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THE CONCEPT OF MORAL STANDARD AND ITS SOCIAL ESSENCE

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Abstract

This article analyzes the theoretical foundations of the concept of moral norms, its historical formation and modern interpretations from a socio-philosophical perspective. The role of moral norms in the stability of society, the regulation of social relations and the spiritual development of the individual is revealed. Based on the interrelationship with the system of values, tradition and culture, the transformation of moral norms in the context of globalization is highlighted. The importance of moral norms as a mechanism of social control, their relationship with law, religion and spirituality is explained on the basis of a comprehensive approach. The role of moral norms in ensuring the balance between the individual and society is summarized, their practical significance is substantiated by scientific conclusions and promising research directions are identified. The relevance and scientific novelty of this research are indicated.

Keywords: Moral, norm, social, value, society, spirituality, order, control, culture, individual.

Introduction

Moral norms are a system of spiritual and moral rules recognized by society and regulating human behavior. They determine the attitude of people to each other, to society and to themselves, and are evaluated on the basis of such concepts as “good” and “bad”, “right” and “wrong”. Moral norms, unlike legal norms, are determined not by mandatory state punishment, but mainly by conscience, social thought and moral responsibility. The formation of moral norms is inextricably

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linked with historical and social processes, they arise and develop on the basis of customs, traditions, religious views and social experience. It is natural that the content and interpretation of moral norms differ in different societies, but their main goal is to ensure order, harmony and mutual respect in society.

“Moral norms are closely related to the inner world of a person, they are formed through the beliefs, values, and conscience of the individual. Even in the absence of external control, a person guides his behavior based on moral requirements. The most important feature of moral norms is the internal control mechanism. Moral norms, which play an important role in the development of a person, reflect the spiritual level of society”[1]. Moral norms are considered to be a person living on the basis of such qualities as honesty, justice, responsibility, and kindness, and are manifested as an important social institution that ensures the stability of society and the harmony of interpersonal relationships. The category of moral norms in philosophy is an important normative system that regulates human behavior and social relations, and is not only a set of practical rules, but also a complex socio-philosophical phenomenon that expresses the essence, freedom, responsibility, and attitude of a person to the world of values. Understanding a moral norm requires a comprehensive analysis of its ontological, axiological, and epistemological aspects.

From an ontological point of view, the moral norm, proceeding from the nature of man as a social being, is reflected in the conscious subjectivity of man, living not as a solitary biological being, but as a person living in a system of social relations. It is this sociality that creates the need to subordinate his behavior to certain rules. “Moral norms appear as an “invisible mechanism” necessary to ensure the order, balance and stability existing in society”[2]. In this respect, they are implemented more through internal beliefs and conscience than through external coercion. Therefore, the moral norm has an ontological basis that is inextricably linked with the social formation of human existence.

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In the axiological approach, the moral norm is interpreted as an integral element of the system of values, and it is precisely through moral norms that such categories as good and evil, justice and injustice, duty and conscience acquire concrete meaning. Norms form values not only as an abstract idea, but also as a criterion for practical activity. The value of "justice" is formed through certain moral requirements - honesty, equality, fairness, and is a means of concretizing values and applying them to everyday life. When interpreted axiologically, moral norms also represent the spiritual level of society and an indicator of cultural development.

Epistemologically, a moral norm is formed and develops in a person's moral consciousness. A person understands certain norms under the influence of moral experience, upbringing, education and social environment, raises them to the level of personal belief with the measure of conscience. In this process, mechanisms of cognition and evaluation play an important role, and a person not only understands the norm, but also evaluates it as right or wrong and expresses his attitude towards it. Moral norms do not remain a simple set of external rules, but become spiritual criteria that are embedded in the inner world of a person.

In philosophical interpretation, it is also a reasonable reality to consider moral norms in the dialectics of universality and historicity. Some moral norms "have a universal character and have retained an almost unchanged content in different cultures and eras (for example, not to lie, not to cause harm). Some norms change depending on historical conditions, social system and cultural context, which indicates the dynamic nature of moral norms, that is, their transformation along with the development of society"[3]. Moral norms also express the balance between freedom and obligation, and do not deny that a person has the right to choose as a free being. However, this freedom is not absolute, it is limited by moral norms. It is precisely these norms that combine human freedom with social responsibility. If freedom is separated from norms, it leads to anarchy, and on the contrary, if the norms are too strict, it leads to restriction of the individual

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development of a person. Therefore, moral standards are a means of ensuring a balance between freedom and order.

The concepts of morality, decency, values, and norms are inextricably linked in socio-philosophical thought, complementing each other and regulating the spiritual life of society. Although each of them has an independent content, in practice they function as a single system and play a complex role in the formation of human behavior and social relations. Morality is a set of general spiritual principles and rules existing in society, expressing human ideas about good and evil, justice and injustice, and as a broad category, it includes other concepts and forms their basis.

That is, morality is a system, and its components consist of elements such as decency, values, and norms. The concept of values is the main basis of the moral system and is a set of ideals, goals, and criteria that are considered important by society. Values give direction to human activity. Concepts such as justice, freedom, honesty, and humanity are accepted as values. It is on the basis of these values that moral norms are formed. So, values are the answer to the question “what is important?”, And moral norms answer the question “how to live?” Moral norms are manifested as a practical expression of values.

They are specific rules of behavior accepted by society and regulate human actions in everyday life. For example, requirements such as “tell the truth”, “do not harm others”, “respect elders” are moral norms. These norms concretize values and apply them to practical activities. From this point of view, there is a cause-and-effect relationship between values and norms: values give rise to norms, and norms put values into practice.

The concept of etiquette is interpreted as an external expression of moral norms and a specific form of behavior. Manners determine a person's culture of communication, speech, behavior and behavior in a social environment. If morality expresses general principles, then manners are the manifestation of these principles in everyday life. For example, such habits as greeting, respectful

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treatment, and keeping one's turn fall within the scope of etiquette. Therefore, manners are a concrete, visible form of moral norms. "The relationship between these concepts can be systematically expressed as follows: values create the substantive basis of the moral system; morality is formed as a normative system that generalizes these values; moral norms express this system in the form of specific rules; and manners are the manifestation of these rules in practical behavior"[4]. Thus, these concepts are hierarchically and functionally interconnected. In addition, their relationship is dialectical in nature. That is, they influence each other and change. For example, when new values are formed in society, this leads to a renewal of moral norms, which in turn change the forms of etiquette. Conversely, changes in everyday morality can gradually affect norms and, in turn, broader moral views. This process is an important mechanism of social development and cultural transformation.

In modern society, the interrelation of these concepts is becoming more complex. As a result of globalization, digital communication and cultural exchange, pluralism in the value system is increasing. This leads to the relativization of moral norms and the diversification of forms of etiquette. For example, new moral rules (netiquette) that are being formed in the Internet environment may differ from traditional etiquette. Therefore, in modern conditions, maintaining a balance between morality, values, norms and etiquette is of great importance. The concepts of morality, etiquette, values and norms are interconnected elements of a single spiritual and moral system, which play an important role in regulating human behavior and social life. Values constitute the substantive basis, morality is general principles, norms are specific rules, and etiquette is their practical expression. Their harmony ensures the stability of society, personal development and the development of a culture of social relations.

Moral norms are one of the important regulatory factors of social life, they guide human behavior based on certain values and social requirements. In analyzing the internal structure of moral norms, rules, principles, and ideals are of particular

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importance as their main elements. These elements are inextricably linked, form a single moral system, and serve to balance the relationship between the individual and society.

Moral rules are a set of specific instructions that directly regulate human behavior. Rules are usually formed on the basis of traditions, customs, and social experience formed by society. They represent simple but important norms that are followed in everyday life. For example, requirements such as respect for elders, keeping promises, and honesty are included in moral rules. Rules are distinguished by their clarity and practical orientation. They give a person a clear answer to the question “how should I act?” Therefore, rules are considered the most concrete and operational level of moral norms. However, rules work effectively only when they become internal convictions, not just external obligations. Otherwise, they remain in a formal form.

The second important element of ethical norms are principles. “Principles are more generalized, theoretical and conceptual in nature than rules, and they define the main directions of the ethical system. They represent the spiritual criteria of human activity and serve as a methodological basis for making the right decisions in various situations. Concepts such as justice, freedom, equality, and humanity are vivid examples of ethical principles”[5]. Principles have a broader and deeper meaning than rules, and they form a common basis that unites several rules. For example, many specific rules are formed on the basis of the principle of justice: not to harm others, to be fair, to respect the rights of others, etc. In this regard, principles act as an “internal compass” of the ethical system.

Another important feature of principles is that they can be flexibly applied in different social situations. While rules are suitable for specific situations, principles provide guidance in complex and uncertain situations. For example, in new social conditions, such as globalization or the digital space, old rules may not be enough, but principles retain their relevance even in these changing

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conditions. Thus, principles are the main support that ensures the stability of moral norms.

The third element of moral norms is considered to be ideals, which represent the highest goals and criteria of perfection to which man and society aspire. They are a set of high values that cannot be fully realized in real life, but give direction to human activity. Moral ideals encourage a person to work on himself, to strive for spiritual perfection. For example, concepts such as the idea of a perfect person, absolute justice, and a perfect society are included in moral ideals. Ideals are the highest level of the moral system, they spiritually enrich rules and principles and give them purposefulness. The main function of ideals is that they have a motivational character. They encourage a person to achieve a higher spiritual level, in addition to adhering to simple norms. In this sense, ideals appear as the driving force of moral development. If rules regulate behavior, principles justify it, then ideals inspire it. They form in the human mind the question "how should one be?" and determines the path to personal perfection.

Rules, principles, and ideals operate inextricably linked to each other. Although each of them has its own significance, only together do they form a coherent moral system. Without rules, principles remain abstract, and rules without principles become meaningless and mechanical. Without ideals, the direction of development and progress in the moral system is lost. Therefore, the harmony of these three elements ensures the effectiveness of moral norms. The importance of these elements in modern society is increasing. In the conditions of globalization, the development of information technologies, and cultural diversity, moral norms are becoming more complex. In such conditions, rules can change frequently, but principles and ideals play an important role in maintaining moral stability. Especially in the digital space, traditional rules are not enough to regulate human behavior, and the need to rely on common moral principles and ideals is increasing.

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“The elements of moral norms - rules, principles and ideals - form a complex but balanced system that regulates the life of a person and society. Rules determine practical behavior, principles create a theoretical basis, and ideals indicate a spiritual direction”[6]. Their harmony is an important condition for ensuring social order, spiritual stability and personal development in society. Moral norms are an important component of social life, they are manifested as the main normative mechanism in ensuring social order and balance. Any society relies on certain rules to ensure its stability, consistency and harmonious development. Among these rules, moral norms occupy a special place, because they regulate human behavior on the basis of internal confidence, conscience and social values. Moral norms, first of all, coordinate the mutual relations of members of society. It is through moral norms that values such as respect, justice, honesty, and responsibility are established among people. If such norms are not strong in society, instability, conflicts, and contradictions in social relations will increase. Therefore, moral norms strengthen mutual trust between people and ensure social balance.

“From the point of view of ensuring social order, moral norms also serve as an informal control mechanism. Unlike legal norms, moral norms rely not on the power of coercion, but on social consciousness and public opinion. A person guides his behavior not only in accordance with the requirements of the law, but also in accordance with the moral values accepted in society”[7]. This serves as an important factor in maintaining social order, since internal control is more effective and stable than external coercion.

Moral norms also serve to harmonize the interests of different social groups in ensuring social balance. In each society, there are different strata, interests, and views, and it is natural for certain conflicts to arise between them. Moral norms, in turn, encourage the mitigation of these conflicts, compromise, and prioritize common interests. For example, the principle of justice serves to ensure equality and fairness in the distribution of social resources, which strengthens social

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balance in society. Moral norms also play an important role in the process of socialization of an individual. A person acquires moral values from childhood through the family, educational institutions, and society. As a result, he forms behavior in accordance with the requirements of society. This process allows for the continuous continuation of social order from generation to generation. If moral norms are not consistently transmitted, a crisis of values may occur in society.

Another important aspect of moral norms is that they, along with ensuring social stability, also serve the development of society. Because moral values are not limited only to maintaining the existing order, but also encourage its improvement. For example, universal values such as respect for human rights, equality and justice create the basis for the democratic development of society. Thus, moral norms perform not only a conservative, but also a progressive function. However, in the conditions of modern globalization and digital transformation, the role of moral norms is becoming more complex. As different cultures and values interact, the problem of forming common moral norms arises. In such a situation, reliance on universal human values is of great importance.

In conclusion, firstly, moral norms are the main regulator of social order, a fundamental mechanism that regulates human behavior in society, ensuring social balance and stability. They are not only a means of external control, but also a system of social values, which have become the internal beliefs of the individual. Secondly, from the point of view of the historical and cultural formation of moral norms, norms are formed and transformed depending on a specific historical period, social system and cultural environment. Therefore, they have both universality and relativity.

Thirdly, moral norms play a decisive role in the development of the individual, being one of the main factors determining the spiritual and moral maturity of a person, developing self-awareness, conscientious decision-making and a sense of social responsibility.

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Fourth, there is a close relationship between moral norms and social institutions, and the institutions of family, education, religion, state and civil society play an important role in the formation, transmission and strengthening of moral norms. Through these institutions, moral values are instilled in the social consciousness. Fifth, in the digital society, moral norms have a transformative nature, and under the influence of modern information and communication technologies, moral norms have acquired a new form and content. The weakening of moral control in the virtual environment is creating new moral problems.

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