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## TOWARDS AN ETHICAL RENAISSANCE

Within Ourselves.....

If we examine the historical evolution of homo sapiens and do so without narcissism, we must reach the conclusion that man continues to prey on his own kind. The tendency of human beings to prey upon their fellow beings has appeared with more or less intensity, but has been ceaseless, during the last 10 thousand years of civilization in all the social and political systems, slavery, feudalism, absolutism, colonialism, Nazi-Fascist and communist totalitarianism and now also democratic capitalism. All cultures and civilizations have also rationalized and glorified the highest exponent of human predation, war.

The roots of the permanent predation may be found in an instinctive (we do not know if it is genetic) tendency of homo sapiens to believe that his own group (family, band, tribe clan, ethnic group, nation, religion, culture and gender) are different and superior to other human groups and thus split our own human species between us and the rest. This does not allow us to share our humanity with other human beings that are different because of their ethnic group, culture, credo and allows us to treat them as if they were a different species, making it possible to create the concept of an enemy. This instinctive predatory tendency is what ethnologists call: pseudo-speciation. Humans have an instinctive tendency to pseudo-speciate other humans, to treat them as if they were a different species. The lowering of humanity is a constant in the history of man and continues to be so today with social exclusion, massive violations of human rights, terrorism and extermination wars and genocide that occur in different regions of the world.

After the Enlightenment, Western rationalism believed that this instinctive predatory tendency of man could be controlled by establishing just societies. Since then, the achievement of happiness will be transformed in the West into the art of organizing just societies. The first attempts were the American and French revolutions. The modern concept of revolution and of political and social engineering that afterwards inspired the Bolshevik totalitarian revolution, the delirium of the Chinese Cultural Revolution, other national revolutions, as well as the social and political organization of almost all the modern Nation States, from liberal to totalitarian emerged from there. Paradoxically, from the birth of the idea of revolution and of political and social engineering to develop just societies, the human predatory tendency which it sought to control, became even more out of control because the political and social engineers became mortal enemies because they had rival projects for happiness as occurred between communism and capitalism.

The ideological war between capitalism and communism was not actually a conflict between two different ideologies but rather a sort of civil war between two extreme approaches of the same Western ideology of seeking a just society and personal happiness through material progress that was spread with even greater vigor after the industrial revolution. Thus, both capitalism as well as communism are two concoctions from the factories of the industrial revolution in the West. Capitalism represents the individualist and democratic approach based on the market and inspired above all by the Anglo-Saxon political philosophy. Communism represented the dialectic, collectivist and authoritarian approach of German political philosophy. These two predatory approaches are the children of the same Western ideology that solely seeks happiness through material progress.

Surrounded by thousands of nuclear missiles and using a propaganda and disinformation that had never been seen before, the communist and capitalist leaders practiced among themselves the pseudo-speciation. They applied the treatment of a different species. They mutually denied each others humanity and each of them presented themselves as the representatives of a new higher ethical order that definitely excluded human predation.

The totalitarian approach of communism was undoubtedly more dehumanized than the democratic-individualistic approach of capitalism because it did not even acknowledge the right of individuals to doubt the project of collective happiness. However, fear of communism moderated the predatory attitude of capitalism, forcing it to establish social protection and offer independence to the peoples that it colonized. In the end, the totalitarian self-predation of communism led to its own technological backwardness and was incapable of creating the material progress that it promised until its own leaders became convinced that the system was unworkable and that it was better to adopt the other approach of the ideology of material progress, capitalism.

The victory of the capitalist aspect of the ideology of the seeking of happiness through material progress has not meant that we are entering into a new ethical order that controls and mitigates pseudo-speciation and predation between human beings. On the contrary, we are now facing the world hegemony of its most predatory version. A savage version of capitalism that seeks material happiness by spreading ecologically unsustainable consumption patterns and preying upon individuals, companies and nations through the market and through technology.

The only thing that now interests us now that fear of communism has been left behind is higher earnings and easy money without caring for the social and ecological costs. The maintenance of individual political rights, of democratic institutions and above all, of social rights, which are the essence of Western civilization are now subordinated to the liberalization and deregulation of the markets. In Latin America, Russia, China, Asia and Africa, markets have been liberalized and a large part of the economy has been privatized without developing democratic institutions, without any promotion of civil society, without social solidarity and without any respect for ecology. The triumph of capitalism in its most predatory version is thus blocking the appearance of a new planetary ethics that would promote a global society that reduces social exclusion and respects ecology. The economy is being globalized but ethics is not. The fashion today is the obsession to share in the banquet of material consumption by all means and at any price. Science, technology, economic theory and political decisions are placed at the service of this frenetic search for quick earnings and material pleasure that devours social rights and the environment.

Today, the predatory logic of the current economic globalization legitimates financial speculation as superior to job creating investment, dismantles social conquests and uses technologies that create unemployment, precisely at the time in which we have an explosive urban demographic growth in the underdeveloped countries. In recent years, television has constantly been showing scenes of national predations, civil struggles, narco-guerrillas, terrorism and a high amount of delinquency. We are seeing even how poor countries instead of developing implode into ungovernable chaotic entities involved in infernal struggles where rival armed groups, infected by an emotional plague of pseudo-speciation mutually reject each others humanity.

At the end of the XX century when underdevelopment is the characteristic of the majority of Nation States and mass consumption and ecological degradation is the result of the progress of a minority, the words of Rabrindanath Tagore continue to be relevant: Progress for whom ... progress towards what?

The great material progress that has been achieved needs a moral sense, a true ethical renaissance, otherwise humanity will face great social and political as well as ecological turbulence. This ethical renaissance is undoubtedly difficult because humanity only learns as the result of great suffering and catastrophes. There are

no wars today between the great powers because the First and Second World Wars left more than 60 million dead and the fear of the nuclear weapon prevented the Third. It is also difficult because the renaissance should begin within ourselves, basically by controlling our instinct to pseudo-speciate other humans and treat them as if they were a different species. It is only when we begin to think of the "others" as "us" that we are capable of a coherent collective ethical action.

Control over one's self, the basis of an ethical collective renaissance must lead us to renounce violence and exploitation within our personal relationships, to abandon our narcissist view of us as the dominant species of the planet and not exercise unnecessary violence against living species and the environment; waive the instant reward of new and continual material needs and moderate our personal consumption patterns; lose our fascination with all scientific and technological progress that is indifferent to the poverty of humanity; and assume all this personal transformation without political ambition, because ethical acts should be their own reward.

This control over one's self is no new discovery. Great and ancient religions and philosophies have preached for centuries the control of our tendency to pseudo-speciate and prey on others. It has rather been the search for happiness in material rewards and the abandonment of the internal exercise of controlling one's self that has divorced the great progress of the XX century from ethics and is today one of the causes of the spiritual vacuum that leads many people once more towards religion, even to becoming members of sects and assuming integral, violent devotions that paradoxically are pseudo-speciative.

In the World.....

To progress towards an ethical renaissance of a planetary dimension it is essential to abandon any utopian search for a just human society, any social engineering claim and all political arrogance that seeks to preach a single social and political credo for all humanity. The idea of a just society is an intellectual fallacy inherited from the Century of Lights that has led to thousands of human sacrifices and that should not be repeated. A perfect and happy society will never be achieved. The human condition is not that of permanent suffering but neither is it of living heaven on earth. An ethical renaissance could markedly reduce our tendency to pseudo-speciate and prey upon other human beings and make life more decent but it cannot ever lead to the birth of a new man, the end of history and planetary happiness.

An ethical renaissance must be based above all on tolerance and on pluralism. It should respect and accept the different cultures, their values and ideals. Nevertheless, tolerance and pluralism should never become a cultural relativism that ends by losing the ethical meaning of the concept of humanity. Cultural tolerance and pluralism cannot ever reach the point of saying that I am in favor of political freedom but I respect that you have concentration camps for dissidents...I don't torture but I respect your right to torture....A tolerance and a pluralism of this nature would be morally absurd.

There should therefore be a set, a specific, not an infinite number, of common human values that must be protected in any culture and whose violation constitutes inhumane acts. These are a set of rights that identify us as human beings, as part of humanity, in spite of the diversity of cultures and civilizations. This set of rights exists and has been accepted by almost all the international community in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in other pacts of the same nature established in the United Nations and other regional organizations.

The ethical task in the years to come implies ensuring that these rights have coercive support, that their violators be punished by international courts to prevent impunity. In the same way that the economy is globalized, so should justice be globalized, respecting cultures, but defending the (not infinite) set of rights that makes us a part of humanity. The punishment of human rights violators is very important to produce a

new ethical and juridical order. Without coercion by international courts we will not have the effective conscience of humanity and without this conscience, it will be difficult to have a planetary ethical renaissance.

However, the punishment of the international courts is insufficient in itself. We also would need a minimum international public force to dissuade and quench the domestic infernos before the occurrence of the massive human rights violations and genocide occur. Although an ethical renaissance should be strictly based on non violence, it must not be utopian. It is necessary to struggle to achieve the establishment of some kind of permanent international public force that does not depend on the Security Council or a new organization. What is important is the existence of a permanent international military force that will dissuade massive violations and arrest violators and subject them to the international courts

From the military and financial point of view, it is not a difficult task to endow the United Nations with a permanent sword. There is today a sufficient supply of armed forces and even of mercenaries in the world to form a sort of Foreign Legion of Blue Helmets for rapid intervention, cantoned in the different regions with the financing and logistical support of the G. 7. The problem is the lack of political will of the great powers. The wealthiest democracies of the earth do not like to involve themselves militarily in the protection of the human rights that they proclaim so much. This reluctance has its roots in their own mass consumption and material reward societies that immunize against compassion and solidarity and ensure that they are politically unwilling to accept military losses to correct wrongs in lands that are regarded as distant and barbaric. This feeling of non commitment to humanity is the clearest demonstration that there will never be an ethical planetary renaissance until individuals control their obsession with instant material rewards and change their excessive consumption patterns.

In the absence of a sword that could bar the massive predation of human rights, the best way to achieve respect for them is to struggle for the existence of genuine democracies, states of law and civil societies in Latin America, Asia, the Middle East and Africa Nothing will better protect human rights internationally than the intensive practice of democracy in these nations. Therefore, it is necessary to maintain a permanent collective action in poor and wealthy countries against dictatorships and above all against the false democracies that manipulated by soldiers and klepto capitalists, are tolerated by the democratic powers because of their economic interests.

Another major ethical task is to support the equal access of women to political posts. Equal political access of men and women is the only way to reflect the duality of humanity and correct female exclusion from decision taking. Women are not a minority, nor are they a social or ethnic category, they are the component itself of the peoples and therefore must have equal political participation with men. Only so will the peoples be represented as they actually exist and above all the exclusively male approaches that in centuries of patriarchal society have proven to be extremely predatory will be balanced. Thus today, the most civilized countries, those that are least predatory with regard to human rights and most democratic of the world are those that are promoting strategies of parity and have the largest female political participation.

With regard to the current tendencies of the global economy, it is necessary to revert the ethical regression that seeks to make a morally neutral natural law of the market as is the law of natural selection, that decides which individuals, companies or nations are capable or incapable of surviving, without paying any attention to unemployment, poverty, the degree of development of the countries or the ecology. This neoliberal thought has transformed the original liberal suggestions of economic freedom and ethical responsibility of Adam Smith into a global market Darwinism. As a result, the current economic globalization is increasing even more the inequality between rich and poor, in countries and between countries.

Faced with this situation, initiatives have been suggested to control the amoral sense of financial capital and of certain direct investment that has transformed the world into a vast speculative casino and into a vast

workshop with deplorable working conditions. The suggested moralizing instrument has been a world fiscalization consisting in three taxes. The first, on multinational speculative capital movements, the second on the multinational companies that do not observe decent working conditions and the third on the profits of multinationals (following the United States unitary tax method) to prevent price manipulations and tax evasion.

All these measures undoubtedly help to correct the amoral feeling of globalization and must be supported and spread but they do not resolve the main ethical problem of global capitalism, which is none other, than its lack of feasibility as a producer and consumer ecology: The current method of production is polluting the air, the water, creating deforestation, desertification, destroying biodiversity, changing the climate and amorally seizing the rights of future generations to live in and enjoy a healthy and viable ecological environment.

What is sought by the current capitalist globalization is nothing else than to convey the unsustainable consumption patterns of some thousand million consumers from the wealthy countries to some 5 thousand million consumers from the wealthy countries to some 5 thousand million inhabitants of underdeveloped countries. The irony is that the development and the poverty that is created by the same capitalist globalization does not allow their adoption. Otherwise, the planetary biosphere would be consumed by 5 thousand million credit cards. All this culture of revealing more and more material consumption which is actually unsustainable actually makes no sense. This materialistic delirium is predatory and may be the most important ethical problem that humanity will have to face.

To face it, it will be necessary to insist that the cost of the production of goods and services must reflect the ecological cost. That a growth rate of the GDP cannot be accounted for as wealth when it consists in heating up the atmosphere, destroying biodiversity, destroying forests, creating water scarcities, polluting the air, rivers, seas and creating toxic waste dumps. Another estimate will have to be invented different from the current GDP which is an aberration. For example, the Index of Sustainable Economic Welfare (Professors Herman E. Daly and John B. Cobb Jr) that deducts obvious losses such as the costs of polluted air and water or the consumption of non renewable natural resources.

Also, within the new suggestions to give the economy an ethical meaning, there is the idea of the installation of a new industrial system. That is, new industries only devoted to recycling and creating products that are also in their turn recyclable. In what is called the reverse factory unit, an industrial unit that produces by recycling and recycles producing. (Professor Hiroyuki Yoshikawa, University of Tokyo). The idea is that this new industrial system. What has been established is that this new industrial system will be established in the poorest regions of the planet, so that it creates jobs as well as protecting the environment.

This new industrial revolution of the reverse factory or any other initiative cannot be made effective unless the participation of the transnational companies is promoted. A new ethical approach is obliged to discard all prejudices and ensure that the transnational companies that are the real and principle operates. This New Industrial Revolution of the reverse factory or any other initiative cannot become effective unless the participation of the multi-national companies is promoted. A new ethical approach is obliged to discard all prejudice and ensure that the multinational companies that are the real and principal actors of the global economy assume a co-responsibility with the States to seek a solution to the problems of economic deterioration and employment. Until now the multinational companies are in the best of the worlds. The only way to achieve this co-responsibility would be to incorporate the most powerful multi-national companies as members of the IMF, the World Bank, the WTO and the United Nations Program for the Environment or create a Special Forum. What cannot be done is to continue with an exclusive representation of the States in the world agencies because it is completely unreal. Today the great majority of countries have a GNP and exports of less than the production and sales figures of the 100 largest multi-national companies. The presence of the most powerful beside the Government in these organizations responds also to the current interest of the multinationals. One of the most powerful presences alongside the Governments since it also

answers to the interest of the multinationals since if it continues the current tendency towards ecological deterioration and social exclusion, its products would become less and less consumable because they would be incompatible both with ecology as well as the meager income of the majority of the world's population.

It will be an extremely difficult task to change the patterns of production and consumption and reconcile economy with ecology because the poor will find it difficult to renounce the dream to someday consume as much as the wealthy and the latter, except for an occasional spiritual transformation, will never cease to increase their consumption. It will only be when ecological catastrophes increase and their social and political turbulence begin to affect the most powerful companies and nations, that they will become conscious of the ethical arguments in favor of changing the predatory patterns of production and consumption. For these reasons, the measures to reconcile the economy with ecology must be focused on the rich countries that are mainly responsible for the current deterioration and because they are the only ones that have the economic power and technology to finance a new form of producing and consuming. It will be completely amoral for the cost of these changes be paid by the poor countries.

In view of the development of science and of technology, an ethical renaissance must be skeptical towards progress that is not related to the urgent needs of humanity. In the last thirty years a large part of scientific activities such as astrophysics, expeditions to the solar system, the creation of an expensive space station, low temperature physics, particle physics and other activities of pure science absorb enormous economic resources, that are far from the deplorable living conditions that exist on the earth. At the same time, applied science and technology devote themselves to creating needs and products that have no connection to the enormous privations suffered by the majority of humanity and that only serve to increase the profits of the companies, creating unemployment and satisfying a small fraction of humanity. Computers, Lap tops, Internet, video cameras, faxes, new cars, fashion, international credit, intercontinental tourism, robots, sophisticated weapons and thousands of gadgets, are only accessible to high income countries and human groups, some 1,800 million consumers. The rest of humanity, some 4,200 million, live on one to four dollars a day.

The profitability guided market will not produce technologies that seek to satisfy these vital needs of humanity. Only science and technology guided by ethical motivations can do so and for this, the scientists themselves must be involved. One of the great challenges of an ethical renaissance will be to recruit them and struggle with them to orient the new technologies and above all, seek to give cheap access to food, water and power, to the majority of the population of the planet that has insufficient income to satisfy these three vital needs of its survival.

Faced with so many resources spent on exploration to Mars, shouldn't we ask ourselves if there is more hunger on this planet than on Herat and if it is not ethical to postpone the exploration of the solar system to devote these resources to eliminating hunger on our planet. In view of so much production and sale of highly destructive weapons, after the conclusion of the cold war, shouldn't we also ask ourselves whether it is ethical to create a world tax on the research, development and sale of all types of weapons to devote it for example to the creation of new cheap and non polluting power or to fighting the lack of sanitation in poor countries.

These questions show us the ethical deficit of a large part of the current scientific progress and force us, today more than ever, to act because we are facing the acceleration of the technological revolution, promoted by Computer Science, through a greater sophistication of the digital memory of computers; by Biotechnology, through greater progress in DNA engineering; and by the future Neutotechnology, that through neurosensors will permit the manipulation of our personal emotions. All of these technologies can free us from the old work methods and from the illnesses of the body and of the mind, but they can also create a great concentration of wealth and power in those that have the skill to understand and control them. These technologies can destroy industries and agricultural production based on old technology and create unemployment, they can oppress those that have no income to purchase them and they can concentrate on the

wealthiest. Everything depends on the ethical orientation that we give to this technological revolution that begins with the millennium.

Nevertheless, we must admit that faced with the explosive growth of the urban population in the underdeveloped countries, the orientation of the technological revolution has its limits because disinvention does not exist and therefore the new technologies will continue to eliminate employment, making the enormous factories full of a proletarian population vanish and allowing the appearance of production centres with a considerable amount of automatization and computing with far fewer workers. Faced with this process of irreversible world deproletarianization, the urban population in the poor countries cannot continue to undergo an explosive rise. Every year more than 38 million seek jobs in the underdeveloped cities. 1,000 million new jobs will be needed in the next years. How will we employ all this mass of world population with the new technologies? Forbidding inventions, harassing inventors, destroying the machines that liberate thousands of men from heavy and routine work?

An ethical renaissance must not only orient science and technology to satisfy the basic needs of humanity in food, water and power but must also promote the self control of the reproductive instinct through voluntary and democratic family planning seeking for the sectors with less income to have access to the same contraceptive means used by the most favored sector of society. Nothing is more relevant when one is facing the contradictions between the technological revolution and the demographic explosion than the words of Albert Einstein: "the only cure for the damage caused by scientific progress is ethical progress".

Just as the XX century was the century of Utopias, of violence and of a great material progress, the XXI century must be the century of the moral renaissance of humanity, where this progress will have an ethical meaning. This renaissance must come from the self control of our tendency to pseudo-speciate and of our obsession of instantly gratifying new needs created by the market. The projection with regard to the world of our personal ethics must be pluralist, tolerant, respect all cultures and approach that of the religions that have preached self control and non violence. This pluralism must not fall into cultural relativism but be committed to the judicial respect of a set of common values and rights equally for all human beings and thus ensure that the concept of humanity is an effective reality. An ethical renaissance must promote equal access of women to political decisions, commit itself to ensuring that science and technology will seek to reduce the basic human privations and ensure that the global economy will set aside its social market Darwinism and initiate its reconciliation with ecology.

Far from any human narcissism, an ethical renaissance must always bear in mind that man is an instinctive predator that must practice self control and be controlled whether by a moral or a religious feeling. At the end of the XX century, so many revolutions, wars, massacres and genocides, in spite of the reign of rationalism and the dizzying development of science and technology, makes us think that original sin, with which the theologians explained the perverse origin of human nature, was not a preposterous fiction.

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