

Opinion Article**Veneration for Honor***

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Abstract

Globalization, development of technology, rapidly changeable environment have established the values of their own. It has become almost impossible to understand moral feelings and relevant behavior. Certain part of the society is marked with spiritual poverty, impairment or negligence of moral values; violence, cruelty, dishonorable acts, indifference towards humans, egoistic intentions and criminal behavior prevail. At schools and families, youngsters are not provided with the teachings on morality, methods of self-management and behavior management. For that reason, young people do not have a full-fledged approach to moral norms and categories. They have difficulties in telling apart valuable and valueless, true and false, right and wrong. Therefore, the research problem of the present article is to determine the essence of honor from the 21st century viewpoint and what ways and means are needed to restore and maintain it among the members of society. The article deals with and analyzes the opinions of such outstanding public figures and thinkers on the concept of honor and dignity as Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Immanuel Kant, William Shakespeare, Lao Tzu, Carl Rogers, Kwame Anthony Appiah, J. Hasley, Iakob Tsurtaveli, Shota Rustaveli, King-poet Archili, Ioane Bagrationi, Iliia Chavchavadze, Grigol Orbeliani, Vazha Pshavela.

Keywords: Honor, upbringing, moral senses, civic awareness

1. INTRODUCTION

*Tired with all these, for restless death I cry,
As to behold desert a beggar born,
And needy nothing trimm'd in jollity,
And purest faith unhappily forsworn,
And gilded honour shamefully misplaced,
And maiden virtue rudely strumpeted,
And right perfection wrongfully disgraced,
And strength by limping sway disabled
And art made tongue-tied by authority,
And folly, doctor-like, controlling skill,
And simple truth miscalled simplicity,
And captive good attending captain ill.*

William Shakespeare, Sonnet 66

This masterpiece of Shakespeare's – Sonnet 66 - is often called “sugar'd sonnet” as the stress of reality and deep heartache for the lost honor and its consequences are vividly felt in this truly classical creation. The key to the better world is love and compassion between humans that implies in its foundation human morality and honor as its main characteristic feature.

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With the growth of population, our universe is becoming more compact and interdependent. The 21st century has long vivified the process of forming unified society in the world. In order to solve problems brought by time shift, humans should deepen universal responsibility within themselves and reach high level of moral concord and civic society.

The research was fulfilled with application of quantitative as well as qualitative methods: questionnaire, interview, analysis of scholarly studies and fiction and sharing leading experience, data processing and critical analysis.

2. FINDINGS

As early as in the distant past honor or dignity was the principle concept of ethics. In his dialogue “Republic”, Plato wrote: “Justice is the excellence of the soul, and injustice the defect of the soul... the just soul and the just man will live well, and the unjust man will live ill...the just is happy, and the unjust miserable (Plato, 2006:38).

Plato’s disciple Aristotle placed honorable man between proud and slave-natured man and stated that his “sphere is a relationship between humans. Proud is a man hard to approach and communicate with, the title proceeds from his nature.” (Aristotle, 1994:35).

In the history of ethic thinking, Aristotle is the first to attempt to draw up a classification of human dignity. Together with physical virtues and vices, humans can have spiritual virtues and vices as well that can be divided into intellectual sensual and willful virtues-vices according to the constituent skills of soul and consciousness. Lao Tzu remarked that everyone should evaluate one’s own virtues very strictly, not to rise above others, sooth passions and reject evil desires in order to make peace on the earth. Hence, the conclusion, evaluation of honor and dignity is topical in self-estimation and quite fascinating. The theme of honor is greatly topical in justice protection issues and has always played major role in jurisprudence. Chapter XX in Montesquieu’s “Spirit of the Laws” in called “Source of Dignity”. It points to the fact how sensual people were towards the virtues of dignity and honor. For example, if a person declared to be ready for a battle he had no right to take his words back as dignity did not allow him to break the oath (Montesquieu, 1964:615). Breaking one’s word still is considered as a dishonest behavior. An American public figure, politician and law theorist, one of the signatories of the United States Declaration of Independence, James Wilson says: “But before a court of honor those qualities and sentiments and actions are amenable, which despise the subtlest process of the tribunals of law, and elude the keenest vigilance of the ministers of justice. This court, powerful in its sentences as well as extensive in its jurisdiction, decrees to virtue, and to the virtuous exertion of talents, a crown of fame, pure and splendid: honor is a sacred tie – the noble mind’s distinguishing perfection that aids and strengthens virtue, where it meets her” (Wilson 2017:1063-1064).

This is how the undersigned of the Declaration of Independence explained relation between court trial and honor. He declared honor in reference with Addison’s famous description in Cato as a “sacred tie” and “noble mind’s distinguishing perfection”.

Moral and ethical norms have been the centers of attention in Georgia since ancient times. In the first literary monument of the 5th century “Martyrdom of St Shushanik”, devotion to the faith is regarded the highest morality. Moreover, having feast for men and women together was not allowed. “It has never been a rule that men and women had feast together”, says the novel.

Compared to Europe, the Renaissance had begun in Georgia two centuries earlier, with the immortal monument by Shota Rustaveli “The Knight in the Panther Skin” in which Rustaveli glorified human dignity, honor, friendship and philanthropy. However, it was not the revival of the Georgian antiquity. It was the revival of universal, common antiquity started in Georgia. The idea was supported by the famous scholar Ernst Honigmann and Georgian scholar Shalva Nutsbidze simultaneously, independent to each other. King Archil, famous Georgian poet of the second half of 17th century created a special work “The Manners of Georgia” dedicated to dignity and honor in which he explains that after publication of such a book no one can ever complain about not being morally correct due to the absence of a good mentor or teacher of manners (Archil, 1999:568). King Archil regarded the knowledge of foreign languages as the best feature of a moral personality, as well as a good sense of humor, ability to keep a secret, diligence, respect towards the elderly, etc.

In his encyclopedic work “Kalmasoba” (“Amusing Queries”), Ioane Bagrationi or Prince Ioane of Georgia formulates the necessary qualities for a diplomat/ambassador – strong in faith and promises, devoted to the country and patron, not self-interested and wealthy (Bagrationi, 1992:256). Anyone would undersign these qualities today, in the 21st century, undoubtedly.

The crownless king of the Georgian nation Ilia Chavchavadze regarded justice and philanthropy as the major virtue of a man: “If you are just and love mankind, you are everything then, a full man as in this case you act and strive according to your potential, your sense of justice will not allow you to stay at a loose end in the world where a man has to deserve his bread by working hard; and you will be a benevolent person as your sense of philanthropy will not allow you to be a villain... thus, live and conduct good deeds, it is all you motherland requires from you... That’s the schools are for – they must open youngsters’ minds and hearts to good deeds (Chavchavadze, 2014:165).

In his story “The Widow of Otarashvili” Ilia Chavchavadze depicts a character of Giorgi as a live image of honor. According to the story he is a good farmer, is a connoisseur of irrigation system, “educated without books”, conscientious and kind. The work develops the idea that “ignorance is bad but neither is it good to judge only from books”... the horizon of mind is narrow without books but neither is it broad with books alone. Every wise man, although illiterate, may appear as a master of his profession to the scholars as well. Ilia writes that “Giorgi is just. Accustomed to justice, he always searched justice from others too.” He does not expect anything good from dishonest people and is striving for justice and truth. Giorgi complains about the lazy and dishonest servant that because of him one cannot trust other servants. Such impudent villains disgrace the rest of the honest personalities – says he and this is his free choice!

Ilia is a dialectic. Comparison of the river Tergi with the Glassier, given in Chavchavadze’s “Traveller’s Notes” directly confirms that “Motion and only motion is, my Tergi, a giver of life and strength to the country. Just try to stand still that you fierce gallant voice rapidly turns into frog’s croak!” – says the author and relates this idea to those fundamental values that he dedicated the whole of his life and death too. These are the values of social equality and freedom, life and death, maternity, human relations, solitude, etc. (Chavchavadze, 1998:65).

The same idea is expressed in the poem of another great countryman and poet Grigol Orbeliani in the following lines:

“Give a broad way to a gift,

And venerate honor.

God renders talent only to a personality

And not to his high birth” (Orbeliani, 1975: 156)

Immanuel Kant elevated the concept of honor and dignity up to the highest rank of values and based it on the scholarly foundations. In his “Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals”, he writes: “In the kingdom of ends everything has either a price or a dignity. What has a price can be replaced by something else as its equivalent; what on the other hand is raised above all price and therefore admits of no equivalent has a dignity...” (Kant, 2013: 42).

In Kant’s opinion, children are spoilt by parents and governors. The first only care about providing welfare and good life for their children whereas the latter strives to bring them up as the weapons of their dominance. While upbringing, they both envisage the existing situation. However, the true education and upbringing should prepare new generations for the better state of humanity in future. Kant considers that all cultures start with private initiative and the main goal of upbringing is to teach thinking. Humans must pass through four stages of conscious upbringing:

- Improve discipline
- Gain labor skills
- Learn forbearance;
- Become moral.

For Kant, discipline is principal. Undisciplined person is savage. You can grant any habit to an adolescent but can never uproot savagery. You cannot substitute indiscipline with anything. The last stage is the most difficult. We are living in the epoch of discipline, culture and civilization. However, we lack morality by far. Kant supposes that unification of own free will to the legally forceful obedience is the most difficult task in upbringing (Kant, 2013: 205).

The upbringing of a common goal and the sense of interdependence and respect for a worthy person is a principle of forming a healthy society. Human being intuitively feels necessity of moral attitude experience; you may not know Socrates' ideas but feel that life is valueless without perceiving the essence of life. Aristotle's followers are well aware that the just and righteous society is the one in which humans are well-behaved and where justice is firmly established as a practice. Article 17 of the Constitution of Georgia states that human honor and dignity is inviolable. As for the difference between honor and dignity – according to the legal science, “honor” implies the objective evaluation of individuals' qualities and abilities by society, whereas the concept of “dignity” implies personal self-assessment. Dignity and honor are inseparable notions. Therefore, the Constitution of Georgia mentions them both side by side. Various types of actions such as race discrimination, slavery, trading with humans, torture, inhuman and cruel treatment, physical punishment, physical and psychological violence, systematic humiliation, desperate state of mind, illegal experimentation on humans, dissemination of derogatory appeals and opinions can violate human dignity.

Recognition of dignity sometimes causes confrontation of values. Great tragedians such as Shakespeare easily feel this tension. He understands the tragedy existing within every culture. The tragedy of the protagonists of the famous Georgian writer Vazha Pshavela is not restricted to the rebellion against traditions. It is a revelation of the dynamic and reviving spirit that is implied in traditions; traditions as not petrified dead notions but with motional spirit leading towards rebirth and regeneration.

If within these conflicts one is unable to find the way towards salvation of personal dignity and tradition alike, then the confrontation ends in tragic outcome or else the tradition is rejected. Vazha Pshavela's protagonists never oppose traditions, but due to their dignity, they can sacrifice their lives to prove that the tradition is not a petrified, unchangeable reality, and that tradition can account for the need for personal dignity.

Like any other forms of life, tradition is of dialectic nature and in most cases, humans are destined to make a choice. Man acknowledges tradition, but he must choose his own way to maintain dignity in this tradition. Tradition is linked with morality, morality-with religion. The US Department of Education believes that the educational system should take orientation towards academic education, and the significant role in this endeavor is given to the teaching of basics of philosophy. The American document explicitly states that “knowledge of fundamentals of philosophy is essential for nation and civilization”.

Reformist thinking in the education system is one of the components of today's globalization process. In today's world, the striving towards the unified education system is becoming more and more palpable. A lot has been done in this respect. Still more is left to be done. We consider it necessary to introduce teaching the basics of philosophy at schools. It had already been mentioned in the UNESCO resolution in the previous century. “Learning is active while teaching vain and restricted. Children should have realistic environment at schools. We should supervise their experience and encourage their own ability of involvement into community. Educational philosophy should promote progressive educational movement and lay foundation to the empirical education program and experimentation” – stated John Dewey. It will enable us to understand that the main problem of life is to learn how to live properly! That humans are themselves the creators of their happiness or misfortunes, and that the human idea is the decisive one and what we do-is a visual revelation of our ideas. The only thing to do is to change the direction of these ideas in order to avoid poverty and succeed. Until our ideas and action are determined by egotistic desires we will have neither dignity nor worthy life!

The modern models of academic study process management take into account uniqueness and dignity of each pupil. Teachers are offered recommendations to perform minimal involvement into a class activity. According to C. Rogers, inner discipline is knowledge of one's own self and the actions to be conducted in order to develop as a personality, to be more precise-as an honorable personality. In this case, pupils will have more opportunity to make a free choice and achieve realization of own potential. In his book “The Honor Code-How Moral Revolutions Happen”, Kwame Anthony Appiah asks a question where the devoted and diligent teachers disappeared, so greatly respected by colleagues and parents. He wonders, if community understands the value of good teachers, why then they are underestimated or underpaid? He himself answers the question and says that in the past this

profession was governed with the professional norms prompted by the code of honor. However, the author also remarks that many agree to the evidence of the incurred loss.

In the educational process, the main attention is directed towards knowledge delivery and intellectual development. The emotional-sensual component is almost extracted from the lesson. The British scholar J. Hasley remarks that the spiritual world of the contemporary person should be loaded with not only intellectual potential and rich imagination, but emotional daring as well and ability to express surprise and wonder towards the outer world.

Type of thinking and norms of behavior determine boundaries between humans in a society. It will become possible if we declare faithfulness towards such virtues as human rights, mutual respect, responsibilities, nurture sensual education and, most significantly-confidence and reliability.

3. DISCUSSION

Based on the abovementioned, if honor is the foundation of rights and freedoms, it is indeed worth thinking about when it [honor] is abused. In addition, it should be clarified, what can be regarded as a means of restoring dignity in the contemporary educational space. The latter is the key issue of the present research. The research included a survey in several cities and towns of Georgia. Different categories of population were selected as target groups. Namely, students and professors from higher educational institutions, teachers and pupils from public and private schools, parents. The questionnaire consisted of the following questions: a) What is the main honor of a person? b) Do you think that the honor has suffered re-evaluation? c) What do you consider as the humiliating action against honor and dignity? d) What, in your opinion, fostered loss of dignity in modern society? e) How do you imagine honor restoration ways and means?

The analysis of the research outcomes showed that in the present educational process the main attention is transferred to knowledge delivery and intellect development. However, teaching and upbringing, word and deeds have become distanced from each other. It resulted in the crisis in educating future generations. We assume that the conclusions and recommendations formulated in this study will enhance the strengthening of links between teaching and upbringing in the educational process in which upbringing will take priority, as well as promote proper understanding of the notion of honor by future generations, educate moral responsibility and formulate high civic awareness.

The analysis of the survey outcomes revealed one common problem characteristic to the educational space in different target groups. It highlights the fallacious side of education – separation of teaching and upbringing process, immanent to the ages of value reassessment and revaluation in the 21st century, which led to the school education crisis in a number of countries.

The analysis of the survey showed the following:

70% of the respondents think that the essence of concept of honor and dignity has experienced certain revaluation – a language of hatred has been established; humans have become alienated due to technological advancement; live contact between people has lessened; people have lost the sense of justice and strife to goals. 60% of the respondents state the opinion that mistrust, arrogance and hatred have caused nihilism and indifference in society. 50% of the respondents regard that the main factor for the loss of dignity is the social-economic and political situation in the country. Particularly, the deficiency of survival minimum as well as lack of job opportunity on labor market has been emphasized.

As for the dignity restoration ways and means, the research analysis showed that 70% of the respondents consider close links to teaching and upbringing in the educational process, with priority of upbringing, as the main tool for restoring dignity. What is more, teaching/learning process should become the part of lifelong education process.

The 80% of the respondents surveyed on the issue of education ways and methods think that teaching literature and arts (including all types of art) should be given special role in the school educational space. On the other hand, the development of thinking skills should be based on philosophical education that can be achieved through introduction of philosophy as a separate discipline into the curriculum of general education.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of the results of the survey we can conclude: The development of technological processes in the 21st century as well as a variety of socioeconomic problems caused the alienation of human beings, people lost their sense of justice and the ability to protect justice, the language of hatred has been established, the living contact has become rare among people.

The most important tool for redeeming dignity is the close relation between teaching and upbringing in the educational process in which the priority will be granted to upbringing. In addition, to enhance teaching education philosophy and pedagogy (theory of upbringing) in the curricula of schools and higher educational institutions, as well as teach each discipline in direct or indirect relation to universal values. It will promote right understanding of honor and dignity among new generations, deepening the sense of moral responsibility within one's own selves and lead towards formation of personalities with high civic awareness.

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