

Aktualno

Sloboda govora i moralna odgovornost

Miroslav Volf

Kada je danski karikaturist Kurt Westergaard prošlog tjedna^{*} imao predavanje na Yaleu, izazvao je lavinu neslaganja. Svjetski je postao poznat 2006. godine kada je na poziv izdavača *Jyllands-Postena* načinio karikaturu proroka Muhameda onako »kako ga je on vidio«. Narisao ga je s turbanom u kojem je bomba s fitiljem. Zbog tog crteža silno su se uzbunili muslimani na svim stranama svijeta. Mnogi od njih drže *uopće* nedoličnim slikom prikazivati proroka Muhameda i u nekim je zemljama to izričito zabranjeno. Posebno su se osjetili pogođenima što je osoba koja znači najdublju srž njihova identiteta prikazana kao terorist. S nekoliko poteza svoje olovke Westergaard je desakralizirao vjerski simbol i duboko uvrijedio više od milijardu ljudi. Kritičari Westergaardova posjeta Yaleu optužili su profesora koji ga je pozvao da je govornicu ustupio jednome odvratnom trgovcu.

Westergaard je sebe i svoju karikaturu vidio drukčije. U predavanju je spomenuo stajalište Flemminga Rosea, urednika za kulturu u *Jyllands-Postenu*. Rose je branio svoju odluku da izazove i da tiska uvredljive slike uz sljedeće obrazloženje: U liberalnim demokracijama ljudi imaju mnoga prava, ali jedno pravo nemaju, a to je »pravo da ih (drugi) ne uvrijede«. Što se tiče prava zajamčenih zakonom, u liberalnim društvima je, kud puklo da puklo, »24/7 lovno razdoblje« u kojem se može uvrijediti ili profanirati. S tog motrišta, ne dopustiti Westergaardu da govori na Yaleu značilo bi zanijekati mu temeljno pravo – pravo na slobodu govora.

* Miroslav Volf, profesor na Yale Divinity School i direktor Yale Center for Faith & Culture, a spomenuto predavanje održano je 1. listopada 2009. (*nap. ur.*).

Amerika je slobodna demokracija, a Yale je duboko privrženo slobodi govora. No, predmet o kojem govorimo nije pravo na slobodu govora, nego odgovorna upotreba tog prava. Smijemo li mi građani liberalnih demokracija, koji prihvaćamo liberalne ideale, činiti sve što imamo pravo činiti? Ne smijemo. Jedan od trenutaka u kojem sam bio ponosan kao profesor na Yaleu bio je onaj dok sam slušao kako su studenti zauzeto ušli u moralnu raspravu s Westergaardom oko ispravnosti njegova čina.

Iznijeli su dva teška prigovora protiv Westergaardove karikature. Prvi se odnosio na *sigurnost*. Više od 200 života izgubljeno je u nasiljima koja su uslijedila nakon objavljivanja danskih karikatura, ne samo na Bliskom istoku nego posebno u Nigeriji. Premda je to nasilje krajnje nepravedno i neopravdano, ono je bilo posljedica objave karikatura od kojih je najuvredljivija bila njegova. Da je znao da će životi biti izgubljeni, bi li bio objavio tu karikaturu? Westergaard je ostao nepopravljiv. Drugi su, a ne on, počinili nasilje. Korištenje njegova prava potisnulo je svaki obzir prema stvarnosti učinaka vlastitog čina. Nekim je studentima to izgledalo kao čudna obuzetost samim sobom.

Drugi se prigovor odnosio na *uljudnost*. Iako proizvoljno vrijeđanje drugih može biti pravo građana liberalnih demokracija, korištenje tog prava teško da može biti odlika ispravno življena života. Posrijedi nije prikladnost izražavanja nečijeg mišljenja i obrane nečijeg stajališta; posrijedi je, radije, poštovanje ili izostanak poštovanja kojima izražavamo svoja mišljenja i dokazujemo svoja stajališta. Jedan je student na nezaboravan način pogodio samu srž problema. Obratio se Westergaardu rekavši: »Odrastao sam u Omahi, Nebraska. Otac me je učio da budem pošten, ali da nikada ne budem prost. Vaša je karikatura poštena jer ste rekli ono što mislite. No, jeste li bili prosti?« Westergaard je odgovorio da je bio izazvan terorističkim napadom na Svjetski trgovinski centar. »Zar je moralno prihvatljivo na jednu neprihvatljivu provokaciju uzvratiti drugom«, s nevjericom je pitao drugi student.

Pouka iz sučeljenja Westergaarda i studenata na Yaleu nije tek ta da je on imao pravo nacrtati spornu karikaturu, nego da su mu studenti pokazali da je krivo postupio okoristivši se tim pravom. Dapače, pouka je bila da ima smisla poduprijeti pravo na slobodu govora samo ako smo spremni ući u živu moralnu raspravu o vlastitom korištenju tog prava.

Preveo J. B.

*Free Speech and Moral Accountability***

When Danish cartoonist Kurt Westergaard gave a lecture at Yale last week he triggered a storm of controversy. He had acquired world-wide notoriety in 2006 when, in response to a request by the editors of *Jyllands-Posten*, he drew a caricature of the prophet Muhammad »as he saw him«. He pictured him in a turban with a bomb with a lit fuse. Muslims around the globe cringed at the site of the drawing. Most of them believe that it is inappropriate to portray the prophet Muhammad *at all* and in a number of countries there are laws which explicitly prohibit the depiction of the Prophet. Just about all felt insulted that the person who defines the deepest core of their identity was depicted as a terrorist. With a few lines of his pen, Westergaard desecrated a cherished religious symbol and deeply offended more than a billion people. Critics of Westergaard's visit to Yale accused the professor who invited him of giving a platform to a hate monger.

Westergaard saw himself and his caricature differently. During the lecture he echoed the position of Flemming Rose, the cultural editor of *Jyllands-Posten*. Rose defended his decision to solicit and print the offensive images with the following argument: In liberal democracies people have many rights, but the one right they do not have is the »right not to be offended (by others)«.

As far as the rights guaranteed by laws are concerned, for better or worse in liberal societies there is a »24/7 open season« for offending and desecrating. From this perspective, not allowing Westergaard to speak at Yale would have been to deny him a basic right – a right to free speech.

America is a liberal democracy, and Yale is deeply committed to the freedom of speech. But the relevant issue is not the possession of the right to free speech, but the responsible exercise of that right. Should we, citizens of liberal democracies who embrace liberal ideals, do everything we have the right to do? We should not. One of my proud moments as a teacher at Yale was to listen to students as they engaged in a moral debate with Westergaard about the rightness of his action.

They raised two weighty considerations against Westergaard's caricature. The first concerned *safety*. More than 200 lives were lost in the violence that ensued after the publication of the Danish caricatures, not just in the Middle East but above all in Nigeria. Though this violence was utterly unjustified and indefensible, it was still a consequence of the publication of the caricatures, the most offensive of which was his. Would he have published the caricature had he known that lives would be lost? Westergaard remained unrepentant.

** By Miroslav Volf, Henry B. Wright Professor at the Yale Divinity School and Director of the Yale Center for Faith & Culture.

Others, not he, committed the violence. Exercise of his right trumped any consideration of the real-world effects of his action. To some students this seemed strangely self-absorbed.

The second consideration was that of *civility*. Though gratuitously offending others may be our right as citizens of liberal democracies, the exercise of that right hardly counts as a mark of a well-lived life. At issue is not the appropriateness of expressing one's opinion and arguing for one's position; at issue is, rather, respect or lack of it with which we express our opinions and argue for our positions. One student put the point unforgettably. Addressing Westergaard he said: »I grew up in Omaha, Nebraska. My father taught me to be honest with others but never to be mean. Your caricature was honest, in that you said what you thought. But did it have to be mean?« Westergaard responded that he was provoked by the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center. »So it is morally acceptable for one reprehensible provocation to elicit another«, asked one student incredulously?

The lesson of the encounter between Westergaard and Yale students was not just that he had the right to draw his caricature but that students have shown him to be in the wrong in exercising that right. The lesson was rather that it makes sense to uphold the right of free speech only if we are prepared to engage in a vigorous moral debate about the proper exercise of that right.