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THE COMMUNICATIONAL BIBLICAL MOTIVE OF SELF-PERFECTION IN AN ETHICAL REFLECTION ON SIN, SHAME, RE-MORSE AND FORGIVENESS

KOMUNIKACIJSKI BIBLIJSKI MOTIV SAMO-SAVRŠENSTVA U ETIČKOM PROMIŠLJANJU O GRIJEHU, SRAMA, KAJANJA I PRAŠTANJA

Milan Petričković

Faculty of Political Science, University of Belgrade, Belgrade, Serbia
Fakultet političkih znanosti, Sveučilište u Beogradu, Beograd, Srbija

Abstract

The generically determined purposefulness of moral self-perfection of man, as an important paradigm of Christian philosophy, is often illustrated through the Biblical stories which reveal various ethical aspects of sin, shame, remorse and forgiveness. In that context, the ethics as a philosophical discipline oriented towards the overcoming of the current man's being, through his constant moral transformation, can reveal in the Bible epistemologically valid ethical reflections in harmony with moral character: sin, shame, remorse and forgiveness. With these moral dimensions in dialectical causality there are also other fundamental ethical issues, like the relation between the being and the need, moral consciousness and conscience, freedom, free choice, moral choice, moral virtues, moral acting, moral judging, moral sanctions and many other moral layers of man's constant transformation.

Sažetak

Generički određena svrhovitost moralnog samo-savršenstva čovjeka, kao važna paradigma kršćanske filozofije, često je ilustrirano kroz biblijske priče koje otkrivaju razne etičke aspekte grijeha, srama, kajanja i praštanja. U tom kontekstu, etika kao filozofska disciplina orijentirana prema prevladavanja trenutnog čovjekovog bića, kroz njegove stalne moralne preobrazbe, može otkriti u Bibliji epistemološki važeća etička promišljanja u harmoniji s moralnim karakterom: grijeh, sram, kajanje i praštanje. S tim moralnim dimenzijama u dijalektičkoj uzročnosti postoje i druga temeljna etička pitanja, poput odnosa između bića i potrebe, moralne svijesti i savjesti, slobode, slobodnog izbora, moralnog izbora, moralne vrline, moralno prosuđivanje, moralnih sankcija i mnogi drugi moralni slojevi u čovjekovoj stalnoj transformaciji.

Introduction

As an immediate offspring of civilization's reflection and realization which has been crystallized through centuries on various aspects of a man's being and his existential appearance, Christian philosophy embodied in the Biblical wisdom has been trying to decipher latent multilayerness of an extremely complex phenomenon of *moral self-transformation* predestined to human nature. In that context, searching for the absolute, religious pondering through ideas, concepts and symbols in a content sense present anticipatory expression and complementary segment of cosmogonic and philosophical interpretation of the potentially reached truths about the world and man, in this context about constancy, generically given moral perfection, which in gnoseological sense makes these two spiritual treasuries the same generically. In spite of esotericism of theological symbols, reflexive synergy of Christian wisdom through mutual complementing and enriching of spiritual revelations of ancient civilizations, Judean traditional postulates and worthy of outwitting of the antique Stoicism, opens crucial questions, proper to human essence, of man's

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totality, built on (through many factors) causally conditioned dilemma of the very meaningfulness and purposefulness of human genesis. In the very core of that quest here stressed Biblical motive of incessant and dynamic change of man is imposed, in the whirlpool of his daily existential temptations as to a being prone to sin (evil-doing), whose deepest anthropological fate is reflected precisely in that attempt in existential surpassing of all the evils of life. Thus viewed Biblical motive of a man's moral self-change opens realizational discourse which gives to the Christian philosophy a quality of a serious and challenging source of ethical judgments, worthy of theoretical analyses, through interpretation and translation into the language of moral, complex reflexive postulates, opposed in their hermeneutics, on multifaceted category of human morality. Actually, it is about one of the fundamental issues of ethics as a philosophical discipline – the moral character of man, through which he realizes himself as a moral subject, among whose important determiners are moral phenomena of sin, shame, remorse and forgiveness. Within these Biblical matters, thanks to deciphering of theological symbols typical of them, a rich mine of ethical reflections of man's moral practice is opened, and these reflections are found in dialectical causality with many other questions of moral philosophy. Put in other words, moral instructions of the Biblical stories on interdependence of sin, shame, remorse and forgiveness, as directives of man's daily actions, which decisively form his generically given aim of moral perfection, in the sense of realization are inseparable from the starting question of ethics on the relation of the relation between the being and the need, moral consciousness and conscience, freedom, free choice, moral choice, moral virtues, moral acting, moral judging, moral sanctions and many other moral layers of man's constant transformation. This text in this context aims to show that Biblical text contains precious anticipations of generically predestined moral perfection of man, which philosophically founded ethics considers viewing and interpreting it also through establishing correlation with important moral properties of man, like sinful actions, shame, remorse and forgiveness.

Man's "sinful" nature – the motive of the same origin as Biblical stories and ethics

Based on mythical and religious consciousness, Christian philosophy tries to penetrate reflexively into multilayerness of a man's generic essence and its peculiar segment of sinful nature, immanent to his feature of existential action which, through its own teleology, is lawfully exposed to constant risk of making various mistakes. At the beginning of The Old Testament this characteristic of evil-doing, peculiar to human essence, is established, which is figuratively shaped in a well known story of primordial sin, which is transferred from the original parents Adam and Eve, as of the first parents, to the entire human kind, thus to each human being. Expressed through symbolical meaning, the snake, as the most cunning of all animals in Eden, persuaded Eve to taste the fruit of the fruit of knowledge, which Adam did as well, upon her insisting, in order to, supposedly, become like gods who own the power of discriminating good from evil. However, that action of the first humans made God angry who cursed them and expelled them from Eden, deciding do punish them by existential tribulations: to the woman hardships during pregnancy and painful delivery of babies, as well as subjection to the will of her husband as her master, and to the man painstaking feeding off the earth where weeds and thorns grow, with much sweat in his labour to procure bread from the soil from the dust of which he came into being and into which he will return. Applying analogical method of copying it is not hard to notice anticipatory forms of ethical dimensions in this Biblical story, through which various aspects of man's morality can be distinguished. Establishing theological *category of sin*, Christian philosophy suites cognitive lines to the set of fundamental ethical questions which derive from the very essence of man's acting, as of a thinking and practical being, where certainly as primary data men's aptitude to perform various actions, thus including various evil deeds, are

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singled out. Viewing *evil* in the causality with the *category of good*, it will be dealt with, as a starting term, semantically evolved from Greek *kakon*; Latin *malum*, by the history of ethics, bringing it into logical connections with the terms like: sin, misfortune, guilt, vice, imperfection, incompleteness, harmfulness, wrongfulness, nothingness, negativity, wickedness, horror, ghastliness, disease, malice, forbidden action, cultic stain, dirtiness, frustrated progress, decay etc. If we take as a serious reflexive postulate Hegel's symbolical treatment of religious notions, based on operating with symbols through which generic features of man and of his existential reality are expressed, which by all means surpasses "vapid theological orthodoxy" which simplifies and interprets literally complex phenomena, thus the Biblical motive of man's sinfulness for the ethics as a moral philosophy is a valuable mine of ethical reflections worthy of researchers' attention and cognitive judgment. In these crossroads of reflexive duality, religious and philosophical, a play of good and evil, immanent to human existence is contained. On one hand, given as harmonic, on the other, constantly endangered with disharmonic. Reaching that equilibrium actually provokes the phenomenon of *human self-perfection*, which is inconceivable without moral cognition, which as well as any other postulate is based on dialectical unity and the struggle of the opposites. "Only in thinking there is the source of evil and good, but in thinking there also is the salvation from the evil done due to thinking." /**1**/ Hence, hereditary nature of sin uncloaked from the theological garment, expresses a civilisational reflexive tendency, proper to human kind, that "every man has the duty to think of himself, that he, as a natural being, as he is directly created, is not as he should be before God." /**2**/ That, in the reality of everyday living, opens to him the possibility of his own repentance of sinfulness, i.e. moral correction and surpassing in the sense of limitless possibilities existential confirmation of a wide specter, of generic potentials given and destined for him as conscious and human being, /**3**/ achieving which man is made alike to the ideal of divinity. Which of these ethical reflec-

tions conceived in the Biblical motive of human self-transformation through self-transcendence and overcoming of inherited generic sinfulness is a cognitive dilemma which is being resolved in the following part of this text.

Shame, remorse and forgiveness in cognitive causality of the Biblical wisdom and moral philosophy

Considering man's sinful nature the Bible provokes actually, in a rudimentary form of civilizational patina, many fundamental ethical categories, mutually firmly dialectically interwoven around the central moral phenomenon of *human self-transformation* which marks the core of historical development of ethical thought. Typical in this respect is the *term of shame*, contained in the aforementioned Biblical story of the primordial sin, illustrated in the following lines:

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.
Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.
Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden.
But the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?"
He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid." /**4**/

So, after tasting fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, first humans began to fear God and hide from God, for because of their breaking the given prohibition and recognizing their nakedness (as a conse-

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quence of their deed) they felt unease and shame, to which the ethics which was to follow paid a great deal of attention. Besides, the term shame (Greek *aidos, aischyne*; Latin *pudor, reverentia*) in the broadest sense of the word, in the ethics is considered to be a product of moral judgments and self-judgments of human actions, and it can pertain to very different areas of mental relationship of man with other human beings and apparent reality in general, the peculiarity of which derives from his evaluation mark. In the psychological and emotional basis, shame is a state of the individual caused by the violation of value content of moral demands, social norms of acting, customs, by the violation of close authorities, as well of his own Self; which has for its consequence the threat of dishonour, followed by endangered self-confirmation of the person in his own self-evaluation of his inner dignity and value. The relation between Christian philosophy and ethics regarding moral category of shame is addressed through thoughts of Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), who enriches his scale of shame - where there are false shame, good shame, sinner's shame, shame of one's own high-handedness, shame of nudity, sexual shame – with shame before God, then before the preaching priest, and especially important shame before *one's own conscience*. This scholastic thinker was to distinguish quite precisely the key moral link in the chain of man's morality – moral conscience, which, figuratively contained in Socrates' *daimonium*, makes him the finder of moral, as he was marked by Hegel. Seeds of moral conscience as processed and self-evaluated moral consciousness on actually done deeds, contained in the story of primordial sin are recommended here for an analysis, since first humans are starting to value their own deeds morally, consider them consciously and bear the consequences of their actions as moral subjects. At the same time, complex moral dimension of conscience and its product the shame, contained in the Biblical lessons on primordial sin, necessarily opens, for the philosophically based ethics, its own dialectical inseparability of *moral character, moral motives, moral beliefs, moral intentions, decisions and choices, then moral imputation, guilt,*

sanctions as well as moral merits which are much like it. In that context, expressed in the terminological and categorical language of ethics, Biblical symbolism delves deep essentially into the primary question of moral philosophy, so called *purpose and principles of moral acting*, pertaining to the very *nature and essence, aims and meaning of moral activities of man in general*. /**5**/ Through Christian symbolism of moral lessons in the Biblical story of primordial sin, actually it was pointed, later in the ethics (suited to the actual philosophic genre), to the issue, dealt with in many ways, of *moral purposes of human practice*, through the cognitive dilemma of the first humans, Adam and Eve, on distinguishing moral qualities of good and evil. From the (im)moral activities of pre-humans, a division of principles was to evolve in ethics. These principles made the base upon which people primarily follow in their moral actions, led by delight, pleasure or utility, which makes three central ethical principles: eudaimonism, hedonism and utilitarianism. Universality of this topic was confirmed in the antique philosophy, too, where terminological segments of shame, caused by awe, consideration, respect, noble feelings regarding life in the Polis are noticed. Protagoras' analysis of the myth of Prometheus points to that. There it is said that the god Zeus gave shame and justice to people /**6**/, enabling them thus to live in polises, which can be brought in connection with the fear of gaining ill reputation or saying and doing things which are not considered beautiful and good in the community. Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) thinks likewise, feeling that the youth can be enticed to virtue through the fear of punishment, through the feeling of shame, which is "praiseworthy" in a human, although he didn't consider shame to be a virtue, due to different kinds and measures of shame (from shamefulness to exaggerated shyness out of respect to the authority). He recognizes, in shame, fear of dishonor, too, which is more similar to feeling than to the state of character, conditioned by the age of men, where shame is more suited to the young than to the old. Respecting one's good intention for good action, Aristotle excludes the possibility of shame appearing in the form of

the consequence of an action. Stoics distinguish the terms of *shame* and *disgrace*, where shame is attributed with positive moral quality, with considerable educational effects, whereas shame falls into the category of affects which have negative value, disturbing the mind. Understanding shame as an affect, Baruch de Spinoza (1632-1677) brings it in connection with some kind of hate directed towards man's interior, where the real value of man is contained in his power over this kind of affect. Shame is the result of tension between the body and spirit, says Max Scheler (1874-1928), seeking its essence in the function as the defense mechanism of an individual, as of an emotional and conscious being, which is not proper to gods and animals, which divests them of shame. Shame discloses the meaning of the other I, through existential relation with others, followed by their accusing looks, where I is no longer the center of individual world, but is viewed primarily through the measures of other people, which inevitably limits or alienates the freedom of an individual, Jean Paul Sartre (1905-1980) says.

Closely related to shame is remorse (Greek *katanixis, syntribe,* Latin *compunctio*) which marks *the inner feeling of regret and public acknowledgement of one's own guilt for a performed action or behaviour*. Formed in the form of inner suffering, or penance, which gives it the attribute of *constitutive part of shame and conscience*, remorse is founded on self-observation and *negative self-judgment of one's own action*. Christian ethics brings clear notion of the phenomenon of remorse, taken in the form of inner spiritual discernment, which comes into being through self-reproach, but also through the life-saving conversion, which comes to the man – aware of his own guilt and sin – from God, who can cleanse and wash human lawlessness from sin, in order to make a better creature out of a sinner. In the virtue of human remorse the meeting of human love for God and the divine love for man is realized, which recommends the Christian doctrine of repentance as one of the sacraments. Illustrative in that respect is certainly the Biblical story of the prodigal son, /**7**/ who, facing his own consciousness, "sobered" morally, deciding to

come home after sinful actions – wandering around the world where he squandered everything he inherited from his father. When, as the Bible says, "he came to his senses", i.e. started thinking and questioning morally the absurdity of "pathless" (immoral) life which led him to the job of keeping pigs and feeding them in the fields, he is exposed to the process of remorse, the basis of which is made of facing, guessing and of awakened consciousness of the measure and actual sense of action. That "coming to one's senses" in this story creates, for the contemporary ethics, important question of so called self-reflection of consciousness, where moral subject is clearly distinguished, whose will is free to change modes of practical action, which makes man subject to judgment of value and morally responsible. From this ethical standpoint the decision morally made by the son who is repenting, aware of his mistakes, should be understood:

"When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death!

I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you.

I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.'' /**8**/

Reflexively sharp, Biblical and philosophical expression will show to the ethics through picturesque analogy the deep meaning and importance of remorse. It could be rightly said that through it – the transformation of consciousness and purification of human conscience, due to which morally "dead" and rejected, "pathless" man, has got the chance of living and existing again. The moral readiness for sincere regret, penance and discernment of one's own mistakes and their consequences thus understood completely justifies connection between moral act of repentance with "self-finding" of the stumbling and lost people in the wilderness of existential traps generically inherited even from Adam and Eve. The following lines from the Bible point to that:

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"For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found..." /**9**/

Since the inner self-knowledge of man as of moral individual (self-reflection of consciousness) is a necessary condition of his existence, it is hard to find in the antique thought a reliable literary testimony on the phenomenon of remorse, until Roman stoic Seneca (4 B.C. – 65 A.D.) pointed out, stressing the importance of moral cognition, that he who does not know that he is sinful, actually does not want to correct himself. Picturesquely, he sees remorse as the beginning of health, which originates in the inner judicial case of consciousness of a kind, to which the transgressor is liable. So he recommends to the "sinner" firstly to do the work of the prosecutor, than of the judge, and in the end of the defender, who should know even how to offend himself. Remorse, as a spiritual act of being sorry, which derives from the feeling that a bad thing was done, is a recognizable paradigm of a newborn ethics, which locates the remorse into the individual and deems it useful if it results in doing better, where one is to be cautious, since in men of weak spirit remorse can be a grave drawback, since it causes insecurity and the fear of further action. Spinoza sees in remorse a useful social affect, due to the danger of reckless crowd which fears nothing. From these points of view he justifies the prophets' demands for modesty, remorse and self-respect, as of the affects which lead one to live according to the reason. Hegel attributes the strength of man's spirit and character to the remorse, through which he can be converted, negating the evil which he had done. It is a course of phenomenological ethics of remorse, as of the inner spiritual pang, through which man distinguishes the obstacle of violated moral order, annulling the deeds which were morally worthless, gaining thus the condition for the moral transformation of one's own existence. The moral category of remorse is therefore a very specific and very important existential leading star, since in its essence there is the constant tendency of various moral reconsiderations, self-judgments and self-depreciation, with the final aim of clear consciousness,

cloaked in conscience as potential warrant of the future non-committing of evil deeds. The very core of man's moral rehabilitation through remorse was to be reached by the moral philosophy of Christianity, establishing the category of *repentance, which relates to the change of one's mind.* /**10**/ Especially when this change of one's mind (the change in the sphere of mental reflections) does not denote self-pity and dejection, but *transfiguration and refocusing of the entire life*, in the direction from past-humble to the future-hopeful, on the path from what man missed to be, to what he can be. Hence, repentance as an incessantly renewing melting of the heart and will, is compared to *awakening, since it causes the change of mind* which leads to attention, which is literally confirmed by a Greek term related to the terms of *sobriety, wakefulness and composure*, as the states opposite to the state of inebriation due to the effect of drugs or alcohol. /**11**/ Is not the whole human life in that context reflected in the synergy of work, socialization, education, value, moral and other fundamental aspects of its totality of praxis, deeply interwoven with various possibilities of free choice between active creative wakefulness and passive metaphysical sleepiness? In other words, can one, in spite of theological expression, deny the universal meaning of a man's repentance built on a refined consciousness of constant change from the past into the future, as a method of sobriety, wakefulness and composure through pondering, rethinking, and outwitting of attitudes, prejudices, values, characterology, life-goals and globally understood human meaning of existence? /**12**/

In the dialectical synthesis with remorse is the *moral act of forgiveness*, /**13**/ as a specific expression of moral self-examining and rethinking, which results in the readiness for *self-growth of the moral subjects, to reconcile and settle, with, immoral (wrong) actions of another doer towards him*. This moral phenomenon, extremely important for the nature of human relations, in spite of its intriguing, both practical and philosophical and ethical content in the civilizational quest is still a phenomenon which has not been studied and well explained yet. It, as one of the fundamental motives, is

dealt with by the Bible, generally through the words of the apostle Paul in his epistle to the Ephesians, advising: "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other…", /**14**/ which is also pointed out in the Gospel according to Luke, where the Christ, addressing the disciples, says: "Forgive and you shall be forgiven." /**15**/ Elucidating the complex nature of man's forgiveness as an answer to the wrong done to him by others, moral lessons of Biblical stories are most indicative, among which the already mentioned one about the prodigal son is indispensable, where the interdependence of the son's remorse and his father's forgiveness is quite plain to see.

"So he got up and went to his father.

But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet.

Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate." /**16**/

Equally valuable is the story of Jesus and adulteress, which describes the situation when the Pharisees bring a woman caught in adultery in front of the Christ, pleading to the legislation of Moses allowing stoning to death as the penalty for that sin. There Jesus places the cornerstone, important in the civilizational context, of moral idea of human relations through the attitude of sinfulness of every human being, through the line:

"Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her."

However, the Pharisees upon hearing this
"… ashamed at this by their conscience, they began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there." /**17**/

After that the Christ forgave the woman, warning her not to do it again, giving a postulate to the philosophically based ethics, according to which each human being is a unique generic totality, with defined individual and moral characteristics, which produce a specific moral relation and actions towards the others, which are in the state of constant risk (of the inherited sin of the first parents) to be judged as sinful and evil. The Biblical story of the wicked servant, where moral obligation of the forgiveness for unpaid debts is underlined, warns us in a strong moral lesson about the necessity of mutual forgiveness of committed sins, determined, lawfully immanent to the human kind. The wicked servant who owed to his master ten thousand bags of gold and who was to be sold to slavery with his wife and children as a means of paying that debt, after pleading earnestly was forgiven by his master who took mercy on him and forgave him that large debt. However, that very servant put his own friend who owed him an insignificant sum of a hundred silver coins into the dungeon, not forgiving him and not heeding his begging to wait a little before he can pay him back. Upon hearing this, the master summoned him and said:

"……'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to.

Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?'

In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed." /**18**/

Thus the ethics gets a formed paradigm of the purposefulness of constant questioning of the moral consciousness and the ethical relativity of judging deeds (both of the transgressors and those who were wronged by them). That gives the readiness to understand and self-transcend, in the form of allowing the right to make a moral mistake, derived from the right to free action, to a man as a moral subject. Hence, not incidentally, there are many symbolic illustrations in the ethical literature on (lawfully) sinful nature of every man,

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which actually conditions him to understand, aware of his sin, and forgive by self-transcendence, "forget", accept and bargain with sin (as an expression of moral imperfect and downfall) of other people. From these it can be concluded that in its essence forgiveness also has the dimension of moral transformation through which one expresses his readiness to the moral self-transcendence of his own immoral actions, as well as of those of the others, which lead him to the other, universally-given human nature.

Concluding thoughts

Synergically merging inside itself the essence of civilization's reflection and realization which has been crystallized through centuries on various aspects of a man's being and his existential appearance, Christian philosophy embodied in the Biblical wisdom has been trying to decipher latent multilayerness of an extremely complex phenomenon of *moral self-transformation* predestined to human nature. In that context, searching for the absolute, religious pondering through ideas, concepts and symbols in a content sense present anticipatory expression and complementary segment of cosmogonic and philosophical interpretation of the potentially reached truths about the world and man, in this context about constancy, generically given moral perfection, which in gnoseological sense makes these two spiritual treasuries the same generically. In spite of theological, terminological and categorical expression, reflexive prudence of Christian wisdom opens crucial questions, proper to human essence, of man's totality, built on (through many factors) causally conditioned dilemma of the very meaningfulness and purposefulness of human genesis. In the very core of that quest here stressed Biblical motive of incessant and dynamic change of man is imposed, in the whirlpool of his daily existential temptations as to a being prone to sin (evil-doing), whose deepest anthropological fate is reflected precisely in that attempt in existential surpassing of all the evils of life. The short analysis of the Biblical motive shown here of one's moral self-changing opens cognitive

discourse which gives to the Christian philosophy a quality of a serious and challenging source of ethical judgments, worthy of theoretical analyses, through interpretation and translation into the language of moral, complex reflexive postulates, opposed in their hermeneutics, on multifaceted category of human morality. Put in other words, it is quite justified that one of the fundamental issues of ethics as a philosophical discipline – the moral character of man, through which he realizes himself as a moral subject, among whose important determiners are moral phenomena of sin, shame, remorse and forgiveness – can be viewed in the correlation with the Biblical anticipations of moral content. Thus this text shows the starting hypothesis that certain Biblical contents, due to deciphering of their characteristic theological symbols open a rich mine of ethical reflections of man's moral practice, which are in dialectical causality with many other questions of moral philosophy. To say more precisely, the moral lessons postulated in the Biblical stories on interdependence of sin, shame, remorse and forgiveness, as the guides of man's daily activities, which profile decisively his generically given goal of moral perfecting, are in the cognitive sense inseparable from the starting issue of ethics. From epystemological positions, as constitutive segments of this question there are imposed ethical issues, like the relation between the being and the need, moral consciousness and conscience, freedom, free choice, moral choice, moral virtues, moral acting, moral judging, moral sanctions and many other moral layers of man's constant transformation.

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/13/ "The practice of mutual forgiveness and confes-
sion of sins was developed especially in the first
centuries of the Christianity and was done in the
form of mutual oral conversation. It was particu-
larly prominent in the cases when someone did
something unfair, insulted somebody, wronged
him or envied him, thought something bad
about someone etc. How widespread this way of
mutual forgiveness was is best shown by H.
Epistle, which was sent to the Emperor Traian
sent in the period 103-105 as a report of Plinius
the younger magistrate of Vitinia and Pont.
There it says: Christians do nothing evil; moreo-
ver, they are committed to good most strictly...
Their greatest fault or their greatest fallacy is
that they gather on a certain day and one after
the other sing to Christ, as to a God, some song
of gratitude and say their sins." Milisav D. Pro-
tić, Pokajanje i ispovest, from the quoted pas-
sage, page 51.

/14/ The Bible, New Testament, Epistle to the Ephe-
sians, chapter 4, line 32. p. 201.

/15/ The Bible, New Testament, Luke, chapter 6, line
37. p. 88.

/16/ Op. cit. chapter 15, lines 20-23.

/17/ The Bible, New Testament, John, chapter 8, lines
7-9. p. 105.

/18/ The Bible, New Testament, Matthew, chapter
18, lines 32-34. p. 25.

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