumer instincts. Morality must be understood as an absolute value.

Keywords: globalization, personality, spirituality, culture, identity, values, tolerance, family, ethical ignorance.

Morality in public life is one of the ways and means of adapting individuals to life in society and combining individual freedom with social necessity, as well as responsibility, and resolving contradictions between them. Historically, morality is primary in the process of human socialization. It enters into the inner world of a person, and for its functioning, a person's own power over himself is enough. The essence of morality is that people realize the need for their behavior, which corresponds to a certain social behavioral type, while they rely on personal beliefs and public opinion.

Ethics is the science of basic moral norms and principles that govern human behavior in society. Ethics studies questions about what should be proper and moral behavior, what is good and evil, and how to make decisions based on moral principles.

Morality can be defined as a special form of normative and evaluative orientation of people in society and as the most important form of public will. Feelings of duty, conscience, and honor are formed in society, and through social relations they become the property of a person in the process of socialization and internalization. Morality regulates the behavior and consciousness of people in all spheres of life – economic, political, social and spiritual, it is determined in a certain way by the type of society.

The foundations of morality belong to the era of the tribal social system. This period is characterized by the power of nature, sensory experience, the peculiarity of conceptual thinking and the comprehension of reality in a fantastic way. There are various types of magic, totemism, fetishism, a system of prohibitions, certain rituals, rituals, mythology. It is generally recognized that consanguineous relations were organizational and normative principles in primitive society.

The communal norms of behavior in this society fostered collectivism and solidarity. Here we can talk about the mechanical solidarity that exists between people. In primitive society there was neither religious morality nor basic moral norms. They appeared at the end of the tribal system, by the period of patriarchy. Then primitive norms of morality are formed: the prohibition of cannibalism and incest, obedience to elders, decent work. These moral norms carried out regulatory regulation as if they were issued by a certain state institution. Although «the moral requirements of the tribal society were provided not only by public opinion, as well as individual

consciousness, but also to a large extent by the activities of institutions of clans and tribes (clan councils, tribal assemblies, councils of elders)».

Basic concepts related to ethics and morality:

Values are what a person considers important and valuable in life. Values may be different for each person and may include aspects such as justice, freedom, kindness, etc.

Norms are rules that determine how people should behave in certain situations. Norms can be written or not written, they regulate relations between people and set society's expectations for behavior.

Principles are the basic guidelines or rules that serve as the fundamental principles of ethics. Principles may include concepts such as justice, respect for human dignity, nonviolence, altruism, etc.

Decisions are choices that a person makes based on moral principles and values. Decision-making is based on a deliberate analysis and consideration of ethical aspects and possible consequences.

Responsibility is the awareness of personal responsibility and the ability to influence one's actions and their consequences. Responsibility includes understanding moral principles and following them in your actions.

New moral norms have appeared in a patriarchal society. The role of the authority of the male head of the family, the fidelity of the wife, the prohibition of lying, and blood feud have strengthened. This period is characterized by the identity of the moral norm with the usual norm. The system of prohibitions (taboos) is very important. They form the consciousness and will of individuals.

Mature communal-tribal relations led to the emergence of a class state, and although this system was based on a communal traditional way of life, it fought with all its might against it and ousted it. State institutions appear, they are outside the community and above it, the oldest sets of laws arise – the laws of Hammurabi, king of Babylon (II BC), the laws of Manu (I century BC) and others.

I will focus on the laws of Hammurabi. They belong to the era of the early slave-owning system and differ from the religious and ethical norms of the communal patriarchal system. In essence, this is already a set of property, family and criminal law. The main place is occupied by transactions with property («buy», «sell», «exchange», etc.) and further actions that violate property rights («steal», «rob», etc.).

Encroachment on private property and theft are prohibited by law and punishable by death. The law defines family relations (conclusion and dissolution of marriage, recognition of paternity, remarriage, etc.). The laws provided for death for theft, for lying, if it is not proven in court. Another measure of punishment was self-mutilation (circumcision of ears, fingers, etc.). Conflicts were resolved through talion. It is obvious that at that time there were no universal imperatives, no abstract moral values, and there was no individual moral motivation, although many moral norms (prohibitions) of the communal way of life passed into the legal code and religious provisions. Class slave-owning morality is different - it is based on the ideas of law.

The process of individualization of the social existence of isolated individuals from the tribal community has led to a change in consciousness as a form of social regulation. New norms were needed that would establish the individual as an independent subject of action. And this has become the golden rule of morality: act towards others the way you would like them to act towards you. It is found in ancient Indian culture, in the Gospel of Matthew, in the teachings of Confucius: «What you do not want, do not do to others.» The golden rule has been widespread since the early class society. It exists in the history of ethical thought, it was mainly mentioned as a requirement of everyday morality, and not as an ethical principle.

Morality is humanity, a decent attitude towards another person, it is the primary, most elementary human attitude that precedes all others.

A qualitative change in European morality and culture took place in the era of modern times. It was in the Declaration of Human and Civil Rights that it was proclaimed that only the rights and freedoms of another person determine the boundaries of what a person should do and what he should not do. This is not just abstract moral principles or religious fantasies, but a real proclamation that a person's moral duty is to build their own lives independently, without violating the rights of others.

The content of human rights and freedoms had very important principles – those that corresponded to the universal requirements of morality. This is the principle of human freedom, nonviolence, self-determination of the individual, non-interference in private life, inviolability of private property, tolerance and others. In the works of T. Hobbes, J. Locke, J. J. Rousseau, they were discussed and proclaimed the highest moral standards, although during this period people began to distinguish between subjective ideas of good, evil, justice, etc. Thus, the principle of freedom of conscience and religion is endowed with the property of objectivity and universality and is considered as a reflection of the natural order of things. The basis of moral relations in a democratic society is the equality of people.

In I. Kant, it is freedom and equality that are the defining features of the content of the categorical imperative: «Act in such a way that you always treat a person, both in your own person and in the person of everyone else, as an end, and never treat him only as a means».

Significant changes in morality are taking place in capitalist society, especially at the present stage of its development. If in pre-capitalist societies morality plays the most important role in shaping a person, then capitalism with its market relations, thirst for profit, wealth is characterized by moral decline, is immoral and dehumanized.

The unrestrained pursuit of profit turns into greed and leads to the deformation of human relations, human goals in a capitalist society. This situation leads to a rupture of ties between people, leads to isolation and individualism, immorality and crime, and to a deepening split between rich and poor in different countries.

In the pursuit of profit, multinational corporations in poor countries restrain modernization, do not comply with safety regulations, use child labor, and ignore the social problems of the countries where they make a profit. The main thing for entrepreneurs is to gain wealth and success in the competitive struggle. For this, they sacrifice morality, and only legal law is the regulator of business relations. But these legal laws often lag behind life, and entrepreneurs act on their own, although moral norms, which are unwritten, react to practical problems faster than legal laws, but they are not taken into account by entrepreneurs.

It is safe to say that modern capitalist society tends to erode moral values and dehumanize people.

The spiritual essence of morality manifests itself in a certain orientation of a person, social groups of society towards specific moral values and norms. And hence the corresponding actions and behavior of people follow. The peculiarity of moral norms is that they are not fixed by state institutions and are not state norms like legal ones. They are performed because this is a person's inner self-image, and the assessment of this behavior by others is approval or condemnation. Without morality, the life of society is impossible.

There are quite a few ways to justify morality. I will mention only a few: utilitarianism, absolutism, naturalism, cosmism.

Utilitarianism assumes that moral values are distinguished from external social goods. Moral activity is justified if it leads to the happiness of people. The prerequisite for the emergence of

this theory was early capitalism with its development of productive forces and with the rise of consumption to a higher level.

Absolutist concepts are derived from an authoritative external source, such as God. Thus, I. Kant in the critique of practical reason writes about God and the immortality of the soul. He accepts them as postulates for the implementation of moral actions, although reason remains the main, reliable and only criterion for Kant.

Naturalism presupposes the derivation of morality from the natural qualities of an individual – from the peculiarities of the organization of the human psyche, or from the basic instincts that are inherent in all living organisms.

For cosmism, it is obvious that the evolution of morality is connected with the development of the cosmos. The influence of cosmic forces contributes to the manifestation of human spirituality and morality.

All these concepts do not provide a clear answer to the rationale for the emergence of morality and its understanding as the social will and core of man. Although, probably, as a result of a very long historical practice, along with the formation of social needs in the process of activity and the preservation of the integrity of human existence, moral values are also formed. People follow them, and for them these values are currently not acting as prohibitions, but as a matter of course.

Almost always, the prescriptions of moral norms are expressed in the imperative mood: «do not kill,» «live your life unnoticed,» etc. It is also characteristic of moral norms that they require certain behavior, and not just convince, teach you to act in a certain way. We can talk about individual moral norms, for example, the ethics of a doctor, or about universal norms that apply to each person. These may be categorical norms that are always in force (norms of Christian morality), or norms that must be fulfilled by people in certain situations. It can be said that the norm at first looks like an external one, like a prescription for a person, but it becomes moral only when this prescription is realized by a person and becomes his inner, his subjective necessity, his will. In its objective essence, moral norms are a specific form of coordination of human freedom and will with common needs, interests, with the will and interests of other communities, other subjects. These can be classes, groups, social strata, etc. They are relative, but at the same time, moral norms are expressed in a universal form. Specifically, moral norms appear as typical standards of human behavior in a certain environment, and they change in the process of historical development. The norms of morality exist not only in the moral consciousness, they are objectified in the actions, moral qualities of a person, moral positions and relationships of people.

Human behavior is primarily motivated by the natural and social needs and specific circumstances of the individual. Socio–natural reality is the beginning of human behavior. But there is another reality – morality, moral necessity. It acts as certain restrictions for a person, carried out either by their own will, or by the will of the collective (in primitive society.)

If we summarize the features of moral norms, they come down to the following. Moral norms always encourage good. They are the result of good will, independently accepted by a person. The choice of moral norms is not determined by their usefulness, but on the contrary, norms guide a person and help him set or choose goals. The norms dictate certain prohibitions, but at the same time they oblige people to live together. And finally, a person sets moral standards for himself and follows them.

It is obvious that the community of people sets moral standards and, as a rule, fulfills them itself. It is absolutely true that morality is a social principle in a person, it binds people together before all other connections.

Moral values include good, evil, love, justice, duty, responsibility, conscience, shame, etc. All of them have different purposes in the language of morality and fix different aspects of morality.

Thus, goodness is focused on the value-normative aspect of the content of morality, and conscience, shame indicate the spiritual and psychological mechanisms and ways that regulate personality behavior. Conscience occupies a special place in the system of moral values.

The higher the measure of a person's social development and social activity, the more important conscience plays in her life.

Conscience is a special spiritual ability of a person, a special mechanism responsible for the preservation of moral qualities and human behavior. Quite rightly, conscience is considered the core of a person, and its absence leads to collapse, deforms relations between people, leads to the destruction of the entire system of moral values, a spiritual crisis.

Moral principles are the basic attitudes, norms and principles that guide people's behavior and interpersonal relationships. They determine what is right or wrong, what should be done or avoided in various situations. It is important to be aware of these principles and adhere to them in order to maintain harmony and justice in society.

A variety of principles:

Honesty: This is a principle based on truth and the absence of deception. Honesty promotes trust and respect for relationships.

Fairness: Being fair means treating all people equally and without bias. This principle is based on the awareness of the rights and responsibilities of each person.

Respect: Respect for other people and their rights is an important moral principle. This means the recognition and value of every person, regardless of their age, gender, nationality and religion.

Kindness: Kindness implies treating others with love, compassion and care. She promotes the help and support of others.

Responsibility: Being responsible means bearing the consequences of your actions and being ready to accept them. This principle implies awareness of one's responsibilities and concern for the well-being of others.

In the 21st century, in connection with globalization, proposals are being made to build a moral system of global coexistence of all states, to establish a new world order that proclaims the idea of «globalizing humanism», «the primary globalization of morality», norms of behavior, ideals. We are talking about a kind of public conscience, to which everyone should be involved.

Such arguments about a unified new morality are absurd. Humanity has developed moral values and universal norms over its long history. If you follow them, if you identify them with everyone, and not destroy them, not alienate them from a person, as is happening today in a post-industrial society, then you can free an individual from the shackles of immorality.

Of course, a person can be taught moral values and norms. He can't help but live a meaningful life. After all, no one can give meaning to a person's life except himself. Therefore, when setting the direction of his life, an individual takes into account the intellectual and practical experience of the people around him, as well as moral experience, and only the person himself is responsible for what he has chosen.

All the properties, qualities, characteristics set by social moral education only give results when they pass «through» the person himself and are developed by him in the process of individual and social development.

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