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GIGA'S RING: PROBLEM OF FOUNDATION OF THE MORAL ACTION

In Plato's «Republic» one finds the story of a Lydian shepherd Gig having found a magic gold ring making its bearer invisible. Being invisible Gig doesn't hesitate to kill the king, marry to the Queen and take the Kingdom. Plato makes a fundamental conclusion of the story: man acts morally exclusively under the pressure of the fear of being punished by the law.

Plato's story deals with the ethical analysis of a moral action, its structure consisting of three elements: themotive, the result and its conditions. In the history of ethics, one distinguishes consequentialist and deontological concepts exaggerating either an objective (result) or subjective (motive) element of a moral action. In opposition to them there is the ethics of virtue revived in the XX c. making one to talk of the "aretaieturn" focused on man's character enabling him to be morally consistent throughout different circumstance of the life. The character (as a sphere of virtues) is viewed to be a set of certain internal states, feelings, qualities needed to be manifested in actions. Purely earthly dimension of the nature of morality is a significant feature of aretaic approach. The need for morality is the aspiration of an imperfect but striving for perfection man living in the world of a constant change.

There are three interdependent aspects of the nature of virtue. Firstly, virtue is a quality of a person, being formed in various social practices. Secondly, virtue is a quality on which a person is able to build his entire life as a serial narrative, the unity and integrity of which is specified by the search for a high purpose (telos). Thirdly, virtue is defined through tradition playing a role of the context of moral practices. Appealing to the virtue in unity of its dimensions historical, cultural and social background shouldn't be neglected.

Proponents of deontological and consequentialist approaches represent objections to the ethics of virtues concerned the absence of clear criteria for correct behavior and the neglect of other concepts on the basis of their moral insignificance. In response to criticism supporters of the virtue ethics state that it tells how to deal with uncertain, conflicting or exceptional situations by forming the image of a moral personality. At the same time they don't want to accept the thesis that virtue is largely the result of a happy combination of circumstances but not entirely the sphere of human control. As for the second objection it could be recognized legitimate.

Despite the lacks of the virtue ethics with its individualized and arbitrary understanding of morality it is worth praising under modern conditions giving a man countless possibilities to challenge traditional style of living. In the world of fundamental interdependence of people being invisible with the aid of communication technologies aretaic approach could be a response to the situation where principles and rules, formulated in deontological and utilitarian theories are helpless.

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