

TEO, ISSN 2247-4382
66 (1), pp. 109-123, 2016

The Plurality of Ethics and the Unity of the Religious-Moral Values

Vasile Vlad

Vasile VLAD

“Aurel Vlaicu” University of Arad

E-mail: prvasile_v@yahoo.com

Abstract

Man estranged himself from the communion with God, entered into a deep lack of knowledge of God. By not knowing God, Who is also the Cause of the entire existence, man noticed the world only as an opaque reality, deprived of the presence of the godlike glory, as a reality composed only of things which made him passionate and enslaved him in the end. From worshipper of God, man became idolater. Deprived of Truth, man's life became an awful race into darkness. Everything became relative, everything started being redefined, according to the man's arbitrary and subjective preferences.

Keywords

Communion, sin, ethics, moral value, Moral Theology

“The sin penetrated where the grace should have mastered, and instead of the godlike fullness there a precipice of nonentity opened in the creation of God.”¹

¹ Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, translation by Priest Vasile Răducă, Anastasia Publishing House, Bucharest, p. 161.

The natural state of Adam was that of desiring God, of knowing Him and of being enlightened by Him. Man's mind, through the communion with the godlike grace, was capable to decipher (to understand) the world and its rationalities in the same manner like God. Man, writes Saint Maximus the Confessor, could achieve the transformation of the mind and of the feeling through deification, and in this way to achieve "the same knowledge of the things like God".² The primordial sin meant the deliberate (free) renunciation of Adam of the true life, of the knowledge of the world and of the things "like God", namely of the event of the full life. The sin, as refusal of communion with God, has brought man in the situation "of being limited to the autonomy and to the independence of his nature"³. The event of existence was to spread out in a nature autonomized by the Creator. But, such a trying (the renunciation to God) meant the estrangement of man from his own truth, the estrangement from his existential reason itself.

Through sin, man entered an existence against nature, within which life is replaced by the biological survival, within which the true knowledge was clouded and subordinated to the terrestrial survival. The bodily and the spiritual existence of the man estranged from the communion with God and was reduced to what can be named "a kind of death", "an existence towards death"!

"The first man, writes Saint Athanasius the Great, while he had the mind entirely directed towards God and towards the contemplation of Him, turned away from watching his body. But, when, due to the snake's advice, men separated themselves from their thinking of God and started looking at themselves, fell into the lust of the body and knew that they were naked; and by knowing this, they were ashamed. But they found out that they were naked not so much of clothes, but they became deprived of the sight of the godlike values and they moved their thoughts towards the contrary ones".⁴

² Maximos the Confessor, *Answers towards Thalassius*, The Romanian Philokalia, translation by Priest Professor PhD Academician Dumitru Stăniloae, Harisma Publishing House, Bucharest, 1994, p. 35.

³ Christos Yannaras, *The Liberty of Moral*, translation by Mihai Contuniari, Anastasia Publishing House, Bucharest, 2002, p. 24.

⁴ Saint Athanasius the Great, *Word Against Hellenes, III*, translation by Priest Professor PhD Academician Dumitru Stăniloae, in PSB, volume 15, Publishing House of the Biblical and Missionary Institute of the Romanian Orthodox Church, Bucharest, 1987, pp. 32-33.

The Plurality of Ethics and the Unity of the Religious-Moral Values

Man's mind, built by the Creator and enlightened by Him for nourishing itself from the knowledge which is offered by the communion with Him, moved itself through sin into "a thought contrary to the truth". By preferring "the corruptible ones and the darkness"⁵ instead of God, the capacity of knowing man's soul contrived to a phantasmal and passionate knowledge of the self.

"Because, by separating from the cogitation of The One and truly existent, namely of God, and from His will, men fell into the diverse and narrow lusts of the body. After that, as it usually happens, being born in them the lust of everything and of many things together, they started to attach themselves to the things and to fear of leaving them. From here, there were added into the soul fear and concerns and pleasures and the thought of death. Not wanting to separate themselves from lusts, they fear death and the separation of the body".⁶

Man estranged himself from the communion with God, entered into a deep lack of knowledge of God. By not knowing God, Who is also the Cause of the entire existence, man noticed the world only as an opaque reality, deprived of the presence of the godlike glory, as a reality composed only of things which made him passionate and enslaved him in the end. From worshipper of God, man became idolater. Deprived of Truth, man's life became an awful race into darkness. "We are shoots of a darkened generation" wrote Makarius the Egyptian.⁷

"Adam, by transgressing the commandment, received in him the dough of the evil passions and, through participation, the ones born from him - the whole of Adam's people - became partakers to the same dough. At last, the evil passions grew and increased among people so much that these ones reached at fornication, orgies, idolatry, killings and other unseemliness, until the (whole) world was leavened in evilness. So much increased the evilness among people, that they started to believe that there is no God, they started to worship the lifeless stones, and not to be able any-

⁵ St. Athanasius the Great, *Word Against Hellenes* VII, p. 39.

⁶ St. Athanasius the Great, *Word Against Hellenes* III, p. 33.

⁷ „The darkness of this era, covering the entire creation and human nature - from the fall of man- determines man to live in a darkness". Macarius of Egypt, *Spiritual Homilies*, *Homily XXIV*, 2 and *XLIII*, 7: version Constantin Cornițescu, in *PSB 34*, and Mission Bible Institute of the Romanian Orthodox Church, Bucharest, 1992, p. 259.

more to have even the idea of God. So much was Adam's people transformed by the god of the evil passions".⁸

In time, the history of the human kind meant a history of the idolatry. On one hand, man, the image of God, was ontologically tensed towards the seeking God and, on the other hand, "the dough of the passions" made this searching be a walk into darkness, in the shadow of death: "the people which sat in darkness... and the ones who sat at the side and in the shadow of death" (Matthew: 4: 16).

From the plurality of the religious idolater forms emerged the plurality and the diversity, sometimes contradictory, of the moral codes. The human creatures, either in their specificity, or included in social structural groups, reached at guiding their daily existence according to arbitrarily chosen values (namely without a revealed transcendent model). The plurality of ethics was shaped as a diversity of moral codes which evaluated the good and the bad often from contradictory perspectives. What was value for an individual or for a group, was reckoned as moral evil for another. Without a revealed transcendent criterion to define the good and the bad, the virtue and the sin, the morals collapses. It becomes a convention, a geographical, historical, social and individual one, deprived of consistency and duration. Everything is relative, everything is being redefined, according to the man's arbitrary and subjective preferences.

Nikolai Lossky, in his work *The Conditions of the Absolute Good - the Basis of the Ethics*, offers a wide perspective on what presupposes the moral relativism generated by the plurality of the ethics.⁹ Each people, each historical époque and each social group, says Lossky, has its own moral code which would represent a piece of the absolute perfection, a piece which substituted the unitary moral ideal. The good and the bad are fragmentarily known, fact that led to partial moral codes of which deficiency resides in incompleteness and unilateralism. Due to this deficiency, man has reached to distort the moral values - namely, to substitute the good with the bad or to appreciate some non-values (negative states) as being values (positive states). For instance, the moral code of the mediaeval knights established that the duel in the case of an offence represented the moral value (the honour). Even through the offender assumed his guilt,

⁸ Macarius of Egypt, *Homily XXIV*, 2, PSB 34, p. 198.

⁹ Nikolai Lossky, *The Conditions of the Absolute Good. The Bases of the Ethics*, translation by Nina Nicolaeva, Humanitas Publishing House, Bucharest, 1997, pp. 98-120.

The Plurality of Ethics and the Unity of the Religious-Moral Values

refusing the duel, it meant a cowardice and the one in cause was excluded from the social micro-group. Tolstoy, in *Anna Karenina*, described the moral code of the character named Vronski as his ethical normality even if his principles overthrown the notion of good:

“he composed a personal code of rules of life which clearly and indisputably established what it was due and what it was inappropriate to do... These rules categorically established that the debts from the cards game must be paid, even to a cheater, and the debt to a tailor could wait, that the lie, forbidden to a man, was allowed to women, that is inappropriate to cheat anybody except the husband... that you can insult, but you cannot forgive even the least offence. These rules could be without logic, bad, but they weren't discussed anymore and, observing them, Vronsky felt himself serene and could keep his head up”.¹⁰

The moral codes can be distorted in the sphere of their usage and in their content. In the first case, the moral duties are applied only to a certain circle of people - for instance to the members of the same family, to the same people, to the people of the same religion; these duties are suspended, though, in the relations with the other categories of people. So it happened with the chauvinistic exacerbated nationalism to which the moral duties cease at the borders of the own people, being allowed to hate and to aggress the other ethnic groups. The distortion of the moral content is often met both in the religious ethical codes and in the laic ones. For instance

“Buddhism assimilates to the evil any personal existence and almost the entire universal existence. This is the reason for which, in Buddhism, a just behaviour means the annihilation of the will for living, the destruction of the personal existence and the participation to the annihilation of the world”.¹¹

Love, as a moral value, in the Buddhist perspective, is a simple compassion through which you abstain yourself to cause sufferance to the neighbour and you help him to free himself from pain; it is not an attitude of recognizing the individuality of the other and of increasing his capacities by being in communion; love must not trouble the process of quenching (annihilation) of the world. The ethnographic and religious study of the

¹⁰ Lev Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina*, Minerva Publishing House, The Library for Everybody collection, volume II, Bucharest, 1972, pp. 104-105.

¹¹ N. Lossky, *The Conditions of the Absolute Good...*, p. 102.

primitive peoples from pagan cultural areas reveals unacceptable moral distortions in the Christian perspective. For example, in some tribes from Malaysian archipelago, those men who did not kill at least one enemy were not given the permission to get married. If, for the old Chinese, Egyptians, Greeks, Ottomans and Romans, killing the parents was reckoned as an abominable crime, some nomad tribes practiced the killing or the abandonment of the parents reached at their old age not to hinder the tribal community. In Melanesia the old people were buried alive - for instance in the Fijian tribes, after repeated begging of the parents to be buried, the son kissed his father, mourned him and then he buried him alive.¹² For some primitive peoples but also in some ancient states, the killing of the new born was reckoned in some circumstances as a moral duty. For instance, there were slaughtered the maimed children, the sick ones, the weak ones and the ones with malformations (this practice was a current one for the old American tribes, for the Australian ones, and it was a law in Sparta and Rome).

Nikolai Lossky pleads for the idea that all these distortions of the moral values do not justify the absolute moral relativism. They would come out from the incompleteness and from the unilateralism of each moral code and would demonstrate that, on one hand, man's nature is moral by excellence, and, on the other hand, the plurality of the ethics would represent a multitude of parallel lines in the ascension towards the Kingdom of God. The common finality of all these ethical behaviours would be the reaching of the absolute fullness of the existence in the Kingdom of eternity.¹³

The ethical pluralism in the modern world

The conclusion of Nikolai Lossky - the ethical codes, no matter how diverse and how contradictory are, they represent stages of the Kingdom

¹² N. Lossky, *The Conditions of the Absolute Good...*, p. 103.

¹³ "No matter how divergent the moral rules would be, practiced in diverse époques by different peoples or persons, they can all of them perceived as stages of the advancement towards a common goal or (in the worst case) as deviations from the sinuous lines of development, lines which most often are determined by different types of conflict between the rank of the value and its force of affirmation, but which lead to the same ontological and axiological realm – the door of the Kingdom of God. What it makes possible and necessary the elaboration of the absolute ethics", N. Lossky, *The Conditions of the Absolute Good...*, p. 103.

The Plurality of Ethics and the Unity of the Religious-Moral Values

of God - it is evident for the religious world, for the world in which the sacred orders the daily life of the people and of the human communities. During the modern period of the human history, the plurality of the ethics receives new valences. The 17th century inaugurated “the metaphysical cold”, namely the idea that the physical world (and man, as a product of this world, can be thought logically, ontologically and theologically, as being perfectly autonomous. In other words, it meant that the physical world is a closed and isolated system, which can validate itself by itself and whose meaning is exhausted by its own existence.¹⁴ The thesis of the radical autonomy of the world generates at least three modifications in ontology: God does not exist anymore and is not anywhere within creation; He becomes a mechanism by Himself and mechanistic through Himself in all the processes and developments, and, in this place, man belongs also to this autonomous world because he is only pure nature without anything transcendent in him.¹⁵ The natural man becomes the measure of all things and the purpose of all human endeavours. Good by nature (because the affirmation of Saint Makarios “we are offshoots of a darkened generation”: does not have reason anymore) man is not a transcendence himself (image of God) and he does not have anymore a transcendent purpose of his psycho-physical nature, and his spiritual life (the moral one) is not more than an accommodation through culture and civilization to the biological and social determinisms and satisfying of these ones. By renouncing to the divine order of the world, the modern man has placed himself in the natural order submitted to the laws of the matter. Gradually, he renounced to the traditional forms of life which he has replaced with a moral of the instincts, of the psycho-physical and social nature. There appeared the laicisation of society and implicitly the laicisation of the ethics. The canonical codes of

¹⁴ Horia Roman Patapievi, *The Recent Man. O Critic of the Modernity from the Perspective of the Question “What it is lost when Somerthing is Gained?”*, Humanitas Publishing House, Bucharest, 2001, p. 68.

¹⁵ “If the world is really autonomous, then God is nowhere (and in no place), and the physical world forms an isolated and closed system (...). If there is not possible anymore to find a place for God within the world, then, in fact, God ceases to exist, no matter of His institutionalized post-existence, which, for a while, still continues to have effects – as those cadavers visible only by night after they have entered in decomposition, due to some luminescent chemical reaction. The problem of the place of God within the world is au fond, the problem of the existence of God. Not being anywhere (nusquam esse) equals to not existing (non esse), H.R. Patapievi, *The Recent Man...*, p. 72.

the church and the Revelation have been replaced with social codes of the secular law. The secular ethics focuses itself on the individual and this one formulates the moral norms, not by referring to divinity, but in relation with the requirements of his psycho-somatic nature. Thus, the ethics of the modernity is secular, by excellence, and lacks any transcendent ordering principle. If in the Christian perspective, man's autonomy from God was excluded because the notion of "man like the image of God" placed the human being in structural, functional and final dependency of God, in modernity, the natural man (the individual) will integrate himself only in the horizon of a nature (either human or the one of the world) disarticulated from within God and from any other higher reason than the one of terrestrial surviving and prosperity. Deprived of the feeling of the godlike transcendence, the individual will organize his entire effort towards knowing his own nature and towards discovering the laws which govern the ambient world. The spirit of modernity will end by proclaiming the right of each individual to define the morality. The ethics becomes economy, physiology, sociology, and biology. The individualistic philosophy is refractory and indifferent to any institutional moral norm and proposes the integral and unlimited freedom.

"The individual disposes on his own life without any reservation, without the presence or the impasse of some constraining law; the law is his own nature. It is obvious that in the social order nothing can stop him from manifesting his intimate nature and aspiration, neither the values, nor the forms, and nor the teaching of some passed experience, caught in a traditional institution. Only the individual will and the free contract of this will..."¹⁶

Individualism, as ordering principle of the modernity and defining in ethical plan, meant the collapse of morality. The line of demarcation between truth and lie, between correctness and deceiving, between altar and market stall, between spirit and telluric, between virtue and sin, at last between good and bad, is moved in an arbitrary and subjective manner. Lacking an ordering transcendent criterion, the society is replaced by a sum of individuals, the communities become collectivities, and the polis becomes a landscape of neutral co-existences in which the agnosticism

¹⁶ Ernest Bernea, *The Dialectic of the Modern Spirit*, Vremea Publishing House, Bucharest, 2007, p. 44.

The Plurality of Ethics and the Unity of the Religious-Moral Values

and the nihilism are imposed as the dominant spirit. In this way, the soil for the appearance of the totalitarian ideologies was prepared and the 20th century fully lived its drama. The Christian moral ethos was replaced by ideology. The moral truth (in a totalitarian society) means only what the axioms, the principles and the “scientific” explanations confirm. The ideologists “know” and “possess” the truth, while the ignorant masses do not know their real needs. The ideological “good” and the “truth” must be imposed to them by all means.

The late modernity (the post-modernity) tried to exit from the “totalitarianism of the consecrated modernity” through the impulse given by the discourse of the quantum and sub-quantum physics. In the heart of the real, there is a “logos” which “regulates, directs and animates the world”.¹⁷

The sensitive world is not the only reality, but there exist also another superior reality, inaccessible to the empirical experiment, but which is intuited and recognized by the science. The scientific knowledge of the world obliges the scholar to study and to discover these deep structures of the existence... The metaphysical reality is not localized behind the empirical experience, but it is situated just in its depth, structuring and determining it”.¹⁸

The new scientific knowledge has penetrated the barriers of the unilateral rationalism of modernity, and the “great narratives” (*grand-recites*, Jean Francois Lyotard) have entered in dissolution. The world has passed to a new cultural and social order with organizational principles tied to the geopolitics of the globalization. The world is a global market, totally transparent through the communication via internet. Peoples and civilizations were abruptly placed together and forced to cohabit not only in what regards the formal political aspect, but also in their daily survival. Mentalities, habits and different fundamental aspirations (what is an ideal some, for others can be intolerable) are gathered under the same canopy created by the financial interests of the geopolitics of the globalization. Different races and civilizations are interfered and forced to harmonize their ideals and their life style. The Arab-African migration from the second century of the First Millennium, towards Europe, offers an exposé of the ethical pluralism never within history. If in the past, the religious and ethical plural-

¹⁷ Jean Guittou, *God and the Science*, Harisma Publishing House, 1992, p. 66.

¹⁸ Max Plank, *L'image du monde dans la physique moderne*, Gonthies Publihing House, Zurich, 1949, p. 174.

ism was visible rather to the researchers and represented a matter of study, because the communities (the tribes, the peoples) were geographically isolated and lived in a natural manner and without problems their religious and ethical mode, today the ethical pluralism represents a concrete reality on the streets of the European States.

On the other hand, must be signalled also that post-modern option for an open science, permeable to a unification of the multiple forms of knowledge, which generate some ethos or syncretic ethics. The new dialogue between religion and science has been deviated in a syncretic direction, a pantheistic and neo-Gnostic one, which can offer the mirage of a unitary knowledge of the reality, knowledge from which no type of experience must be excluded. This new gnosis is some sort of *mélange*, a paste obtained from all the spiritual ingredients of humanity. Revealed-un-revealed, virtue-perversion, absolute-relative, are put in the same crucible and mixed, and the obtained dough represents the new type of knowledge and living. From “mathematics to politics, from physics to the oriental mysteries, from ecology to the feminist theories”¹⁹ everything is put together without an integrator and transcendent vision and without any referring to the Christian Tradition upon the eternal life or upon the Kingdom of God! The new gnosis gathers together, in an amalgamator manner, the multiples theories within which the science dilutes its consecrated authority and identity, becoming a narrative amongst others. The world has reached the difficulty to distinguish between fact and fiction, between real and superstition, everything having, in the post-modern discourse, the same statute and the same value. The scientific affirmations are often socially built, interfering with the politics and the financial interest (see the pharmaceutical and food industries) missing the exactness and the objective scientific rigor.

In another area, the modern science has entered a dubious combination of sustaining the oriental mystics (Hindu, Buddhist, Taoist), combination through which these mystics are wrapped in a “scientific” language and clothing.²⁰ Many Europeans have embraced this “mystic-scientific” perspective which seems to offer them an interior experience, a feeling which

¹⁹ Adrian Lemeni and Adrian Ionescu, *Orthodox Theology and Science*, Publishing House of the Biblical and Missionary Institute of the Romanian Orthodox Church, Bucharest, 2007, p. 109.

²⁰ Dyonisos Farasiotis, *The Great Initiates of India and Father Paisius*, translation by Hieromonk Evloghios Muntean, Egumenița Publishing House, Galati, pp. 262-264.

The Plurality of Ethics and the Unity of the Religious-Moral Values

the Christian churches, marked either by the rigid moral voluntarism, or by the bureaucratic organization, either by the stiff and outdated institutionalized, either by the social, charitable and political activism, or by the lack of interest for spirituality, cannot provide anymore. These Europeans retain from the Christian tradition only the great mystics (Meister Eckhart, John of the Cross, etc.) whom they combine with the esoteric tradition of the Judaic Cabbala, with the Islamic sophism and with the pantheistic spirit of the Oriental mystics.²¹ This whole mélange, pantheistic by excellence, has found in the conscience of the European man an ally in the “scientific” language through which it “certifies” its veracity. In fact we are dealing with the same Gnosticism and with the old pagan ethos, which have been revived in a quasi-scientific manner. A reality expressed through the terms of another one: “the science” integrates itself in the mystical horizon, and the mystique is “scientifically” justified and expressed.²² This leads to a magical re-ciphering of the world, namely to the re-institution in the post-modern world of paganism, not as an institutionalized religion, but rather as a mode and as a philosophy of life (of a Gnostic type).²³

Summarizing, the late European modernity, on the demographic ground (the new-migrations) and on the cultural one (the invasion of the gods wrapped in the scientific magic) seems to have chosen to ignore, or even to deny the Christian ethos.

“Almost everything that surrounds us today, in the Western countries, is anti-Christian, - often, with an ostentation, both illiterate and malevolent. The antipathy or even the repulsion for Christendom, expressed through the liberties which we are taken against its tradition, have become almost the unique spiritual content of our modernity”.²⁴

²¹ Jean-Louis Schlegel, *Religion in the Modern Societies*, in the volume *The Concepts of the Humanity. A history of the Scientific, Political and Social, Religious, Philosophical, Artistical Ideas*, translation by Oana Mezdrea, Lider Publishing House, Bucharest, 1996, pp. 123-124.

²² Fritjof Capra, *The Theo-physics – a Parallel between the Modern Physics and the Oriental Mystique*, Third Edition, translation by Doina Țîmpău, Technical Publishing House, Bucharest, 2004, p. 225.

²³ Ghislain Lafont, *Towards a New Figure of the Church for Our Time*, in the volume *The Socialist Thinking of the Church*, volume realized by Ioan I. Ică jr. and Gemano Morani, Deisis Publishing House, Sibiu, 2002, p. 612.

²⁴ Horia-Roman Patapievică, *The Unseen Part Decides Everything*, Humanitas Publishing House, Bucharest, 2015, p. 119.

Final Observations

A summary of the excursion regarding the plurality of the ethics:

- Adam's ethos before falling: his thirst for the communion with God, for knowing Him; the nature of the man: the holiness;
- The sin meant the renouncement (through the capacity of the liberty) of the knowledge (communion) of God, the renouncement of holiness and of the full life;
- Through the sin the man has entered into an existence contrary to his nature - the mode of death;
- The mind of the fallen man contrives a phantasmal image of reality;
- The darkness of lack of knowledge of God brings idolatry into the world;
- The human history is a history of idolatry;
- Idolatry gives birth to a plurality of ethics - or to a diversity sometimes contradicting the ethical codes;
- Each ethical code presupposes a reduced and fragmentary perception of the absolute Truth (the Good);
- The incompleteness and the unilateralism of the ethic codes generate the substitution of the good with the moral evil;
- Distortions in the sphere and in the content of the ethical codes; the distortion of the moral sphere; the application of the moral good only by a preferential group of people; the distortion of the moral content: the relativisation of the notions of good and bad; the evil if presented as good, and the good reckoned as a denial of liberty;
- Nikolai Lossky: the plurality of the ethics validates two things: 1) the moral capacity, structurally, (ontologically) belongs to the human nature; 2) the ethical codes are lines, often parallel, or thresholds towards the Kingdom of God;
- The novelty of the modernity: the world is a reality totally autonomous from God;
- The natural man (the product of the modern thinking) is the measure of all things:
- The traditional moral, the religious one, is replaced by the secular one;
- The secular ethics lacks in consistence – it can be economy, psychology, sociology, biology, philosophy;
- The slogan of the modernity – the moral relativism:

The Plurality of Ethics and the Unity of the Religious-Moral Values

- The new “religion” which defines the good and the bad – the positivist science – what cannot be scientifically proved, cannot be accepted!
- The political ideologies enslave science and ethics, making them an “ideology” and transforming them in instruments of constraint (see the totalitarian ideologies);
- The late modernity (the post-modernity) reconsiders the grounds of the consecrated modernity - the great narratives, the hard concepts of the modernity are uprooted and the “weak thinking” is promoted;
- Science becomes one of the narratives of the post-modern world, the physical nature of the world does not represent the last form of existence, the metaphysical reality is not an illusion;
- The geopolitics of the globalization - different human races and civilizations are removed and physically interfered, forced to cohabitation in the same public space and determined to harmonize their styles of life;
- The new gnosis: science and religion enter into a combination of syncretic, pantheistic and neo-Gnostic type;
- A domain of science is expressed through the terms of another domain (the mystique); the oriental mystique abusively and amateurishly used astronomy, biology, physics, electronics, for validating its discourse;
- The Western European man is not satisfied anymore by the traditional Christian Churches because they do not offer him mystical “feelings”. He formulates to himself a syncretic spirituality with elements from some Christian mystics, from Judaic Cabbala and from the Islamic Sufism. Everything is clothed in the wrapping of the “scientific language”;
- The mystical syncretism dilutes to annulling any objectivity in the ethical norms;
- The great Arabian-African migrations reconfigure the pluralism of the ethics. There is a magical re-ciphering of the reality (of the world) through the invasion of the pagan concepts and of the ones about gods;
- Paganism does not come back in Europe under the form of the old pagan religions but rather at the level of the daily living;

Europe records today an acute and concurrent religious pluralism in which the Islam passes from enclavisation to proselytism;

- The Chisto-phobe attitude of the European institutions is increasingly accentuated.

The unity of the moral values

The ethical diversity imposes with necessity the matter: is there an absolute moral truth? Are the good and the bad eternal values or just human historical-geographical and cultural conventions? We have shown in the previous pages, quoting Nikolai Lossky' thesis, that the moral codes, no matter how diverse and contradictory could be, represent some stages toward the Kingdom of God. Lossky formulates the idea that the elaboration of an absolute ethics could be done if we consider the following four conditions²⁵:

- Accepting the fact that the entire creation is valuable and positive; and that there exist positive values. This means that the values, by themselves, have a universal signification - they justify themselves unconditionally and represent the good from all the perspectives, in all concerns and for any human subject. Besides the absolute values there are also relative values which are right only for some concerns and for certain human subjects. The man, no matter to which geographical space belongs and to which historical time, can have access to the absolute values;
- The absolute ethics need the acceptance of the categorical imperatives, respectively, of the unconditioned commandments. They have an organic connection, complete to the human nature (the liberty, the vocation). Between the categorical imperative and the freedom of will there is no collision;
- The unity of the human nature (conscience) due to which the human subjects are identified in the same horizon of value - they have an ontological and a common finality. The human beings do not reduce themselves to another; they have an absolute uniqueness and individual value, but, at the same time, each human "self" is capable to bear in his conscience the full "you" of the other one. The human subjects are a unique "self - the self of humanity - and at the same time, a completely individual *alter ego*, responsible and free. The moral values have the same property for each human self;
- The moral life is possible also in the conditions of man's falling into the sin (of the estrangement from God) because man remains an image of God even after the falling. Even when the image of the man is darkened, it remains a godlike one. Due to it, man is fundamentally defined as a moral creature, as a structural bearer of a "normative idea" through

²⁵ N. Lossky, *The Conditions of the Absolute Good...*, pp. 113-117.

The Plurality of Ethics and the Unity of the Religious-Moral Values

which he expresses his absolute valuable destine, unique and irreplaceable which helps him ontologically towards the Kingdom of God. As a moral creature, man feels the sanctions of the moral conscience which emerge unconsciously from the depths of the spirit, no matter which would be the historical and the social circumstances in which he lives;

In the perspective of the Moral Orthodox Theology, we can add that, together with the Incarnation, Jesus Christ the Saviour is the criterion, the basis and the sense of morality. Through the Incarnation of God the Word ("the Logos Has made Himself body", John, 1:14), in the human nature, in the nature built by God, there have entered and dwelled all the transcendental godlike values. These ones have united themselves inwardly with the human nature of God, namely they communicated themselves with it, becoming permanent in it.

Christ, as fully God and fully Man, is the greatest, the basic and the most profound value in the human world. He is the consummated synthesis of the godlike and of the human, of what is here (of the immanent) and of what is beyond (of the personal and of the transcendental), or of the natural and of the supernatural, of the physical and of the metaphysical, of the real and of the ideal. Into Christ there has been realized the most radical and the total unity of the life from here and from the eternity, the unity of the knowledge of the world from here and of the one from beyond. The good and the bad have been definitively and effectively solved in the Person of Jesus Christ. The moral axis, as life into Christ, circumscribes itself on the line of the Kingdom of God and expresses the absolute values inaugurated by the Incarnation, the Sacrifice and the Resurrection of Christ the Lord! These absolute values mean the partaking of the creature to the life of the Holy Trinity, they mean the godlike life in the clay vessels of man. The Trinitarian Life is inaugurated within man, in an ecclesial-sacramental manner. Through this, man becomes a moral creature by excellence. In Christ the Lord any moral relativism is excluded, the plurality of the ethics is surpassed and the unity and the uniqueness of the moral values are absolute.